

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME



UNHCR / WFP Joint Assessment Mission:

Togolese refugees in Benin and Ghana and IDPs in Togo

(26 January – 8 February 2006)

Team Leader: Laurent BUKERA, WFP ODD

Co- Team Leader: Francois MARRILLET, UNHCR Geneva

Mission Members: Geert BEEKHIUS, WFP ODD

Housainou TAAL WFP ODDY

Daniel Roger TAM, UNHCR, Guinea

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the unrest accompanying the Togolese presidential elections on 24th of April 2005, Togolese refugees arrived in Benin and Ghana, while another group sought refuge in the country side in Togo. UNHCR and WFP, in collaboration with their partners and host governments, responded swiftly to the crisis. Emergency assistance to refugees and IDPs in the three countries was provided from the beginning of May 2005 onwards.

After nearly 10 months of implementation, a Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) assessed the performance of the emergency operation, with particular attention for food and non-food needs of the refugees and IDPs. Also, the extent to which UNHCR and WFP's assistance reflect these needs were reviewed and possible gaps and solutions to address these gaps were identified.

The table below shows that out of a total of about 38 000 refugees registered with UNHCR, 22 173 refugees were identified as in need of food assistance. During the December/January rounds of food distribution, about 20 301 refugees collected their rations.

	Previous JAM estimate	Registered with UNHCR	Currently on food distribution list	Benefiting from food aid in Dec/Jan	Projected caseload benefiting from food aid: end of 2006
Refugees in Benin	21 000	25 476	10 093	10 395	10 000
Refugees in Ghana	17 000	12 414	12 080/b	9 906	10 000
IDPs /victims in Togo	16 000	\ a	0	/ c	5 000
Total	54 000	37 890	22 173	20 301	25 000

\ a: IDPs were not registered; it is believed that there are currently less than 1 000 IDPs.

\ b: This number was used in December/January and has been reduced to 10 000 as per JAM recommendation.

\ c: Only one distribution, in August, to a total of 38 540 IDPs and other 'victims' of the violence.

The evolution of beneficiaries from the initial estimates and initial registration to date as well as projected beneficiary caseload through to 2006 is significant. The report details further reasons that can be attributed to, primarily three key factors: a return of the entire Togo IDP caseload, the UNHCR profiling exercise that helped refine further the list of refugees and finally the limited but evident signs of spontaneous returns of some refugees back to Togo.

The JAM team recommends that overall assistance be diversified and oriented towards:

- for Ghana: enhanced targeting of vulnerable groups, enhanced self-reliance and move towards a partial phase-down of free food assistance;
- for Togo: holistic approach supporting the various groups of victims of the crisis, including addressing specific needs of ex-IDPs and the re-integration of returned refugees, through augmented presence of UNHCR and WFP and increased collaboration with partners in Togo and
- for Benin: continued multi-faceted assistance to refugees staying in refugee camps.

Enhancing self-reliance through the promotion of Income Generating Activities (IGAs) is a recommendation of particular importance, particularly in Ghana where the potential and interest for host communities and refugees is clearly present.

UNHCR and WFP have an important role in i) establishing partnerships with development partners, such as, for example, the Italian Cooperation and the European Commission and other UN agencies, and as a result an important role in ii) establishing synergies with the various existing development projects in the Volta region, such as the EC-funded and led 'community-based' development project, to provide more adequate solutions to refugees in the area of self-sufficiency and reduce economic burden on Ghanaian host communities.

Key recommendations related to food assistance can be summarized as follows:

- i) continued free food distribution of a full ration to an estimated 10 000 refugees in the Benin camps until the end of 2006;
- ii) implementation of a food-for-work scheme for about 5 000 people in crisis-affected areas in Togo;
- iii) implementation of a safety-net programme in Ghana for about 3 000 vulnerable refugees in need of a full ration until the end of 2006; and
- iv) progressive free food distribution phase-out for about 7 000 refugees in Ghana (Ghana free food distribution phase out to be completed by end 2006).

The JAM notes that although a partial phase out of free food assistance is recommended, the overall exit strategy is highly dependant on the evolution of the situation in Togo. The launch of negotiations on a tri-partite agreement will depend on the Togolese government progress made in the area of confidence building and fulfillment of various conditions. Also the existence of appropriate structures that will guarantee the protection and safety of returnees in Togo is critical for a voluntary return of refugees still in Ghana and Benin.

In that regard, the JAM team noted efforts undertaken by the Government of Togo. Where good progress can be reported, an additional effort is recommended to integrate all key actors in the dynamics, in order to work towards an augmented confidence, from refugee populations, in the national reconciliation process. It is therefore recommended that UNCHR presence be strengthened in Togo to allow for full and adequate UNCT team participation in an extended repatriation 'steering group' initiated by the government of Togo.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE MISSION AND METHODOLOGY

II.1 Objectives

Rapid appraisal missions carried out by UNHCR and WFP in May 2005 permitted the formulation of a comprehensive emergency response in Benin, Ghana and Togo. For over 10 months, WFP, UNHCR, and their partners have, in close collaboration with the Governments of the respective countries, assisted the Togolese refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in order to ensure a (food) secure situation for them.

In line with the objectives of its Terms of Reference, the Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) assessed the performance of the emergency response with a focus on both food and non-food needs of the various groups affected by the crisis. Also, the extent to which UNHCR and WFP's assistance reflect these needs were reviewed and possible gaps and solutions to address these gaps were identified. A set of recommendations has been formulated at the end of this report, which will form the basis for the country offices to elaborate a plan of action.

II.2 Methodology¹

The JAM team² visited Benin (26-29 January), Togo (30 January – 3 February) and Ghana (4-8 February), and conducted interviews with Togolese refugees, their hosts, and other victims of the Togolese crisis. In addition, in each of the three countries, meetings were held with representatives from central and local authorities, national and international non-governmental organizations and donors. The villages, camps and organisations visited by the JAM are summarized in the JAM programme (annex 1). In each of the three countries, the existing reports, studies and surveys related to the refugees and IDPs were reviewed.

Based on the experiences of the May 2005 rapid JAMs, semi-structured questionnaires were elaborated and used for the focus group discussions with refugees (in camp and outside of camp) and hosts (annex 2). Separate focus group discussions with women, men, the youth and persons of the third generation were held, to better encourage interviewees to freely discuss the issues important to them. No systematic individual interviews were carried out with the refugees as time was limited. A total of approximately 70 focus group discussions, with an estimated 2 100 participants, were held in Benin and Ghana, as well as various non-structured interviews with IDPs and refugees who had returned to Togo (in Aneho, Boko and Atakpamé).

Following the field visits, preliminary findings and recommendations were presented to UNHCR and WFP representatives in Accra (with participation from WFP Benin). Agreement was reached on the revision of the intervention strategy and its main activities. A de-briefing was also organized with the UN Country Team and selected donors.

The time horizon employed by the JAM is from March-December 2006, but with the understanding that a possible favorable change in the conditions in Togo, inducing the signature of the tri-partite agreement regarding repatriation, may alter the interventions and therefore require a new JAM.

III.3 Information gaps

The significant number of first hand interviews gives some assurance on the quality of the data recorded. In addition, the presence of UNHCR, WFP and partner staff in the field since the beginning of the crisis has helped to get a better understanding of the livelihood conditions of hosts and camp based refugees. In Benin, the IFRC also played a crucial role in the identification of vulnerable groups in the camps and UNICEF made a remarkable contribution regarding the identification and

¹ The JAM was carried out in accordance with the UNHCR/WFP Joint Assessment guidelines, 2004.

² Laurent Bukera, WFP (teamleader), François Marrillet, UNHCR, Daniel Roger Tam, UNHCR, Housainou Taal, WFP and Geert Beekhuis, WFP. Representatives of the WFP/UNHCR country offices participated in the mission in their respective countries.

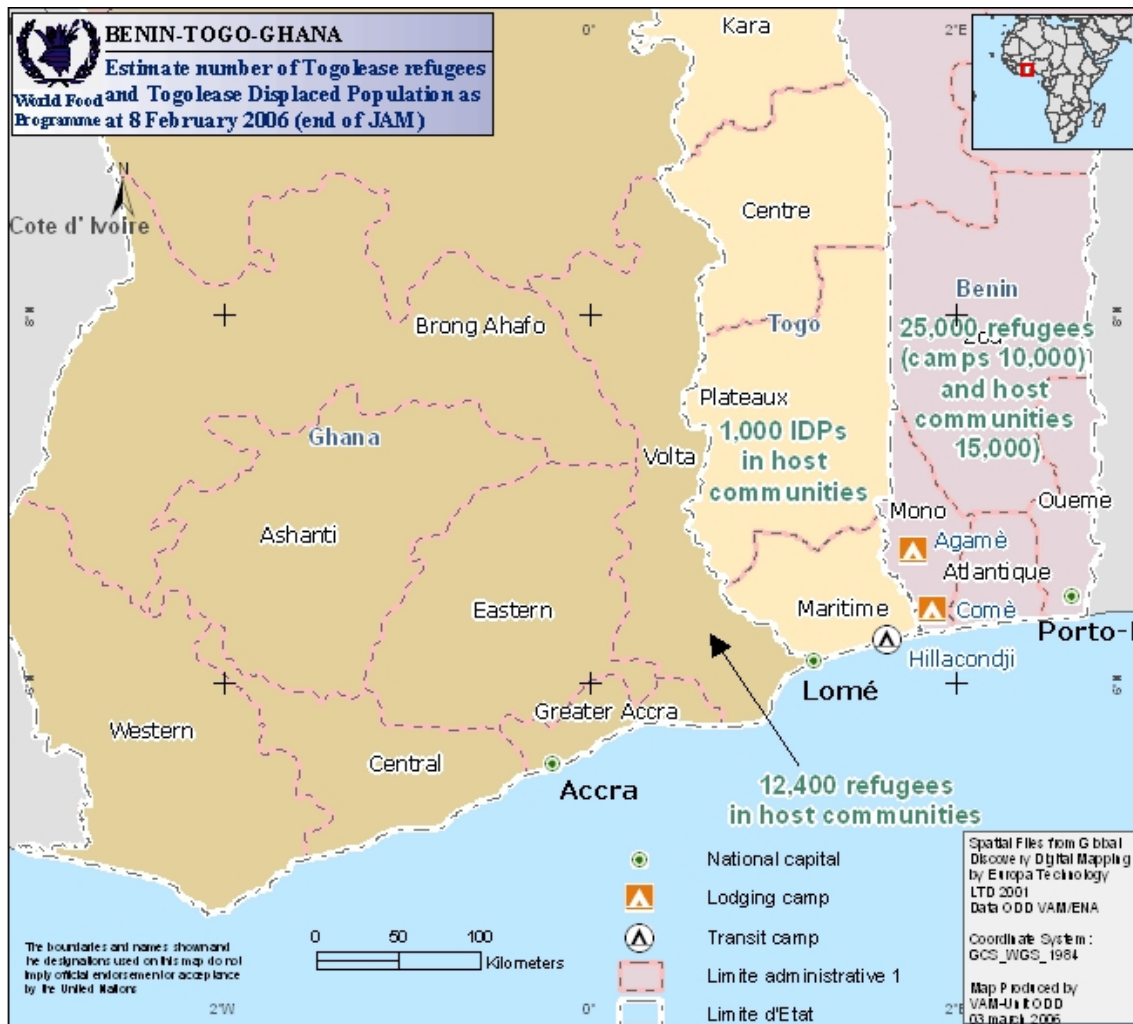
reunification of unaccompanied minors. The psycho-social pilot project initiated by UNHCR in Cotonou also represented a breakthrough in terms of access to urban refugees and collect of information. The various sources of information were compared and assessed against what was provided by the refugees.

The main challenge in compiling accurate data however remain: i) the location and number of refugees staying with host communities in Benin; ii) the number of refugees and IDPs who have returned home; iii) the exact number of refugees staying in the Agamé camp in Bénin and with host communities in Ghana; iv) providing a detailed overview of the nutritional and food security status of refugees and hosts and to identify the vulnerable groups and v) the extent to which the refugees are able to generate their own income.

III. REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

III.1 The crisis and the humanitarian response

Early preparedness mechanisms helped UNHCR and WFP, in coordination with other UN entities, host governments and NGOs, to intervene without delay and provide humanitarian assistance to Togolese refugees in Benin and Ghana, and to support the Government efforts to assist IDPs in Togo. All refugees were given access to protection and no ‘refoulement’ was reported at the time of the outbreak of the Togolese crisis. Both Benin and Ghana considered refugees from Togo as “prima facie” refugees, although with some delay and certain level of reluctance by Ghanaian authorities. The overall distribution of the refugees and IDPs at the time of the JAM is given in the map below



UNHCR and WFP were able to respond to the new situation in Benin, Ghana and Togo respectively through deployment of additional staff and (re)-establishment of Offices in Lokossa (Benin), Ho (Ghana) and Lomé (Togo). Before the crisis, neither WFP nor UNHCR had offices in Togo. Both organizations decided to manage the operation for Benin and Togo from their Country Offices based in Cotonou, while establishing a light presence in Lomé. With respect to the refugees in Ghana, both organizations coordinate and implement the humanitarian response from their country office based in Accra.

In Togo, a UN Country Team assessment of the IDP situation unveiled the critical condition of a large group of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), essentially in the Southern and Central regions of the country. The situation prompted a coordinated relief effort by the UNCT, including food, NFIs, education, psycho-social support. While the initial assessment had identified some 16 000 IDPs, food was actually distributed to a much larger group of 38 540 “victims”, a terminology often used by Government officials, which includes IDPs, vulnerable groups within host communities and other direct victims of the ‘events’. UNICEF assistance to 3 000 school children and various schools as well as UNFPA psycho-social support to the victims of violence in 170 localities were extended on the same *modus operandi*. As opposed to the targeted approach, the Government situational approach implies that returning refugees would be assisted only if other categories of victims and vulnerable are targeted in the same area of return. According to latest estimates, a maximum of 1 000 persons currently remain in a IDP-like situation, and it is even considered by most of independent stakeholders that the IDP dimension in Togo has faded away.

In Benin, registration of refugees was done at various levels (border entry point, temporary transit centres, Cotonou). A multi-faceted assistance programme was immediately set up by UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA, IFRC/CRB and other partners to meet the needs of about 10 000 refugees settled on sites in Come and Agame and relying exclusively on international aid to meet their basic needs, primarily food, shelter, water and sanitation, health and education. Traumatized and wounded refugees received specific psycho-social and medical assistance and the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS were integrated in the programme from the beginning of the crisis. The other 16 000 refugees are spread either in urban areas (13 000) or hosted by local communities in rural areas (3 000), including in the immediate vicinity of the two refugee camps. The “non-camp” refugee group has access to protection and documentation when required, but it is not receiving assistance other than on an exceptional and individual basis and according to vulnerability criteria. The urban refugees in Cotonou have been assisted to establish their Committee and UNHCR provided training sessions on protection, status, rights and responsibilities in the host country.

In Ghana, mobile teams established jointly by the Government and UNHCR conducted a registration exercise throughout the Volta Region. UNHCR and WFP, along with other UN agencies and NGOs performed multi-sectoral needs assessments in the 10 districts hosting refugees. The situation did not require the creation of refugee camps since all new refugees, with the assistance of village leaders, were given an opportunity to find accommodation within the host community. Destitute refugee families received material assistance to secure or rehabilitate a shelter in the village. Standard food rations were distributed from July 2005 onwards and non-food items (NFI) packages were provided to a majority of registered refugees. Arrangements to ensure access to health services were elaborated with the Ghana Health Service and with the assistance of WHO. UNICEF assisted the incorporation of refugee children into the Ghanaian school system and promoted peaceful co-existence between refugees and host population through the Peace Education Programme.

III.2 Food assistance

UNHCR and WFP carried out rapid JAMs in May 2005, in collaboration with partners, and concluded that there was a need for a multifaceted humanitarian response, including food assistance³. Following an initial response funded by three Immediate Response Account (IRA) projects, WFP elaborated and approved a Regional Emergency Operation 10465.0 (EMOP), to be coordinated by WFP Benin (see also www.wfp.org). The objective of the EMOP is to provide assistance to 66 500 beneficiaries,

³ The consolidated summary JAM report is available at www.wfp.org.

including IDPs in Togo and refugees in Benin and Ghana, from July to December 2005 at a total cost of USD 3 018 521. The EMOP was extended in time first until March 2006, without augmenting the total budget. The July – December 05 budget was considered adequate to cover the period until March 06 as well (due to Immediate Response EMOP resource balances). A further extension in time was under consideration by WFP during the current JAM (until 30 September 2006, with a revised budget of USD 3 576 205).

The overall goal of the EMOP is to contribute to household food security through food aid interventions that preserve human and productive assets and that encourage recovery prospects of vulnerable people who have suffered as a result of the crisis in Togo. The immediate objectives are as follows: i) save lives of the food insecure Togolese refugees; ii) meet the basic food needs of the affected people to prevent deterioration of their nutritional status; iii) support access to primary education for refugees and local population in Benin and iv) preserve assets and promote self-reliance of host communities and refugees living with them.

The below table shows the expected and realized outputs in terms of beneficiary numbers and tonnage of food distributed. Achievements fell below initial plan due to resource shortages; in Benin this meant the operation was able to target only refugees in camps: the supplementary feeding, emergency school feeding, food for work and the general food distribution to refugees in host communities was not carried out; in Ghana this led to postponed and reduced rations for the refugees with host communities. The total amount of food distributed amounted to 2 173 MT from the beginning of the operation until December 2005; this performance is explained by the re-orientation of the EMOP necessary to accommodate the resource shortfalls. In Benin and Ghana, 31% of the target distribution was achieved. In Togo, planned distribution to 10 000 IDPs and subsequent distribution to 38 540 meant that 385.4% of the target beneficiaries were reached.

Table 1: Food assistance objectives and outputs:

	EMOP objectives		EMOP outputs (end December 05)	
	Caseload	Food requirements	people benefiting from food aid	food distributed
General food distribution				
Refugees in camp/outside	26 000	2 075	10 395	872
Refugees in host communities	22 000	2 291	9 906	726
IDPs	10 000	1 574	38 540	575
Sub total	58 000	5 940	58 841	2 173
Supplementary feeding	2 000	106	0	0
Emergency school feeding	4 000	108	0	0
Food for work	2 500	758	0	0
Grand total	66 500	6 912	58 841	2 173

Overall, refugees benefited from WFP food aid and maintained a good nutritional status despite reduced rations during some of the monthly distributions. This contributed to reduce mortality resulting from malnutrition related causes especially among children and unaccompanied minors. The third objective, related to supporting access to primary education through school-feeding, was not achieved due to the re-orientation of the EMOP; the fourth objective, related to preserving assets and promoting self-reliance, was only partially achieved (in Ghana only).

WFP, in partnership with UNICEF and UNHCR, enforced measures and intimated to partners to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and domestic violence. Efforts to increase the number of women in food distribution committees, has been initiated and needs further consolidation. In addition, WFP has

installed milling machines, trained operators, set up management committees with a view to reducing workloads of women.

The shortage of resources impacted on support mechanisms in all three countries. This is also compounded by tremendous logistics challenges of proving support to relatively small caseloads spread over long stretches of territory. In Ghana, for example, assistance is provided in well over 100 sites spread across the border with Togo. Finally, due to disappointing harvests and high market tensions in West Africa, local and regional purchases by WFP turned out to be very expensive for the operation. Regional borrowing proved to be untimely and ineffective and this has resulted in delivery delays until the end of the year when cereals and beans prices stabilized.

Creation of a task force from all stakeholders proved to be a successful initiative in managing the refugee crises in Benin and Ghana. This was particularly useful in Benin where there was a lack of partner capacity in managing emergency operations. Information sharing and timely actions have led to sustainable achievements. The programme in Ghana where refugees were settled in host communities has proven to be an example of a low cost, low profile model programme as compared to settlement structures in camp settings.

IV. TOGO

IV.1 Context

The former President of Togo, Mr. Eyadema Gnassingbé, died in February 2005 after 38 years in power. The installation of his son, Mr. Faure Gnassingbé, as Head of State provoked worldwide condemnation. In response to internal and international pressure, he stepped down and called for presidential elections on 24 April 2005. The announcement that he won with 60 percent of the votes was followed by widespread violence involving government security forces and government and opposition supporters. Already prior to the elections, in anticipation of civil unrest, some Togolese citizens began crossing into Ghana and Benin. After the elections, the violence resulted in extensive human rights violations and mass displacement, both internally and across international borders with Ghana and Benin. At the same time, high level of destruction of individual properties and community infrastructures was observed in Lomé, Aného and Atakpamé, as well as in smaller towns and villages in the South and Central Togo.

In an effort to respond in a coordinated manner to the various humanitarian challenges, the Government created in June 2005 the *Haut Commissariat aux Rapatriés et à l'Action Humanitaire*' (HCRAH) with the financial and technical support from UNHCR and various Togo-based UN agencies. In July, the Government with the support from UNDP and UNHCR embarked in the formulation of a Plan of Action consisting in a number of political, security and judiciary measures aiming to restore confidence.

Internally, the situation has progressively shifted from a humanitarian crisis to a recovery crisis, whether it be in terms of human rights, civil society reconciliation or economic self-reliance. The security situation appears to have globally returned to normal, but a limited number of new incidents affecting individuals are reported by the *Ligue Togolaise des Droits de l'Homme* (LTDH). Almost all IDPs are believed to have returned to their place of origin as at end January 2006, but full recovery in terms of job opportunities, housing and self-reliance is far from achieved given the poor economic situation in the country. The main concern therefore remains the overall economic situation that has worsened, partly due to the discontinuation of the agriculture cycle affected by population displacement. In this regard, the EC-funded programme of *micro-realizations*, targeting pockets of poverty in 3 regions/11 *préfectures*, appears to be currently the only existing and significant programme that is attempting to respond to basic needs in terms of recovery and rehabilitation (projects with community participation are in place for schools, health posts, water/sanitation infrastructures, market places, roads etc.). This situation underlines the shortcomings of the international community at large, both in terms of presence and scope of assistance to economic development in Togo.

The long awaited process of dialogue between the Government and the various opposition segments is however in motion at various levels. While a number of initiatives aiming at moving towards national reconciliation are considered as positive steps by a majority of observers, the controversial issue of a global amnesty remains high on the agenda of the Government and continues to prompt categorical refusal by human right activists and opposition segments to accept what is considered impunity as a baseline solution to the Togolese problem.

Concerning refugees, their movement towards Benin and Ghana was rather massive in May but stopped relatively quickly in July/August 2005. Concomitant sources indicate that an unknown - probably a substantial - number of these refugees have returned spontaneously to Togo, with an acceleration of the trend in January 2006. The JAM met with a number of refugees who – according to them – returned from Benin (Tchetti and Agamé) and Ghana (Accra)⁴. The scope of return and, moreover, the motivation of the returnees remain to be assessed.

Similarly, key aspects of the Government policy as well as practical steps meant to set up returnee monitoring and assistance mechanisms have yet to be carefully assessed. The concept of ‘Returnee Committee’ aiming to systematize monitoring of returns is being developed but UNHCR and other UN agencies are only marginally consulted and associated in the process. This situation leaves the Government pursuing own initiatives and approach, and therefore frustrated with regard to results achieved so far. The response received from the international community has indeed remained limited in financial terms and cautious in political terms. Until now, the situation was not conducive to an organized repatriation of refugees in safety and dignity but given the changes that are taking place the facilitation of repatriation may soon become a durable and credible solution. A majority of international stakeholders, including key donors, are expressing their readiness to support the return and reintegration process whenever conditions permit.

IV.2 Food security and food assistance

Food assistance during 2005

According to the EMOP, it was initially envisaged to distribute a full food ration to 10 000 IDPs, during a period of 6 months. The key challenge was the difficulty faced by the NGO delivering food in convincing the authorities that food was being distributed only for humanitarian purposes. NGO staff and the WFP staff member based in Togo were held for questioning by the police during several hours on 19 August 2005. The accusations of the ‘procureur’ against some of the implementing partners, such as *La Colombe* are still pending within the judiciary.

In line with the ‘situational approach’ of the Government (see previous section), WFP enlarged its target group to include other victims of the crisis. In the end, a total of 575 mt of food were distributed to approximately 38 540 direct and indirect victims considered to be vulnerable (a 1 month ration).

WFP’s key partner in Togo, ‘Organisation de charité pour un développement intégral’ (OCDI), expressed interest to assist future food distributions if the Government shows a favorable commitment and if there is an established need amongst the local population. The JAM recommends ensuring that the government is involved in the process and grants its full consent for any future distributions under this EMOP.

Food security status

At the national level, cereal production improved slightly in 2005/2006, whereas the production of vegetables, roots and tubers decreased⁵. According to an evaluation mission of FAO, production losses due to the political crises are estimated at 6 000 MT⁶. National cereal balance sheets have shown small

⁵ In addition, a list of 132 names of returned refugees was presented to the JAM by a refugee ‘group leader’; these refugees returned from Tchetti in Bénin.

⁵ Please refer to annex 3 for more details; Source : Ministère d’agriculture, DSID, Statistiques agricoles, décembre 2005.

⁶ FAO, Evaluation de l’impact et des besoins des populations affectées par la mauvaise campagne agricole 2005/2006, 2005.

deficits in 2004 and 2005, mainly due to relatively high rice consumption. In terms of availability, food security conditions are not critical, but stagnating.

However, from an access point of view, food security is not ensured for all Togolese, in particular for the poorer segments of the society and for those not able to generate an income due to the political crisis, such as the households who lost their assets, a family member or their jobs after returning to their community. Fortunately, cereal prices have come down to a more normal level (for example for maize, in January: FCFA 160 / kg)⁷, after having reached all-time high levels in June-July 2005, as elsewhere in the West African region.

No in-depth food security assessments have been carried out recently in Togo. Malnutrition data was not available to the JAM. However, poverty rates are high: extreme poverty touches 57 per cent of the Togolese, whereas 60-68 per cent of the Togolese living the crisis-affected regions 'Maritime, Plateaux and Centrale' are considered to be extremely poor; the poverty rate in Lomé, also hurt by the events in 2005, is below the average⁸. The poor economic prospects have been mentioned at various occasions by refugees in Benin and Ghana as the main reason for not willing to return to Togo⁹.

Another difficulty lies with the appraisal of the impact of the crisis. There have been antagonistic estimates on the part of the Government and human rights organizations such as the LTDH concerning the number of victims and the scope of destruction of private properties. According to the official report of the Commission Nationale Spéciale d'Enquête Indépendante led by former Prime Minister Joseph K.Koffigoh, 154 persons lost their lives, 654 were physically injured and 1 346 households experienced asset losses. The areas that have experienced the highest degree of violence were the Maritime, Central and Plateaux regions.

Future food-related assistance

As the two food insecure groups (those affected by crisis and the chronically poor) are intrinsically related, it is suggested to orient assistance to both groups, while focusing on those communities characterized by the presence of a substantial number of victims of the crisis. This would also alleviate social frictions that may exist between the various fractions of society.

It is proposed to support community-based projects that may, first, re-habilitate social infrastructures damaged during the 2005 events, and second, establish economic infrastructures that may permit, in the longer term, augmenting the revenues the Togolese generate on their own. In addition, those refugees staying in Ghana and Benin because they lost means to sustain themselves economically in Togo may be motivated to return once they realize that support is available for them to reintegrate in their community of origin. These challenges should be addressed within a development framework, with only a supplementary or supportive role for food assistance, i.e. a food-for-work scheme in support of community-based projects.

IV.3 Needs and assistance not related to food

Self-reliance

Very few interventions promoting self-reliance or income-generating activities (IGA) are currently supported by international stakeholders such as the UN, bilateral partners or the World Bank, as most of the donors have frozen their funding of projects and programmes pending the fulfillment of recommendations on key political reforms. However, some notable exceptions exist, such as the EC-funded 'Projet de Petites Micro-Réalisations' (PPMR). This project has supported approximately 700 community – based micro-projects such as school buildings, boreholes, but also IGAs, through grants covering 75 per cent of the investment cost. The PPMR has an existing implementing capacity of 70 persons located in 15 offices; their budget for 2006 is approximately 750 millions FCFA.

⁷ Ministère du Commerce, de l'Industrie et de l'Artisanat, Mercuriales des denrées alimentaires, commune de Lomé et ses environs, 2006.

⁸ Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, November 2004.

⁹ Notwithstanding that the majority of refugees put forward security concerns as the main reason for not willing to go back to Togo.

It is clear that additional projects promoting self-reliance are urgently needed in order to mitigate widespread poverty and inherent vulnerability of large sections of the population. Communities hit by the crisis (in terms of physical damage or population movements), visited by the JAM, expressed keen interest in IGAs that can help vulnerable groups to recover their occupations and sustain themselves in a marginal environment. Returnees and residents often cited that they need income earning opportunities to sustain themselves. Key constraint in promoting self-reliance for interested Togolese is the lack of funds to support such programmes, while security risks form a second constraint for those who left the country and are not yet confident of their adequate protection and safety upon return. For this last group, promoting self reliance activities will depend on the security situation and the establishment of clear mechanisms for reintegration.

Protection

Within the overall UNCT effort, UNHCR supported, in particular through trainings on protection issues, the Togolese authorities in building and strengthening the capacity of HCRAH.

Housing

Thanks to the support of UNHCR victims of the socio political crisis in Atakpamé and Amelamé succeeded to make some repairs of their damaged houses. In addition, the Ministry of Social Affairs also gave construction materials (bags of cement, sheet iron) to some victims of the crisis so as to enable them repair their houses. OCDI paid for a few months of rent for some IDPs in the Atakpamé region. However, there is still a lot to do in terms of house repairs because only few IDPs and other victims of violence were assisted in this framework. The Togolese government and the international community should think of supporting this category of people by providing them with some building materials in order to enable them repair their houses by themselves.

Education

About 5 170 children benefited of school assistance from UNICEF¹⁰. In September 2005, OCDI also assisted families of IDPs in Atakpamé area in terms of school fees and education material for a total of 500 pupils. Peace education and psycho social counselling done by UNFPA and RESEAUDEC (a partner of CARE-International) were effectively carried out in 170 localities throughout the national territory.

Other community services

Some IDPs and returnees received (through OCDI) a financial assistance (varying from 10 000 to 15 000 FCFA) for their social reintegration. In collaboration with UNDP and NGOs, UNHCR distributed NFIs to some 10,000 IDPs. This comprised: buckets, kitchen utensils, soaps, mats, blankets and towels.

IV.4 Re-integration of IDPs, returnees and other victims

The sensible decrease of insecurity in Togo, the opening of a national dialogue, the signs of improved communication and response to human rights organisations has resulted in: i) a return of almost all internally displaced victims as well as ii) some evident signs of spontaneous returns of refugees from Benin and Ghana. It also appears that the group of victims that either stayed in Togo or returned from Benin / Ghana face economic difficulties. Finally, an increased presence of key stakeholders such as UNHCR would provide credibility to the assessment of the degree of the progress made by the Government of Togo, and would facilitate, once the conditions permit, the discussion and conclusion of a Tripartite Agreement for assisting the voluntary return of refugees. It is therefore important that re-integration opportunities be proposed to the group of victims that suffered April 2005 crisis through community based projects approach. It is also crucial that the community based income generating activity scheme be considered as an integral and un-dissociable part of the Togolese crisis set of required solutions.

¹⁰ The assistance package given by UNICEF had initially targeted 3 000 pupils, but this was finally extended to other children in need.

V. BENIN

V.1 Context

The large majority of the Togolese refugees entered Benin as of 26 April 2005 through the official border entry point of Hilla Condji and other refugees crossed along the border with the region of Mono. The context in which refugees have arrived in Benin has radically changed as compared to the 1993 influx. This time, close to 40% of the Togolese refugees could not resort to private arrangements or find hosts within the local population. The emergency settlement of 10 000 refugees in basic camps in Come and Agame also means that they will rely entirely on assistance for an unpredictable duration.

While some refugees reported to be survivors of direct and targeted violence, many have left before generalised violence or aggravated instability. An unknown number of refugees who are believed to have participated in violence during the crisis in Togo appear to have left their country in fear of retaliation for their acts. Additionally, from the onset, a group of refugees - whose direct connection to those who have perpetrated violent acts in Togo is not formally established but is possible - appears to have high expectations in terms of resettlement to a third country and to impact negatively on the rest of the refugees in Agame camp. Frequent tensions, unrest and open provocation, which have already resulted in the expulsion of several refugees from Agamé in 2005, are of concern to humanitarian workers and are highly detrimental to vulnerable refugees in the camp. Outside the camps, and especially in their immediate vicinity, tensions have also arisen between the local communities, the authorities and some of the refugees. Last but not least, the Presidential Elections scheduled for March in Benin are an added factor of tension, and the prevention of possible refugee interference with the elections is high on the Government agenda.

In this context, the humanitarian response to the refugee influx in Benin had mitigated results. While very successful in the emergency phase (comprehensive registration, identification and quick establishment of refugee sites, food and non-food assistance etc.), the multi-faceted programme set to establish durable structures and services in the camps has suffered several setbacks. The most significant one is the shelter programme that has failed to achieve the replacement of tents by mud-houses. Worryingly, some “hardliners” have discouraged other refugees to participate in the construction, most certainly in an attempt to prevent any action that would lead to a durable stay in the camp. The UN agencies and the partners are self-supportive in this challenging situation and their interaction is in many aspects exemplary, including with Government counterparts.

Since all actors focus on the challenges arising at camp level the consequence for the refugee programme in Benin is that exploring and addressing the specific needs of non-camp refugees is not done on a significant scale and with the required attention. Over 4 000 refugee attestations have been delivered to date to urban refugees referring themselves to UNHCR Office, but assistance to reduce vulnerability remained marginal. The Pilot Project initiated by UNHCR, using refugee “facilitators” networking on a voluntary basis, seems to be the way forward to reach refugees in urban situation, with the overriding challenge to strike a balance between a screening raising expectations and a targeted, exceptional assistance to the most vulnerable only.

V.2 Food security, malnutrition and food assistance: Status and prospects

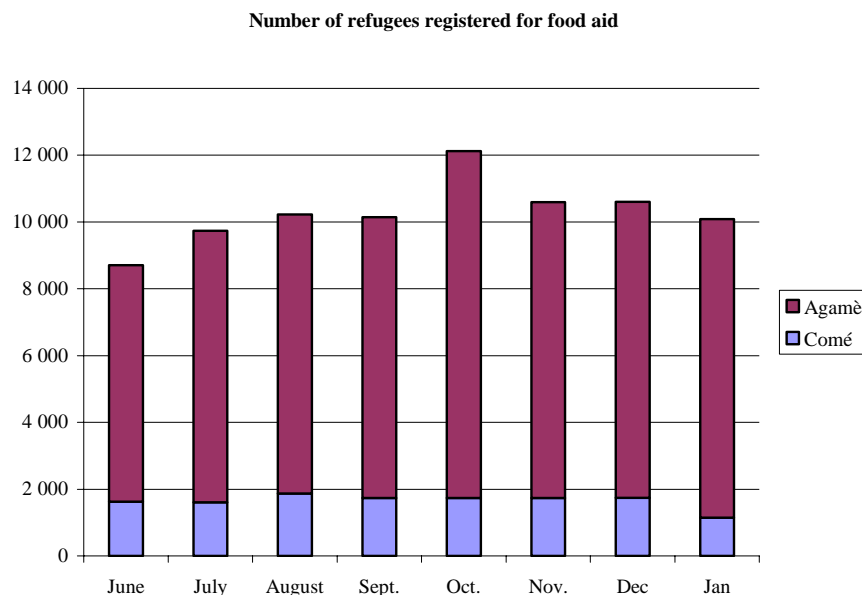
Food assistance in 2005

A total of 1 119 mt of food¹¹ has been distributed to registered refugees located in the Comé and Agamé camps, between May 2005 and January 2006; no food was distributed to refugees not registered at one of the two camps. The food basket is composed of 420 grams of cereals, 50 grams of pulses, 30 grams of vegetable oil and 50 grams of corn soya blend (CSB); sugar and salt is to be

¹¹ Composition: 886 MT cereals, 107 MT pulses, 66 MT vegetable oil, 54 MT CSB and 6 MT of high-energy biscuits.

provided by other partners. This food basket provides for approximately 2 100 Kcal. However, due to lack of stocks, CSB has only been distributed from August until November, resulting in a food basket of only 1 900 Kcal in December/January.

The number of refugees registered for food aid in the Agamé and Comé camps is depicted below. It has been observed that only approximately 88 per cent of refugees show up for food distribution. For example, although 10 093 refugees were registered at the two camps in January 2006, only 8 423 refugees showed up for the food distribution in the first half of January. This gap would be explained by the unreliable refugee statistics and to movements in and out of the camps. A thorough project profile that is intended to provide the true picture of the beneficiaries is being implemented by UNHCR.



Source: WFP Benin.

Food security and nutritional status of refugees and hosts

National food security conditions improved following the 2005 harvest: cereal production went up by 5% compared to 2004, whereas roots and tubers production increased by 6%¹². Food production also increased in the Mono and Couffo departments, bordering Togo, with on average 2%.

Before the harvest, during the lean season that coincided with the aftermath of the Togo crisis, cereal prices sky-rocketed in the lean season, reaching levels 100% higher than the five-year average. Although prices came down since August, they remain above the normal levels at the end of December¹³: for example the price of maize at Dantokpa market in Cotonou came down from FCFA 330 in June 2005 to FCFA 165 in December 2005, still 15 percent above the 5- year average for December¹⁴. It is expected that prices will augment gradually towards the lean season, with approximately 15 percent, in line with the usual increase between December and June, but no dramatic abnormal increases are expected during the next months (except if major crises in Nigeria or Ivory Coast occur).

¹² Please refer to annex 3 for more details; Source : Ministère d'agriculture, de l'élevage et de la pêche, Rapport du Bénin sur la situation agricole et alimentaire et les perspectives de récoltes de la campagne agricole 2005-2006.

¹³ Source: ONASA.

¹⁴ Maize prices in Mono-Couffo, where most of the refugees are based, are about 15% higher than last year (source: ONASA).

The food security and nutritional conditions of refugees in camps depend to a very large extent on the food aid provided by WFP. Although some food was purchased by refugees on the local markets (condiments, fish), this was often financed by the sale of a part of the WFP food aid.

Some nutritional data regarding children under 5 have been collected at the two camp sites. However, systematically-collected data and its methodologies were not available to the mission. The JAM noted also the need to clarify the roles of the various partners involved in the nutritional surveillance system. The following observations/results are available:

The Red Cross listed 117 children between 0-4 years who are malnourished, on a total of 1 162 children in this age group (10 %) at Agamé camp;

Caritas and Plan Benin registered 72 children in the age group 0-3 years at Agamé camp in February 2006, to whom – resources permitting - additional food will be distributed;

MSF, who started its operations only mid December 2005 at the Agamé camp, registered 4 malnourished persons during the first three weeks of January 2006; according to MSF, the children are in general in good nutritional condition;

In Comé, the Red Cross and the ‘Centre social’ registered on average 7 malnourished children per month amongst those that visited the health clinic; and

No severely malnourished children were observed at the two camp sites by the mission.

Following remarks by the JAM regarding the deficiencies in the nutritional surveillance system, UNICEF fielded a mission on 7 February that led UNICEF to make available funds for the identification, monitoring and response to nutritional deficiencies. Three teams coordinated by UNICEF will measure and weigh all the children in the 0 -5 age group from 17 to 19 February at Agamé camp¹⁵. This important initiative will need to be followed up by WFP/UNHCR as to ensure constant monitoring of the nutritional conditions of children and to have an adequate response system in place. As the numbers will be fairly small, WFP may use some of its general rations not distributed due to the absence of refugees, for supplementary feeding activities for malnourished children (assuming that CSB is available).

It is noted that the food security and nutritional status of the refugees located outside of the camp has not been widely assessed neither monitored. However, some indication is given by the urban pilot socio-psycho project (titled: Pilot Project One), which identified a total of 8% of 1 378 persons assessed as being ‘highly vulnerable’. According to the international coordinator of the Pilot Project One, the key needs of this group concern education, health and socio-cultural activities¹⁶. Possible lack of income to purchase food may be addressed by UNHCR through a subsistence allowance.

Registered refugees staying outside the camps have the possibility to be admitted in the Agamé camp and as a consequence receive food and other assistance. The mission met some out-of-camp refugees who were aware of this possibility, but did not show any interest to move to Agamé as they were locally integrated. However, some refugees staying with host communities may not be aware of this possibility and a sensitization campaign may be necessary.

No systematic evaluations of the impact of the arrival of Togolese refugees on the food security and nutritional status of host communities have been carried out. However, it is believed that this impact was largest at the beginning of the crisis and that it has been reduced throughout 2005 as harvests came in and refugees developed their own IGAs.

Future food-related assistance

It is unlikely that the self-reliance activities discussed in chapter V.4 will generate a substantial level of revenues for the refugees located in the camps. Thus, their dependence on food aid will not significantly change during the rest of 2006. Therefore, the provision of a full ration, including salt and fortified blended food, is recommended by the JAM. If salt is to be provided by partners, WFP

¹⁵ Unicef, Back-to-office report Boudt Ann, 07/02/06.

¹⁶ Pilot project One, Reporting at a glance 2005 activities.

should ensure monitoring of a regular and adequate provision of these items. In addition, the identified cases of malnourishment should be treated in collaboration with partners; WFP will provide food from rations that have not been distributed under the general food distribution scheme.

The JAM recommends that no food distributions to refugees outside the camps are done at the moment. The strategy would be re-directing food insecure or vulnerable households in need of food aid to the camps, so that they can be admitted and supported in the camps.

V.3 Issues from other sectors: status and prospects

Considering the small number of refugees hosted in Comé camp (less than 1,200 persons), taken into account the geographical position of the camp (in the middle of the town) and the crowded condition in which refugees are living in there, but also in order to minimize the costs of running two separate camps for the same group of refugees, UNHCR Benin is planning to move (in a near future) all the refugees living in Comé to Agamé camp.

Protection

UNHCR steadily monitors the security and protection situation and coordinates actions aiming to reduce the risks for the refugees, in particular in the camps where the most vulnerable are hosted within a context of highly crowded condition. The Government of Benin has fulfilled all its obligations concerning the refugees and is providing security to the sites. Rumors over the infiltration of sympathizers of Togo's ruling party have been circulating among the refugees in Benin but there been no evidence of direct, targeted physical threat, on the refugees to date. It is worth noting that the most serious security incidents on the refugee sites have been generated by some of the refugees themselves who have resorted to violent acts to put forward their claims, primarily for resettlement.

From the beginning of the crisis in 2005, UNICEF played and continues to play a crucial role in ensuring that child protection issues are properly addressed in a region known for its risk of child trafficking. In collaboration with Terre des Hommes and UNHCR, UNICEF has reunified some 190 unaccompanied minors (UAM) with their relatives in Togo and 35 cases (30 boys and 5 girls) are hosted in a specific area of the camp in Comé pending further progress in tracing their families.

Housing

UNHCR has provided shelter (tents) for more than 10 000 camp based refugees. Semi permanent constructions in mud bricks are very slowly being constructed in Agamé camp. These new houses will gradually replace the emergency tent structures that were provided to refugees upon their arrival. Construction materials are being given to refugees of the camp in order to enable them build their houses and some few refugees who are familiar with construction activities have been recruited for the construction of houses for vulnerable people. For personal reasons few refugees who have been registered as persons living in Agamé camp are today renting a room in the village located just next to the camp.

Considering the relatively small number of refugees hosted in Comé camp and given the fact that it is not sustainable to continue using facilities right in the middle of the town, UNHCR has a plan to move the refugees to Agamé camp in 2006 and to consolidate all relief activities on that site only.

Education

UNICEF opened temporary schools in the two camps of Comé and Agamé as from 30 May 2005 to allow Togolese children complete the academic year 2004-2005. At the beginning of the new school year 2005/2006, 2 077 children have been registered and 76 teachers and school animators recruited¹⁷. Teaching activities are still going on in the camps even though the number of students attending classes is lower than the number of registered pupils. In January 2006, the number of children in

17 Source: UNICEF, 'Réponse de l'UNICEF à la situation d'urgence créée par l'arrivée au Bénin des réfugiés togolais', January 2006.

school dropped by approximately 140 compared to the beginning of the school year, as they did not come back after the Christmas holidays. Classrooms have been constructed and equipped with teaching materials. Education kits “school in a box” have been provided. Refugees’ pupils were authorized by the Benin government to sit for official exams organized in Benin. In Cotonou, 412 refugee students passed the national exams.

It is likely that UNICEF will continue its ongoing educational assistance until the end of the new academic year 2005/2006. For the academic year 2005/2006, UNHCR has made available 40 scholarships (on a total of 350 candidates) to Togolese students so as to allow them continue their studies. Some urban refugees have benefited of a punctual assistance from CARITAS in terms of school fees, school uniforms and education kit. Togolese who teach in the schools of the camp receive monthly incentives whereas Benin teachers also working in the camp are paid according to national standards for short term teachers. No special problem has been reported so far with respect to the level of education that the refugee children receive in the schools of the camps.

Health

There is one health post in each refugees hosting site of Comé and Agamé. A small medical team of MSF-Luxembourg is in place to provide primary health cares to refugees in case of emergency. The other diseases are treated in the Lokossa hospital (14 km away from the camp) and the refugees who detain an attestation from UNHCR are entitled to medical services free of charge.

Emergency medical kits have been provided in the 2 hospitals and 5 health centres of Comé and Lokossa. Some medicines (worm expeller) were distributed by UNICEF for 746 children of 6 months to 5 years in the two camps. Vaccination campaigns against measles and polio are regularly organized in the camps in collaboration with the Ministry of Health.

Sensitization campaigns against HIV/AIDS have not been neglected during the emergency phase. IFRC has established a mechanism to ensure that refugees living with HIV/AIDS are properly taken care of. The Red Cross volunteers on their side also supervise regular sensitization campaigns related to health and sanitation issues (maintenance of latrines, malaria, AIDS etc.). There exists an agreement between UNHCR and the NGO Aktion Pro Humanitat that is in charge of the follow up of people infected by HIV/AIDS.

Some critical issues that need to be addressed in the course of the year 2006 are: the purchase of medicines for sick refugees and the problem of who will cover the costs of health services that are rendered to the refugees. Initially, it was hoped that thanks to the donations of drugs (medical kits) by UNHCR, UNFPA and WHO the government would have been able to share the burden regarding staffing, use of ambulance, specialized interventions etc. This arrangement has not been efficient so far in assisting refugees for health treatments. The absence of an ambulance in the camps has been a critical issue for almost a year (the ambulance was made available in March 2006 only). A few number of refugees living in the camps still have bullets in their body which they received during the crisis that erupted in Togo last year.

Water and Sanitation

The existing local water network has been extended to the camps and potable water supply in Agamé and Comé is not a matter of concern. An average of 20 liters of water is consumed every day per refugee. A well has been dug in the extension zone of Agamé camp for gardening activities. A total of 219 latrines and 199 toilets have been built and 56 water points were set up in the two camps. A system of waste collection (150 waste bins available on the sites) was put in place in the camps and regular disinfection campaigns are carried out. The cleaning of the camps as well as the maintenance of the drainage system is done by the refugees themselves; trainings on hygiene are organized 3 times a week.

Other community services

UNHCR provided refugees living in the camps with cooking utensils (not to all the families), mosquito nets, buckets, soap, baby kits, hygiene kits for women and charcoal for cooking purposes

(but also as a means to preserve the environment). The local electricity network has been upgraded and is currently being extended in the camps.

A psychosocial pilot project of CARITAS launched in September 2005 is still going on in Cotonou. Until January 2006 about 272 families of 1 378 beneficiaries have been assisted in the frame of this project whose main objectives are: i) to identify vulnerable persons among urban refugees and assist them in solving some of their problems and ii) to provide psycho-social counseling to traumatized refugees.

V.4 Self reliance

Self reliance activities in the Comé and Agamé camps are fairly limited in scale. Activities such as petty trading, hairdressing and small scale gardening in camp settings have been done by a small number of refugees. There is potential for self reliance activities, particularly in light of the diverse occupational profiles of the refugee population. In the two camps visited, some former occupations range from electricians, mechanics, hairdressers and customs officers. This pool of workers could contribute to the Benin economy and augment their incomes if opportunities are given.

With regard to farming, a five ha plot of land was offered by the Benin authorities for refugees residing in the Agamé camp to cultivate some crops (on four ha) and do animal breeding (on one ha) and augment their food availability. There are also possibilities to do vegetable gardening in the plots allocated to the refugees. Such activities can minimize the problem refugees currently face with regard to availability of food condiments which they obtain by selling a portion of their rations. The key constraint on promotion of self reliance activities relates to willingness of refugees to engage in such activities and the availability of resources to realize such activities. Some refugee groups such as women are very keen to conduct such activities compared to the youth. UNHCR-Benin should make provision within its annual budget of funds that could be used as grants or loans (refundable after every six months) by those refugees who are interested in IGAs inside the camps. This approach will certainly help to promote self reliance activities among refugees.

V.5 Local integration and return & re-integration

The refugee population staying outside the camps, either in urban or rural areas (not benefiting from assistance) is engaged in activities and has to-date demonstrated capacity to locally integrate in Benin. Some refugees have returned to Togo (for example from Tchetti), whereas others have indicated their willingness to go back (26 already repatriated from a group of 78 refugees registered in Agamé at the time of the JAM). However, a massive return movement is not expected from Benin before Togo offers i) a more conducive context restoring confidence amongst refugees and ii) fulfill all conditions for an organized return through a Tripartite Agreement. In this respect, the recommendation made by the JAM to augment the level of presence of UNCHR and humanitarian actor in Togo, is expected to participate in confidence-building and to positively impact on the willingness to return. The spontaneous returns (from all categories of refugees described above) observed already are expected to develop progressively as progress is observed in Togo. Proposed efforts to provide re-integration opportunities through community based micro-projects in Togo will allow for re-integration.

VI. GHANA

VI.1 Context

The majority of the Togolese refugees entered Ghana as of 28 April 2005 when Aflao border entry point officially reopened and other refugees crossed along the border with the Volta Region including through unofficial entry points. Whether settled in rural or urban/semi-urban areas, the Togolese refugees who are in majority from the Ewe ethnic group, like 68% of the population in the Volta region, have all benefited from a peaceful and secure environment since in Ghana and have enjoyed a great deal of solidarity and economic support on the part of the local populations. In many locations, the presence of refugees is believed to have generated pressure on existing resources and structures.

To a certain extent, the active role and contribution of local entities has contrasted with the apparent absence of articulated policy and support on the part of the Central Government of Ghana, at least in the initial phase of the crisis.

The refugee population is made of an almost equal number of adult males and females, and children account for more than 40 percent. The fact that refugees are located in 114 locations within 10 districts in the Volta Region (Adaklu-Anyigbe, Akatsi, Ketu, Keta, Kadjebi, Kpando, Jasikan, Ho, Hohoe and South Tongu), spanning over 400 km, poses a complex challenge in terms of access and monitoring. Notwithstanding a Regional Ministry in Ho, each District in the Volta Region has its own local autonomous governing body, the District Assembly, and there is lack of coordination in each of the ten districts hosting refugees, adding to the complexity of humanitarian programmes.

Multi-faceted assistance has been initiated and coordinated by UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF in partnership with the National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO) covering refugee protection and coordination, with the National Catholic Secretariat (NCS) for food and NFI distribution, with the Ghana Health Service (GHS) for health care, with the Regional Directorate for Education for refugee access to primary/basic school, and with the Women's Initiative for Self Empowerment (WISE) for SGBV prevention and psycho-social counseling.

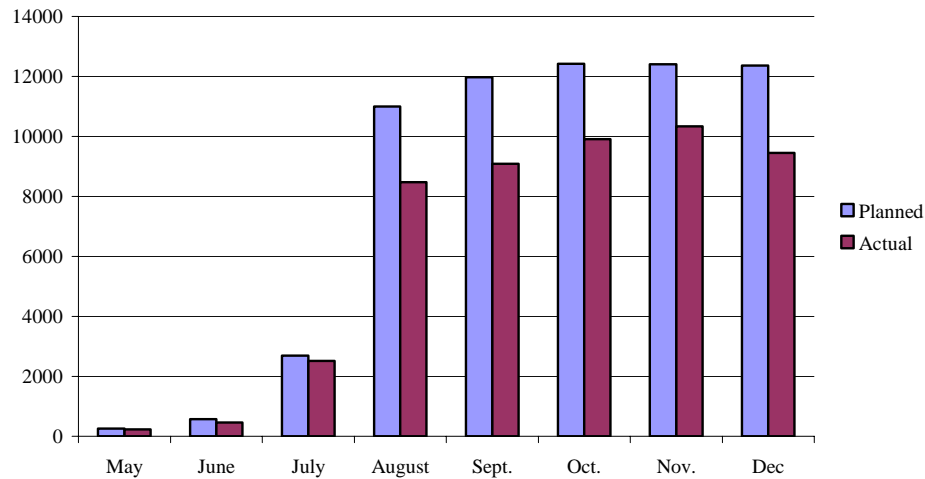
In many Ghanaian villages hosting refugees being on or within a few kilometers of the border with Togo, it has been difficult so far to monitor any movement back and forth on the part of the refugees. In this regard, associated to the forthcoming verification exercise, it will be important to further ascertain why a majority of refugees express unwillingness to return while various sources report that unknown numbers have returned to Togo, some of them even prior to registering with UNHCR, and/or cross the border frequently. In this regard, the physical verification and profiling exercise, using UNHCR *Progress* database, is urgently needed to start the issuance of refugee ID cards and targeted assistance to vulnerable cases as of July 2006.

VI.2 Food security, malnutrition and food assistance: Status and prospects

Food assistance in 2005

The table below presents the number of refugees registered for food aid on a monthly basis, as well as the number of refugees that have actually collected the food aid. Overall, only 80% of registered refugees have showed up for food aid distributions, with a Oct-Dec average of 9 900 food aid beneficiaries on a registered total of 12 400 refugees (82%). As it the case in Benin, this gap would be explained by the unreliable refugee statistics and to movements in and out of the host communities. A thorough project profile that is intended to provide a more precise picture of the beneficiaries will be implemented by UNHCR.

Planned and actual number of food aid beneficiaries



Source: WFP Ghana

The EMOP's strategy was to provide a full general food ration for the first 2-3 months to all registered refugees, covering the lean season (harvest takes place in July/August), which would subsequently be replaced by more self-reliance type of support from September onwards. This switch was conditional on an evaluation that would show that the refugees had limited means of coping with food insecurity. This evaluation has not been carried out, and blanket free food distribution continued until the time of the JAM.

The EMOP envisaged distributing the same food basket to the refugees in Ghana as those in the camps in Benin, with a daily calorie level of 2 100 Kcal. Due to resource limitations, CSB was not provided, reducing the calorie provision to an estimated 1 900 Kcal. Rations were cut to approximately a third in October and in December, whereas the January distribution was postponed until the beginning of February, signs of the very difficult resource situation of the EMOP. The total food distributions amounted to 726 MT from May until December 2005.

Food security and malnutrition status in the Volta region

At the Volta regional level, the production of cereals, roots and tubers has improved in 2005 compared to 2004¹⁸. Cereal production augmented by 4%, whereas the production of all staple foods went up with 13%. Most of the Volta region has two growing seasons for maize (April-July and September-December); in 2005, the first season showed a good production performance, whereas the second season was marred by irregular rains (according to Ho regional authorities and confirmed by refugees). However, on the whole, production increased in 2005. The national agricultural production statistics for 2005 were not yet available. The price level at the Ho regional market has diminished substantially since the arrival of the July/August harvest, but seems to have remained above the normal level.

The food security and nutritional conditions of refugees have not been monitored or evaluated in a systematic manner. Although recommended during the May 2005 JAM, no nutritional survey was implemented, mainly due to slow progress with regard to the establishment of a national nutritional surveillance system, assisted by UNICEF, in which the Volta surveillance system would be integrated. With regard to the food security and nutritional status of the host population, no detailed impact studies have been done. The Ghana demographic and health survey, carried out in 2003, presents information on chronic malnutrition rates in the Volta region. The mission had to rely on its own

¹⁸ Source: Statistics, Research and Info Directorate (SRID) and Ho regional authorities, Ministry of food and agriculture, Ghana.

observations and discussions with refugees and their hosts, cross-checked with the opinions of key resource persons.

Food security and nutritional status of refugees

Food security of refugees is to a large extent determined by external food aid, purchases of food on the markets financed by IGAs, in-kind payments for support to hosts and food aid offered by the local communities. The lower food aid rations in October and December, as well as the postponed distribution in January, have reinforced the importance of the latter three sources of food.

The large majority of refugees indicated to gain some money with labor-intensive activities, as well to carry out work for their hosts. In addition, some refugees started to rear animals, to carry out some commercial activities or to cultivate crops on borrowed land. However, there are some groups of elderly, injured and sick people, as well as female-headed households and children, who are unable to carry out work and depend entirely on aid for their food security. Unfortunately, no reliable data on the capacities to earn an adequate income are available. It should be noted that current income is not only used for the purchases of food, but also for medical expenses, transport costs and other types of expenditure.

Physical access to markets does not pose a problem for the refugees, except for a minority of refugees located in remote villages. Markets appear to function well; even during the very difficult 2005 lean season maize was always available on the markets, though on sale at higher prices. From July onwards, with the harvest, prices have come down, but started to increase again in November; in December the price of a kg of maize was 25% higher than in December 2004. Food prices are expected to gradually further increase as the lean seasons sets in. The key problem for accessing food via markets is the lack of income.

Thus, considering that the food assistance offered by the host communities to the refugees is not sustainable, WFP and UNHCR would need to support the refugees to earn sufficient income, while helping the refugees to reduce their non-food – foremost medical - expenditure and providing income/food assistance to those groups that are unable to carry out IGAs.

Food security and nutritional status of host communities

The availability and access to food are in the rural areas of the Volta region to a large extent determined by the harvests and the prices of food, whereas in urban areas the other sources of income are of increased relevance for the 'access to food' by host populations.

The arrival of the refugees impacted negatively on the food security position of hosts as the latter shared their food reserves with the refugees in particular during the first weeks of the crisis (May/June 2005), in anticipation of the arrival of external aid. This period coincided with the lean season, during which food prices reached record levels, mainly due to market tensions in the larger West Africa region. With the two harvests of maize in July and December/January, the food aid distributions and the lowering of food prices, it is believed that the impact of the crisis on the food security status of the hosts has softened significantly. Although hosts still share some of the food stocks with the refugees, it is not believed to expose them to a high risk of food insecurity. Nevertheless, a failure of rains during the upcoming agricultural season (April-July) could impact negatively on the food security position of the hosts, in particular in rural villages with a high density of refugees.

The most recent mortality and malnutrition figures, dating from 2003¹⁹, show relatively low mortality and malnutrition figures compared to other sub-saharan countries (please refer to Table 3 in Annex 3). A total of 35% of children (0-59 months) is chronically malnourished (stunting, measured by height for age) in rural Ghana, whereas a rate of 23% was registered in the Volta region²⁰. Chronic malnutrition is explained by various biological, behavioral, social and economic factors, such as

¹⁹ Ghana demographic and health survey, Government of Ghana, 2003.

²⁰ Acute malnutrition rates in 2003 were relatively high in the Volta region – 14% compared to an average of 7 per cent); these statistics are heavily influenced by short term factors such as the last harvest; it is the moderate malnutrition rate that reveals more about the nutritional status of a population from a longer term perspective.

access to clean water, sanitation and food. Within the Volta region, according to a UNICEF spokesman, pockets of higher malnutrition exist mainly in the far South, near the urban centres, and in the northern part, North of Kedjibi.

Future food assistance

Concerning the prospects, the JAM estimates that a further shift in sources of food from aid to market purchases is feasible for the able-bodied refugees as:

- the large majority of refugees already have some form of IGA that can be further developed;
- the start of the agricultural season in March/April will generate additional substantial IGA opportunities for refugees in rural settings;
- the support to IGAs by UNHCR planned for February / March, as well as the more extensive support efforts recommended by the JAM, in collaboration with partners, will bear fruit during the coming months and
- it is likely that medical expenses be reduced as the support to health care services is reinforced.

Favorable impacts on the food security position of the refugees will be felt gradually and in particular after the harvest. To be on the safe side, the JAM recommends to start reducing the rations only after the harvest, and only for the non-vulnerable group of refugees. A safety-net will be put in place for the vulnerable groups, to be identified through the UNHCR verification exercise and a vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) study. Based on the above analysis of the food security position of the hosts, no specific food assistance is recommended for the host communities.

VI.3 Issues from other sectors: status and prospects

Protection

Soon after the influx of refugees, a registration exercise was carried out jointly by UNHCR, the Ghana Immigration Service and the Ghana Refugee Board. Mobile teams completed their physical verification throughout the Volta region by mid September 2005. The validity of claims put forward by cases that missed the registration exercise has been assessed by UNHCR on an individual basis, and few cases have been admitted to the refugee list during this process. As in Benin, rumors on the presence (infiltration) of Togolese “agents” in Ghana are frequent but there has been no request from refugees to be transferred in regions away from the border for safety concerns.

Currently, UNHCR is working on improving foster care for the unaccompanied minors and is working with ICRC in order to trace the family members who in Togo and/or possibly in Benin.

Housing

Not all the refugees are really accommodated (free of charge) by host communities. Some rent a room (mostly in urban areas) while others spend their night in the kitchen of their host family or in an open area. Some refugees share the same room with host families while others not. There are more problems related to crowded condition for refugees living within host families than for those who rent a room. But in the two cases, many refugees are most of the time crowded in a single room. Most of the houses in which refugees are being accommodated are leaking (roof in a bad condition).

Education

Absorption into the Ghanaian school system has been retained by the Ghana Education Service and UNICEF as the most viable option to address the educational needs of Togolese refugee children. Primary education is available for refugee children and the latter seem to be up to the task mostly because the language EWE (spoken by approximately 65% of Togolese) and French have been introduced in the school system. No support is given to school children of secondary and university levels.

UNICEF has donated learning kits (14 schools-in-a-box and 15 recreational kits) to the Togolese refugee children in those communities where informal schools have been established. UNICEF activities do not touch all the districts in which refugees are found. Apparently some Togolese children living not far from the border between Ghana and Togo cross the border to Togo on a daily basis to attend classes and return in the evening to Ghana where their parents are based.

Health

The Ghana Health Services has directed all health centers and hospitals to provide medical care to refugees. Despite this instruction, the absence of a formal agreement between UNHCR and the Ghanaian Health Service does not facilitate access by refugees to health treatments. The National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO) is in charge of facilitating medical care to refugees by delivering them medical forms every time they need to go to the hospital for consultation. However, medical forms to take along while going to a health post are not always available for refugees. Health centers are not supplied enough with drugs; this explains why refugees complain of not receiving medicines most of the time they go to hospital for a treatment; some times they are not even welcomed by the health practitioners.

WHO and UNHCR have together dispatched emergency health kits and basic health drug boxes for an equivalent of 60,000 people. USAID has donated 39,000 condoms. A few numbers of refugees living in the camps still have bullets in their body which they received during the crisis that erupted in Togo last year.

WISE has been providing psycho social counseling to wounded and traumatized refugees and is also involved in counseling women on SGBV issues.

Water and Sanitation

The problem of water supply that people face in some parts of the region Volta is not an issue linked to the arrival of refugees in Ghana. This problem has existed before but may have become more acute with the influx of refugees. People have to pay for potable water. Other refugees collect their water from a well. Public latrines are lacking almost all over the refugees hosting communities of the Volta region.

Other community services

UNHCR distributed non food items almost immediately after the arrival of refugees in Ghana. This included: mats/mattresses, blankets/quilts, mosquito nets, kitchen sets including cooking utensils (to some families), coal pots, rubber buckets, jerry cans, and soap and hygiene kits including sanitary pads.

VI.4 Self reliance

Togolese refugees staying with host communities in Volta Region are engaged in a variety of self-reliance activities. In rural settings, refugees are involved in farming activities while sometimes only contributing their labor. In the latter case, they are compensated both in kind and cash and have used such income to supplement the food rations they have been receiving. In semi urban settings, refugees do wage labor in activities such as fishing and provision of services in petty trading of food commodities.

In support of activities aimed at promoting self-reliance amongst refugees, UNFPA has donated 40 health kits and 30 sewing kits to the Togolese refugees in the Volta region. In addition, 60 sewing machines bought by UNHCR, were put at the disposal of refugees through the NADMO in order to promote self-reliance for refugees. Some groups of refugees benefited from agricultural seeds and tools that were distributed; this assistance helped them to carry out small scale agriculture.

The favorable attitude of host communities and the Government contributed to the evolution of self reliance activities. Refugees have a variety of skills in farming and vocational occupations such as carpenters, electricians, and hairdressers which could be put to productive use. They will appreciate

any type of assistance that can be given to them in order to set up business, trade, salt industry, poultry, carpentry etc.

Key constraint is the lack of funds and tangible support to further expand and consolidate income generating activities. The need for seeds and tools is evident in rural settings as well as cash to initiate vocational work in urban settings. The JAM identified various development projects and institutions with whom WFP/UNHCR could partner up to support IGAs. Due to time limitations, the JAM could not visit all these potential partners, but recommends WFP/UNHCR to carry out a fact-finding mission in Accra and in the Volta region with the aim of providing specific recommendations for enhancing collaboration with these potential partners²¹.

VI.6 Local integration and return & re-integration

The Ghana context is characterized by a spontaneous hosting of refugees in Ghanaian communities in the Volta region (at the border with Togo). It results in a smooth receiving and association of refugees in the day-to-day activities of Ghanaian communities. Given their particular interaction with host communities, most refugees are engaged in some sort of minor income generating activities mainly in fishing and farming. Findings indicate a strong and unanimous demand for self-reliance activities in Ghana. Local communities indicated willingness to avail land for refugees to undertake rural activities. Some spontaneous returns have been observed and are anticipated to continue on a small scale to eventually develop further as progress is made in Togo to fulfill conditions for an eventual repatriation.

VII. PROPOSED RE-ORIENTATION OF INTERVENTIONS

VII.1 Objectives and intervention strategy

Although the overall goal of the current emergency interventions remains valid, that is 'to reinforce the coping mechanisms of refugees, IDPs and hosts in dealing with the Togo crisis', it is proposed to diversify and orient the interventions more towards :

for Ghana: targeting vulnerable groups, enhancing self-reliance and moving towards a partial phase-down of general food assistance, and

for Togo: adopting a holistic approach towards supporting the various groups of victims of the crisis, including addressing specific need of ex-IDPs and the re-integration of returned refugees, through augmented presence and increased collaboration with partners in Togo,

while continuing the assistance to refugees in Benin camps

The JAM recommends that the country office from WFP and UNHCR prepare an action plan to follow up on the recommendations of the JAM.

VII.2 General recommendations: Food assistance²²

1. The recommended standard food basket will continue to comprise on a daily basis and per person: 500 grams of maize (grain), 50 grams of pulses, 30 grams of vitamin A enriched vegetable oil, 50 grams of fortified blended food and 5 grams of iodized salt. WFP should endeavor to provide all the components, including CSB and salt. If maize meal is to be provided, a reduction of 75 grams per day can be applied as milling costs / losses are no longer incurred. This general food basket would provide approximately 2 100 kcal, with protein and fat contents of about 10-12% and 20%, respectively.

²¹ Following the JAM, WFP/UNHCR fielded the recommended fact-finding mission (February 2006): a summary of the recommendations is attached as annex 6.

²² It is proposed that WFP carries out a budget revision of the existing EMOP to integrate the food – related recommendations.

2. Food distribution methods should be reviewed and enhanced as to increase efficiency and to improve the participation of refugees in the process. Post-distribution monitoring and reporting should also be reinforced in all three countries.

VII.3 Specific recommendations for Togo, Benin and Ghana

Specific recommendations for Togo

Food assistance

1. To support the implementation of approximately 100 small-scale community-based projects (CBP) benefiting 5 000 persons, through the use of the food-for-work instrument; these CBP would:

- preferably be implemented in collaboration with existing development projects such as the 'Projet de micro-réalisations', funded by the European Commission, so that WFP can build on existing implementation capacity;

- be carried in those communities having a substantial number of victims of the crisis, including returned IDPs and refugees;

- permit victims of both sides of the political spectrum to earn some in-kind revenue (food) to sustain their families, through the food-for-work scheme; and

concern the re-habilitation of social infrastructure damaged during the 2005 events, as well as the establishment of economic infrastructure that may permit, in the longer term, augmenting the income that the Togolese generate on their own.

2. The food-for-work scheme, whether carried out with existing development projects or stand-alone, consists of 5 000 rations for a period of 60 days per beneficiary, whereby the ration is based on a daily ration per person of 500 grams of maize (grains), 50 grams of pulses and 30 grams of vitamin A enriched vegetables oil²³.

3. Resources associated to refugees from Benin and Ghana who have returned to Togo will be re-directed to the above-mentioned programme.

4. WFP should request a written consent from the Government that it agrees with the planned food assistance, as to prevent a rehearsal of the problems encountered in August 2005.

Self reliance

1. There is a need for the bilateral and multilateral partners to finance micro-credits and community based initiatives. By doing so, the international community will help the country to alleviate the state of poverty that the majority of the population is facing for more than 12 years now.

2. Community based projects in which returnees, IDPs and other victims of the crisis will be involved as full actors need to be launched.

Return and integration

1. To establish community based micro-projects with partners present in Togo (e.g.: EU micro-projects programme). WFP will integrate food aid component through food for work scheme.

²³ Whereby the food-for-work programme itself may be extended over a longer period.

2. Through augmented UNHCR and Humanitarian actors presence in Togo, to review with the UNCT, donors and development actors present in Togo other opportunities for community based micro-projects for the Togolese victims, whether previous internally displaced or returnees.

Specific recommendations for Benin

Food assistance

1. To provide a full food ration to a caseload of 10 000 refugees staying in the Comé and Agamé camps, until the end of 2006, as self-reliance activities are estimated to remain limited to the production of condiments by a small number of refugees; it is noted that it is likely that some refugees will leave the camp to spontaneously return or to locally integrate, whereas some 'out-of-camp' refugees will join the Agamé camp. Continuation of food assistance in 2007 will be assessed by the end of the third quarter 2006 as to allow planning for subsequent interventions.
2. To clarify and reinforce the nutritional surveillance and response system, while WFP will make available food aid, that may not be used for general distributions due to the absence of refugees, for supplementary feeding to malnourished children.
3. Should there be no other alternative, to refer the out-of-camp destitute refugees to the camp in Agamé where they could receive basic assistance, including food.
4. If/when facilitation of voluntary repatriation is initiated during the year, food assistance (1 full monthly food ration) can be considered as part of the return package.

Non food

1. To close Comé and consolidate activities at Agamé level, while maintaining multi-faceted assistance for camp refugees throughout 2006. To revisit beneficiary figures in the light of a verification exercise (Project profile) that should be carried out as soon as possible in Agamé.
2. The Government, the UN/NGOs, donors and all concerned stakeholders should mainstream their approach and communication strategy in Agame camp to prevent at-risk situations for aid workers. UNHCR should seek the support of UNICEF and other interested stakeholders to develop a Peace Education Programme targeting both refugee and host communities.
3. To sensitize and encourage refugees women to use fuel improved stoves for cooking purposes

Self reliance

WFP, UNHCR and the government work with the refugees to promote feasible income generating activities that will augment and improve the food and nutrition of refugees and therefore promote their self reliance. For example, UNHCR will promote small-scale gardening as to enrich refugees' diets and to limit the sale of food rations to purchase condiments.

Return and integration

1. To implement the profiling/refugees validation process.
2. Monitor spontaneous departures and adjust accordingly the distribution lists in the Benin camps

Specific recommendations for Ghana

Food assistance

1. Pending the planned verification exercise, the current caseload of registered refugees is estimated at approximately 12 000, whereas it is estimated that a total of 10 000 registered refugees are in need of food aid, corresponding to the number of refugees that showed up for food distributions during October - December 2005.
2. To provide a full food ration to the estimated 10 000 registered refugees in need of food aid, from March until June 2006, permitting in the mean time a further support to IGAs, the arrival of the harvest and time to sensitize refugees on the new food assistance approach.
12. To provide a full food ration to identified vulnerable groups amongst the registered refugees, estimated at 30 per cent of the present caseload of actual food beneficiaries (10 000), or 3 000 persons, until the end of 2006. Continuation of food assistance to vulnerable groups in 2007 will be assessed by the end of the third quarter 2006 as to allow planning for subsequent interventions.
3. Resources permitting, the vulnerable groups will be identified through a vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) exercise and the planned verification (Project Profile) by UNHCR. This VAM study of refugees and hosts will be used as a base case to monitor the food security situation, possibly based on a limited number of sentinel sites as appropriate.
4. To provide a reduced food ration to 7 000 registered refugees in need of food aid, from July until the last quarter of 2006, while the last distribution will take place no later than 31 December 2006.
5. If/when facilitation of voluntary repatriation is initiated during the year, food assistance (1 full monthly food ration) can be considered as part of the return package.
6. The caseloads are depicted in the table below. It is estimated that approximately 3 500 MT of food aid would be necessary to cover the recommended distributions (see Annex 7 for more details).

	Ration	Period	Benin	Togo	Ghana
General food distribution	Full	Mar – Dec	10 000	0	3 000
	Full	Mar – Jun	0	0	7 000
	Reduced	July – 4 th q	0	0	7 000
Accompany return package	Full		Pm		Pm
Food for work	Full	2 months	0	5 000	0
Food aid tonnage (MT)		Mar-Dec	1 905	175	1 455

Non food

Any agreement between UNHCR, the Ghana Refugee Board and the Ghanaian health service should seek to systematize refugees' access to health services according to clear procedures and with widely disseminated instructions to the field level;

1. Implement the profiling / refugees validation process in the Volta region as soon as possible with a view to streamline distribution lists ; and

2. Through collaboration with UNICEF and other (new) partners (UNESCO), support the incorporation of refugees' children into the Ghanaian education system should be maintained and extended geographically so as to provide the same level of service for all refugee locations.

Self reliance

It is recommended to scale up activities in support of IGAs, whether it concerns activities interest of development agencies that have so far concentrated their interventions mainly in the Northern regions of Ghana.

Return and integration

1. Monitor spontaneous departures and adjust accordingly the distribution lists in the Volta region.
2. Implement the profiling/refugees validation process to better assess targeted income generating activities requirements.