

UNHCR / WFP
JOINT ASSESSMENT MISSION
SENEGALESE REFUGEE INFLUX
INTO THE WESTERN DIVISION OF THE GAMBIA
FINAL REPORT

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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)



World Food Programme (WFP)
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ABBREVIATIONS

CSB	Corn Soya Blend
CFSVA	Comprehensive Food Security Vulnerability Analysis
D	Dalasis (The Gambian currency)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GOG	Government of The Gambia
GRCS	The Gambia Red Cross Society
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IGA	Income Generating Activity
JAM	Joint Assessment Mission
MFDC	Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques en Casamance
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
ODD	WFP Regional Bureau for West Africa in Dakar
PDM	Post distribution monitoring
SF	School feeding
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
ToRs	Terms of Reference
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America
WEC	World Evangelical Church
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

Chapter 1



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Casamance insurgency in Senegal started in 1982 and there have been sporadic waves of refugees fleeing mostly from intra Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) rebel group fights. Refugees have been fleeing in and out of The Gambia for the past 20 years. However, since August 2006, the fighting has been between the Senegalese Army and one of the rebel MFDC groups. This has caused considerable panic among the local population, leading to the current refugee influx into The Gambia. Indications are that the present military confrontation will last for a considerable period of time since the military option appears to have been chosen, which precludes the return of the refugees in the short-to medium term. In addition, due to the intensity of the current conflict, the refugees, comprising mostly of women and children, have tended to arrive largely without their basic belongings or food supplies. The host Gambian families have allowed the refugees to spontaneously settle in their midst, sharing their meagre food resources, in an area that is not food secure according to the World Food Programme.

In this context, a Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) was fielded in September 2006, to assess the conditions of life of the refugees living in host families in the Western division of The Gambia, with particular attention to food and non-food needs of the refugees. Also, the extent to which future UNHCR and WFP's assistance might address these needs was reviewed and possible gaps and solutions to address these gaps, identified. All recommendations are summarized in Chapter 7.

After throughout registration, the Gambian Red Cross Society counted 5,247 refugees spread in 46 different Gambian villages localised in the Western Division, particularly in Foni district. These refugees are hosted by 397 families including mostly the refugee relatives. The breakdown figures include fifty percent of males and fifty percent of women. Twenty percent are children under five years, thirty percent are young boys and girls, forty-one percent are adults and eight percent are elderly (60 years and above).

The JAM recommends providing food assistance to the refugees for a period of 12 months to reach the most food insecure individuals and preventing malnourishment among children. In particular, the JAM recommends the inclusion of Corn Soya Blend (CSB) in the ration, especially for children, pregnant, and lactating women, who today have one to two meals compared to three meals before their flight from Senegal. Furthermore, the JAM recommends that i) a nutritional survey be conducted in November 2006 to measure the impact of the ration distributed, ii) a new JAM be undertaken in January 2007 with a view to re-assessing the food basket, livelihoods, and self-reliance activities.



2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Context and objectives

UNHCR has been monitoring the situation since the short-lived influxes that occurred between 22 January and end June 2006. During that period, it was clear that once the intra Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) skirmishes had lulled, the refugees would quickly return home, as happened. The general assessment then was that this was yet another manifestation of what had become a cyclic phenomenon over the years. The numbers of refugees that arrived in this first period was relatively low, a maximum of 1,600 at the time and most of them quickly returned home. Strategically however, UNHCR still conducted some cursory needs assessments in the critical sectors of shelter, food, health and sanitation, which were determined to be adequate at the time. Since the current arrivals began around 16 August 2006, UNHCR has physically visited all arrival sites and conducted interviews with the refugees to better understand the factors prompting their flight and prospects of return. From these exercises, it has been established that this is almost the first time that the Senegalese Government has decided to seek a military solution to the Casamance insurgency in years after the various Peace Processes have faltered. Thus, there is political determination to resolve the problem militarily. It has, and will take the refugees some time to understand the changed complexion of the situation, namely, that this time, it might not be possible for them to return home soon as in the past. Practically, what this has meant is that the refugees were taken unawares about the magnitude and scope of the current military engagement. They fled with bare belongings and almost without their food, leaving their farms and animals untended. Now they find themselves in what is doubtless a welcoming environment due to ethnic affinities, but one that is nonetheless now stretched and cannot single-handedly shoulder their presence.

The host authorities installed a refugee reception system under which Village Chiefs (known as *Alkalos*) would report any new arrivals to the local Police & Immigration authorities in Sibanor. Upon receiving such reports, the Sibanor authorities would despatch officers to physically interview and register the newly-arrived refugees. In this process, the Gambian Police & Immigration officials had registered 3,747 individuals crossing from Casamance to the Gambia between 16 – 22 August 2006 while the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) undertook a census of the new arrivals and found 4,763 of them scattered in 30 villages. At the time of the JAM, the UNHCR requested a complete registration of all refugees by the Gambian Red Cross Society (GRCS) with the strict criterion that only the refugees physically present be registered.

During the subsequent and more thorough registration exercise, the GRCS counted 5,247 refugees spread in 46 different Gambian villages (Annex 5).

No Joint Assessment Mission had been conducted before with respect to the Casamance refugees in The Gambia.

In line with the objectives of its terms of reference (annex 1), the JAM assessed the needs of those refugees residing in the hosting families, with particular attention for food and non-food needs of the refugees. Also, the extent to which future UNHCR and WFP's

assistance could reflect these needs were reviewed and possible gaps and solutions to address these gaps were identified.

2.2 Methodology¹

The JAM team started its mission on 7 September 2006 in Banjul, with meetings with WFP Banjul to review how the team would proceed to cover the 30 villages known to host refugees as of that date. It was finally agreed that the first village, would be done jointly while WFP and UNHCR would then split in order to cover the maximum number of villages. While UNHCR mainly visited the Eastern and Western villages of the Foni area in the Western Division, WFP concentrated on the central ones (8-10 and 12 September). Due to security reasons (Phase 1), all villages lying very close to the border were excluded from the list of villages to be covered by the JAM.

During the field visits, interviews were conducted with refugees and their host families, *Alkalos* (village Chiefs), police and immigration officers who accompanied the teams, as well as with the Directors of the Bwiam Hospital and the World Evangelical Church health post in Sibanor. The programme of the mission is attached as annex 3. At the end of the mission, preliminary recommendations were summarized in an *aide mémoire* and presented to the UNHCR Representative, the WFP Officer in charge, the UN Country Team, and the Government. Their comments and suggestions of these various interlocutors have been taken into account during the elaboration of the JAM report.

The JAM combined various data collection techniques and the information has been cross-checked with various sources, as to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. The information has been collected by the JAM through a combination of: i) reviewing and analysing relevant available reports (see annex 4: Bibliography); ii) meetings with the responsible national and local authorities, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the United Nations (UN) working in the Casamance, and in the Western Division under other programmes; iii) meetings with UNHCR and WFP staff, iv) visits to refugee locations for: a) interviews with site *Alkalos* considered also as a host family for many of them; b) interviews with refugee families, either individually or in groups; c) inspection of general conditions of the hosting buildings, presence of assets, including food and water availability and cooking arrangements; d) visits to clinics; e) shops present in some villages or in their vicinity.

The time horizon employed by the JAM is from September 2006 until September 2007.

2.3 Data quality, information gaps and future assessments

Data on the number of registered refugees in 46 villages of the Western Division is considered reliable. Nevertheless, due to the presence of refugees in Brikama that are not receiving assistance from UNHCR, the registration did not take place in this town to minimise pull factors with existing and known populations of Senegalese refugees in urban centres, including Brikama. Although the GRCS used the UNHCR registration forms and had a training on data collection, the time frame was short, and suitable materials were missing. Because of this, UNHCR has therefore not yet entered the bio-data and photos of all registered refugees in a data base.

In the meantime due to the preparations for the Presidential Elections and projected campaigns visits to the Western Division, the local authorities were no longer able to systematically continue registering any new arrivals.

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

To support decision-making on programmes to be efficiently operational, the JAM recommends that:

- i) UNHCR Gambia endorse the refugee figures expected to be provided by The Gambian Red Cross Society on 18th September 2006;**
- ii) UNHCR Gambia creates a refugee database from the Casamance refugees registration exercise carried out by The Gambian Red Cross Society,**
- iii) the UNHCR provide a Family/Ration Card to all the refugees for assistance purposes (the JAM Team understands that the refugees have all been recognised as refugees on a group or *prima facie* basis). Information available to the JAM Team is that registration has effectively excluded returning Gambian nationals who were previously based in Casamance and that this group of individuals are systematically asked to return to their areas of origin in The Gambia;**
- iv) sporadic arrivals continue to be registered by the Police & Immigration authorities in accordance with the procedure already described above;**
- v) the mission of the UNHCR Regional Registration Officer, from the Hub Accra, early October 2006, to further train the GRCS and the UNHCR staff on data base management, creation of a refugee data base, possibly with the support of photos, in view of control processing and field monitoring;**
- vi) a new registration exercise will be conducted in January 2007, prior to the recommended new JAM;**
- vii) immediate reinforcement of UNHCR staff capacity in Banjul office, by the support of a Field Officer (programme), first for a period of three months reviewed for a longer period if necessary; WFP Country Office shall be also closely assisted by the West Africa Regional Bureau (ODD);**
- viii) in parallel, the presence of SURGE (protection) to follow up the data management and**
- ix) to re-examine the closure of the UNHCR Office in Banjul in order to support the refugees and the host families (for 6 months, until June 2007 or longer period as the situation may dictate).**



3. CONTEXT

3.1 The cyclic nature of the Casamance issue

Five times this year, the Senegalese from the Casamance region fled to the Gambia. The first wave of refugees arrived in January 22 (63); the second influx occurred in April (363); the third wave happened in May (871) followed with 217 refugees. In early June, a family of five entered the country and the last known group (154) crossed on 24 June 2006 due to a pro-Senegalese rebel group. Nevertheless, host families generally had secure food reserves and domestic animals for consumption as well as use of beasts of burden. Refugees managed to go back in order to collect their domestic animals and family belongings because of the threat of a planned counter-attack from the rebels. The situation then calmed down and people were able to return to their villages.

Due to the new war situation in the Bignona area of Senegal where the Senegalese Army has been deployed since August 2006, there has been sporadic but sustained fighting between the Government forces and armed MFDC rebels. From 16 to 18 August 2, 622 refugees were registered rising to 4,763 by 25th August, 2006.

It is reported to be the first time since the outbreak of the insurgency in Casamance in 1982 that the Senegalese Army has directly engaged the insurgents in a sustained military campaign. It is significant because all previous armed clashes that led to refugee outflows into the Gambia were primarily between opposing MFDC rebel groups. These clashes had specific hallmarks: they were swift, short and cyclic in nature. Therefore, the majority of the refugees that were generated as a result were mostly able to quickly return to their areas of origin once the conflict had subsided. During the mission, the team met only two families of former refugees around Sibanor. There are probably former refugee families who have definitely integrated the Gambians in the villages or in towns, like Brikama, near of Banjul.

This has forced the local population in the area to flee to safety in The Gambia in near-destitute conditions. They first came from villages nearby the border and later from villages within a wider circumference of 25 km from the border.

The refugees have thus far outnumbered the local host population in most of the villages, thus causing a serious strain on existing water, health and other infrastructure that was designed for a relatively small local Gambian population.

This is further compounded by the fact that some of the host families habitually do their farming in Casamance and they are no longer able to work their land. The single most serious implication of this is that even the best farmers have exhausted their 2005 food reserves and partly their 2006 food reserves as well and cash. The harvest season begins from October and ends in January next year, depending on the type of crop. Because of removal from their farms, the farmers will not know in advance the quality of their harvest. Most of the population might not be able to harvest its crops if the armed conflict persists either because their farmland is on the Senegalese border or too close to the border. Without humanitarian intervention, even the local population will not be able to provide food to the refugees. It is important to note that this period is generally described as the "lean period" in this part of The Gambia, when food shortages are rampant.

There is generally good food availability on commercial terms but the primary obstacle is lack of access due to lack of money. The host communities are welcoming and generous but they too now have nothing to offer.

Some refugees could not be housed by the local population and have been forced to seek shelter in a school and a skills development centre. Some of the shallow wells are now suspect since this is the rainy season; the refugees lack basic kitchen and other utensils such as water containers; clothing, since most of the refugees fled with just the clothes they were wearing at the time; and there is a serious risk of exposure to malaria and water-borne diseases.

There is a sizeable portion of female-headed households without accompanying male support (some of the males were reported to have stayed behind to protect livestock and household belongings).

The nearest health centre is a private missionary clinic in Sibanor and refugees do not have the money to access the health service.

Because of refugee hopes that the situation might normalize soon, they have resisted any talk of relocating to a refugee camp and also due to the fear of not being able to take care of their cattle. This in turn is supported by strong ethnic links as both the refugees and the local population belong to the *Joola* ethnic group. The host authorities are receptive but lack the necessary financial means to deal with the emergency on their own.

4. REPATRIATION, AND LOCAL INTEGRATION

4.1 Repatriation:

Although sporadic new arrivals still occur in the Western Division, following clashes in the battle zone, the border is more impermeable than in the past. Some heads of family who decided to remain behind in view of taking care of their animals may still decide to cross the border. Despite the current uncertainties, it is nevertheless important to begin considering eventual voluntary repatriation plans for these refugees, once the situation returns to normal. Unfortunately, there is now clear evidence of the presence of land mines in the Casamance region. Handicap International, and the World Bank had been working on de-mining and mine awareness but these activities are now on hold due to the renewed fighting. Strategically therefore, voluntary repatriation may not occur as rapidly as in the past.

Nevertheless, it is important that any preparatory provisions should include transport of the refugees and a package of Non Food items, especially agricultural implements.

4.2 Local integration:

Except few cases regarding refugees hosted in *Alkalo's* compounds, all refugees are living with their relatives. Across the border, the populations share the same in language and culture and inter-relationships have exist since time immemorial. Again, they all belong to the *Joola* ethnic group. These social links between communities should be encouraged if refugees express the need and the will to be locally integrated. Some of the old refugees of past crises are reported to have constructed homes and to own land in the Western Division. The local population is also reported to be willing to provide land for cultivation. Outside support would be required with the provision of seeds and tools. The JAM recommends that if the current situation stays unresolved for a long period of time, then UNHCR, the Government and local authorities should explore the possibilities of applying local integration as a long-term solution for the refugees. (Note that the Team is aware of the official position of the Government on this issue, which is that they are opposed to any formalised form of local integration).

4.3 Recommendations for voluntary repatriation and possible local integration:

- **UNHCR should provide mine awareness sessions for all refugees with the support of leaflets from the British Council;**
- **UNHCR should seek resources to ensure that the majority of the refugees will return home in safety and dignity with transport capacity and NFI while at the same time engaging the government on possible local integration options and**
- **UNHCR and the UN Country Team in general should prepare the agenda, especially on support to income generating activities, education and health sectors for a proper local integration climate in the future.**



5. FOOD SECURITY AND SELF RELIANCE

5.1. Food access and utilisation

The food security situation of refugees strongly depends on the food assistance received from host families. This is because the refugees are hosted by the Gambian families and are fed by them.

During the discussions with heads of refugee families and their host families, the lack of food was raised as the main concern faced by refugees and the local population. This is due to lack of income and food reserves and high prices of rice in the market and shops. The host communities were giving cash and kind to the refugees as an expression of solidarity, however the amount was not sufficient.

No income generating activities (IGA) such as financial assistance for small trade, employment, nor support for agriculture activities (distribution of seeds, and tools, cultivable grounds) were provided to the refugees and to host families. The refugees were mostly farmers and because of their arrival in mid-August, it was too late to cultivate any food crop (millet, maize, rice) and the majority of the agricultural work could not be done.

Some women refugees were involved in small trade, petty commerce in order to acquire cash. These women have traditionally been engaged in selling fritters and roasted corns. The women were more active within the host community. They were also participating in social activities and ceremonies in the village.

The daily meal consumed by refugees and the host community is composed of rice, green leaves or wild grass usually eaten during this period and some of them ate dry fish. The majority of refugees declared eating twice a day: lunch and dinner. For the children, generally a portion of the dinner was taken aside to save for their breakfast for the following day. This means that the quantity was insufficient and was inappropriate to meet the refugees' food needs and their families'. In Casamance and also in The Gambia, usually, population have three meals a day: breakfast, lunch and dinner. However, by leaving their houses in Casamance, all the refugee families stated to have given up food reserves and assets such as cattle, which could be used as sources for food or income. In the Eastern villages of the Western Division, some refugees came with their herds of bovines, sheep and goats. This group of refugees with cattle could be considered as wealthy. They can sell their cattle to acquire some cash as their last resort. On the other side of the Division, the trend showed that refugees have fled from their villages without carrying food to The Gambia.

Women were generally in charge of cash crop such as groundnuts, pumpkins, tomatoes and others. Most of the time cash crops were not shared with the refugees but were kept for the host families.

Most of the host families' size was large by itself and had received on average of three refugee families, corresponding sometimes to nearly 24 people (average size of refugee family is of eight members) to feed everyday.

In general, the head of the host family buys a bag of rice (50 kg) and gives it to the head of refugee family. This provision is managed by the refugees themselves. According to the number of families accommodated in each compound and the size of their members, the period of consumption of one bag of rice varied between less than one week to more than two weeks. The contribution of refugees to the host family was limited; some who had cattle could sell them and contribute to the food basket of the host family.

Under these conditions, an external food aid is desirable for the refugees to decrease the burden of the host families and to feed themselves. After three to four weeks of refugee presence in The Gambian villages and the food exclusively supported by the local population, the food situation of the refugees and the host families will be exhausted. For the time being, the majority of the refugees are coping to this situation by reducing the number of meals. Though harvests will start in October for millet and maize, the availability will not be sufficient for all population of the community. In general, the Western Division is not a food insecure region. The results of CFSVA investigation 2006 show that only 18% of the households are severe or moderately food insecure². However, the surge of thousands of refugees could deteriorate the food security level of the communities. In view of the above, **the JAM recommends that a food ration is provided to all 5,247 refugees registered at the end of August (see Annex 5).**

5.2. Food aid supply

The refugee will benefit from food aid for three months. It is a ration of 550g including 400g of rice, 60g of pulses, 60g of CSB, 25g of vegetable oil, and 5g of iodised salt, which provides 2 112 Kilo calories following the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNHCR and WFP. This ration is calculated to cover the food needs of refugees and also to prevent the eventual degradation of the nutritional status of the most vulnerable groups (children under-five, pregnant and lactating women). This food ration will be provided until a JAM is done to confirm the targeting of vulnerable groups. Although the food provision will only target the refugees, it is assumed that food will be shared with the host families. **The JAM recommends advocating for the host families to receive food from another source as they will not benefit from the WFP food aid. As a way of laying the foundation for the eventual integration of refugees in the Gambian communities, food assistance to host families can reduce the burden of feeding the refugees in their household.**

The recommended duration of food supplies is 12 months including the first three months from October to December 2006 during which emergency food aid is provided to the refugee population. The second phase, from January to September 2007, targeted feeding programmes should be one of the main objectives to review during the next **JAM that is planned to be organized in January 2007.**

For twelve months, the food aid needs raise to 1 053 Mt including 766 Mt of rice, 115 Mt of pulses, 115 Mt of CSB, 48 Mt of vegetable oil and 10 Mt of iodized salt. For the first three months, 260 Mt are needed for all 5,247 refugees.

The WFP development Project 10311.0 for "Support to Basic Education in Rural Vulnerable Regions" (15/10/2004 – 31/07/2007) has stock that can cover the emergency food needs for refugees. Thus, this stock can be borrowed to meet the first three months needs for the intervention for the refugees in terms of rice, pulse, vegetable oil and iodised salt. CSB needs to be imported rapidly. WFP Senegal proposed to lend its stocks to WFP Gambia.

² "Western Division includes the Great Banjul Area and Coastal areas that are mainly food secure. However, Foni District is known as deprived area of Western Division."

5.3. Food aid distribution and monitoring

In order to minimise confusions and food diversion, **the JAM recommends that food distribution be based only on Family/Ration card distribution cards** established per refugee families (including the list of family members) by UNHCR. Food is given to refugees physically present. Where it is possible, the food will be given to the women, even if they are not the head of their household/family. Nevertheless, it is understood that special measures should be in place for vulnerable and sick people who will not be able to reach the cluster villages.

Food will be distributed every month by GRCS selected by both UNHCR and WFP as the implementing partner for the registration of the refugees and the distribution of food and non-food items. The GRCS received first level training for the registration. It is planned that the GRCS will also be trained for distribution of food by UNHCR and WFP.

Due to the fact that security is not guaranteed everywhere in the southern part of Western Division, the monitoring of the food distributions needs the presence of national police, and the support of the Gambian Army patrolling the border, WFP and UNHCR, and the implementing partner. Therefore **the JAM recommends that food distribution be organized in a location 5 km north from the border villages for security reasons.**

In order to improve the distribution system, the database on beneficiaries should be updated regularly, after every distribution before the feeding list is given to WFP. It is proposed that feeding list be submitted one week before distribution starts, to allow partners to crosscheck the accuracy in order to enhance smooth implementation and effective time management. Mechanism should be put in place by UNHCR and WFP to ensure that feeding list is prepared and cross-checked by the relevant stakeholders in a timely manner before distribution commences. It is also recommended that only refugees that have been registered will receive food.

A harmonized food distribution system should be established in all the villages by giving priority to women (pregnant and lactating, heads of family) in order to empower and allow them to have control of their own food.

Food basket monitoring, post distribution monitoring and monthly monitoring reports should be used as monitoring tools to enhance the quality of the food distribution systems and the impact of food aid on the refugee beneficiaries. These tools are very effective for general food distribution. **The JAM recommends that WFP and UNHCR take the necessary measures to ensure that food is managed and distributed in accordance with the MoU (chap. 5).**

5.4. Nutrition and Selective feeding programmes

WFP undertook a nutrition survey in 29 villages (30 clusters) during October 2002 including 697 children aged between 6 and 59 months³. This study concluded that acute malnutrition (wasting) among the children surveyed was 11.2%. while the chronic malnutrition (stunting) was 16.2%. Morbidity was very high among children (66%). Over 50% had suffered from malaria in the two weeks preceding the study. Acute malnutrition among children who had been ill over the last two before the study was equal to 14.3% compared to 5.4% for children, who had not been ill.

³ The nutrition survey has been undertaken for complementing a household food security assessment. It was carried out on behalf of WFP by Concern Universal in the framework of the preparation the Sahel EMOP 10249.0. October 2002.

During the 24th August mission, one case of malnutrition was reported. No cases of severe malnutrition were observed during the JAM although there were borderline thin children. Twins were seen where one of the two children was eating less and was more meagre than the other.

The number of meals have decreased to two or even one meal per day. Usually, a portion of each meal, mainly lunch and dinner, is kept for the breakfast of the children but some destitute families indicated that there was no breakfast from time to time. It was clear that children did not receive the quantity and the quality needed for normal growth and development. Furthermore, being in the "lean" period of the year when situation is worse with the rainy season, diseases are rampant. It is therefore essential that close monitoring is implemented to follow up the nutritional status of children under-five and vulnerable groups. Their meal is based on rice with wild grass leaves and oil is often absent. The continuation of such meals that lack protein and lipids can have consequences on the nutritional status of children under-five years and pregnant and lactating women.

The JAM does not recommend any selective feeding programme for refugees at this stage, but suggests that the nutritional status of children under-five and most vulnerable groups should be monitored by UNHCR, WFP and the implementing partners in order to put in place adequate support if necessary. **The JAM recommends a nutritional survey in November 2006 using the anthropometric variables as the main basis. UNICEF, WFP and UNHCR will jointly review the methodology and overall indicators. It is important that results are expressed with a confidence interval, which will allow comparisons with future surveys and indicate a statistical difference of increase or decrease of malnutrition.**

The Gambian children in the primary schools in Foni in Western Division benefit from the assistance of the WFP School Feeding Project. If refugee children are enrolled in these schools, **the JAM recommends that they should be integrated in the school feeding programme in dialogue with the local authorities, UNICEF and the national partners of the education.**

5.5. Self-reliance opportunities and strategies

The local population is ready to offer land to refugees for cultivation. Taking into account the close family relationships between the populations on both sides of the border, the refugees will not have any difficulty to undertake activities to sustain their livelihoods; the close relationship with local communities facilitated the hosting of the refugees and their integration. During the mission, the activities for self reliance were very limited because the refugees arrived in the villages when it was too late to cultivate the land.

The access to land could help facilitate some production of food and generate some income for refugees. However, women as social group do not have the same social standing and recognition as men to negotiate access to land. Female-headed household also do not have enough manpower to cultivate large plots as compared to men. During the cold season, between December to January/February, the Gambian women make truck farming in gardens around the villages. The refugee women could be encouraged to take part in these activities for their own account or in partnership with the women of their host families. The small trade is another advisability to make the refugee women autonomous.

During the harvest (from October to February 2007), active refugees can participate in agricultural activities by supporting their host families in harvesting and storing millet, maize and rice. The lean season (idem) is also an opportunity for refugees, especially for women, to practise truck farming. **The JAM recommends that FAO procures seeds**

(mainly maize, late millet and cash crops such as groundnuts, and vegetable) and tools by March 2007 for distribution in April 2007.

5.6. Logistics of food aid

The Western Division, which received almost all the refugees is located not far from Banjul. The majority of the hosting villages are accessible within two to four hours by road from Banjul. Thus, WFP store in Banjul will be used as extended delivery point.

Food commodities will be transported from Banjul directly to the cluster villages. There should be no need for secondary storage unless distribution could not be finished on a daily basis especially for large communities of refugees. In that case, local warehouses/co-operatives or UNHCR containers will be used.

The telecommunication network is fairly well developed and connections by mobile phones are possible in certain places along the road. Nevertheless, WFP will use its HF radios for vehicles engaged in the operation.

WFP will also hire additional staff for logistics, monitoring and reporting. **The JAM recommends that: i) at least one Logistics Assistant and one Food Aid Monitor support the WFP office; ii) Taking into consideration the distance between the different villages in order to review the quality of the village stores, a Logistics Capacity Assessment is undertaken or updated before the end of October 2006.**

5.7. Partnerships, and planning

Adequate coordination mechanisms among UN agencies and NGOs partners are in place at national level (Banjul). They are operating and functioning well and have ensured effective management of information in the delivery of assistance and support to the refugees.

During the implementation of the assistance of refugees, regular sectorial meetings should include issues such as Technical Coordination, Pre and Post-Food Distribution, Education, Protection Group and Repatriation.

The JAM recommends that the partnership with different concerned actors (Government, UN System (UNICEF, WHO, UNDP, FAO), NGOs, local administration including *Alkalos*) should continue with participation of refugees and host families in order to increase the common relationships between border communities.

Chapter 6

6. HEALTH, WATER, SANITATION, EDUCATION, AND PROTECTION

6.1 Health: status, interventions and recommendations

There are two main health facilities in the area. The Bwiam hospital under the Gambian Government is located in Bwiam and the Health Centre in Sibanor under the World Evangelical Community (WEC).

The hospital covers the population from Bwiam to Brikama, eight stations on the main road, where the Western Division ends. It was opened in 2003.

All patients have to pay a ticket of 5 *Dalasis* (D) that is attached to the hospital card. Then, all depends if the patient is Gambian or Non Gambian.

Services/Nationality	Gambian	Non Gambian
Drug revolving Funds	free	10 D
Major surgery (Caesarean)	250 D	600 D
Intermediate surgery	100 D	150 D
Minor surgery	50 D	100 D
Obstetrics	25 D	50 D
Antenatal card		25 D
3 meals/d seven days hospitalisation	50 D	600 D

Although the cost is cheap and many non Gambian are coming from abroad, 50% of the population cannot pay.

The survey done in 2002 concluded that morbidity, especially malaria and diarrhoea, seemed to be associated with malnutrition. These diseases are frequent during the rainy season. That is why during the visits of clinics, some partners said that the malnutrition is high during the rainy season, which was later confirmed by WEC. It also includes teenage single mothers from 12 years old.

There is no indication of who is a refugee when a beneficiary comes to the hospital although some patients informed the administration. Most of the refugees through different interviews indicated that they received cash from the host community to receive health needs. Nevertheless, others mentioned that when the host family is not in a position to provide support, and the refugee has no money, the refugee stays at home.

The Health Centre in Sibanor is under an international independent NGO, World Evangelical Church, who strictly follows the Gambian Government rules (statistics provided, immunization, reports, etc) but they do not receive funds from the Government. They also cover a large administrative area.

Services/ fees	Adult	Child
Entrance fee	10 D	5 D
Treatment	15 D	5 D (2 D < 2 years old)
Antibiotics	+ 10 D	
Laboratory	10 D	5 D

There is no surgery provided at the exception of abortion (50 D) and immunisation is free.

Malnutrition starts in July and ends in November, with several severe cases of Marasmus and Kwashiorkor. They consider malnutrition cases as half of their consultations. Many Low Birth Weight (< 2,5 kg) babies are seen at the centre.

The immunisation department in the centre has several outreach teams that were sent in the villages to cover the children against meningitis. Nevertheless, there is no proven card distributed to the refugee families on the vaccine injected. Therefore families are used to respond positively when asked if the children were vaccinated against measles while it is not the case. In order to receive measles vaccination, people need to come to the health centre, for which they would first need to pay the entrance fee.

The JAM recommends that:

- i) **WHO/UNICEF ascertain that children are all covered against measles at nine months and fully immunised at 12 months, following WHO recommendations, and that outreach teams vaccinate children against measles and yellow fever as was the case for meningitis with a proven vaccination cards of the vaccines injected;**
- ii) **WHO assess the cost recovery system in place in the main health posts of the Western Division and the Bwiam hospital in order to quantify the generic drugs;**
- iii) **UNHCR ensures that from the Ministry of Health register fee is free for all refugees going to health posts;**
- iv) **UNHCR allocates a monthly register fee subsidy for an agreed number of refugees with the administration of the Sibonor health centre only for the next three months as the medical structure is a private institution;**
- v) **UNHCR distributes basic emergency health kits (one thousand people) for the first three months of the operation in the above medical centres, which would minimise refugees requesting cash to the host family;**

Malaria, HIV and infections such as Tuberculosis are common. Although WHO has provided 500 bed nets against malaria, the quantity is not sufficient. **The JAM recommends that: i) WHO and other donors continue distributing mosquito nets in the 46 villages in order to have 100% full coverage; and ii) that HIV sessions take place with distribution of pamphlets/leaflets.**

6.2 Water and sanitation: status, interventions and recommendations

Access to water is one of the key problems in the villages. Most of the time there are between one to three hand pump wells, three opened, concrete lined/unlined wells per village at the exception of one. Due to the increase in number of beneficiaries, people are queuing to collect water. Further, wells from schools were used during the holidays while from the 11th September, children are back to schools and people will not be able to collect from there.

Latrines are also not sufficient. It is difficult to calculate the ratio due to the unknown population per village. As previously mentioned people used the latrines from schools. It is clearly indicated from the host as well as the refugee families that open field defecation is a common practise.

The JAM recommends that: i) UNICEF assess the situation in all villages regarding hand pump wells, concrete lined wells, and pit latrines in order to calculate the number of pit latrines needed to facilitate better hygiene conditions; ii) start chlorinating wells so that people have access to potable water; iii) distribute soap for refugees and possibly host families in particular to pregnant women and children.

6.3 Education: status, interventions and recommendations

Most of the refugee families knew when school will resume. Nevertheless it is the decision of the head of the family if the child can go. As many heads of families were at the time of the interviews in Casamance, many mothers were uncertain of the future enrolment of their children. Further it is between the refugee and host family heads of families that an agreement can be reached that the host family may support the school fees, uniforms and shoes.

In some families children are already part of the Gambian school system following precedent events. Other siblings started the French academic system in Casamance.

The JAM recommends that UNICEF:

- i) assess the situation of all the schools where refugees are present in the Western Division in view of calculating the ratio of rooms/the new refugee children enrolled at school and augment the number of classrooms in the existing Gambian schools;**
- ii) evaluate the quality of the school building and resources in view of possible repairs and/or upgrading; and with UNHCR support receives plastic sheeting to cover any schools that are deemed appropriate;**
- iii) provide sufficient school materials (chairs, tables, notebooks, pencils, pens, etc.);**
- iv) with the support of UNHCR, and the Gambian Department of Education, identify teachers for refugee children who already attended at least two scholarships in the Casamance;**
- v) and The Gambian Department of Education a) ensure that school fees are free of charge until the end of the year, allowing refugee and host families to support uniforms and shoes first, and later regularise the entrance fee, b) through teachers, verify that all children entering school are fully covered.**

6.4 Protection: status, interventions and recommendations

From the different interviews with the refugees, it appeared that some families had to split while fleeing and did not yet manage to reunify while in the Gambia. Some families are aware of the villages where the other members of the families are, others are not, especially for elderly people who are totally alone. Although the host families are taking care of them, **the JAM recommends that: i) ICRC/GRCS trace the families as soon as possible for reunification, preferably before the distributions start, which will minimise their stress in difficult environment; and ii) UNHCR continue to interview refugees upon arrival.**

The JAM recommends the distribution of Non Food Items (NFI) including soap, blankets, jerry cans, kitchen sets, sanitary pans, to all new refugee individuals and families that have been primarily registered.

Refugees are split in 46 villages of the Western Division without support. In order to cover the maximum of them, refugee committee should be created in each village.

The JAM recommends that:

- i) UNHCR with the IP create a refugee committee in each hosting village, no later than October 2006, with a ratio of five persons in small villages and 10 persons in villages of more than 100 refugees, and for which presence of women are highly supported;**
- ii) 50% of women refugees would participate in the distributions;**
- iii) UNFPA with UNHCR SURGE have a common policy on training refugee committees including highly motivated refugee women against Sexual Gender Base Violence; b) UNFPA and UNHCR trains police and immigration officers, military personal, *Alkalos*, and IPs on SGBV at the field level and in Banjul; c) UNHCR trains police and immigration officers, military personal, *Alkalos*, and ten persons of refugees among the refugee committees, and IPs on code of conduct by October 2006 at the field level.**

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

7. 1 Objectives and intervention strategy

The overall objective for the period September 2006 – September 2007 is to repatriate all Casamance refugees, should the situation in Senegal be stable and making local integration for the remaining caseload acceptable for the Government of The Gambia. In addition, the objective is to improve - or at least maintain - the food security conditions of refugees, with particular attention for the nutritional status of children under five.

The complete set of JAM recommendations is summarized below. ***As suggested in the UNHCR / WFP mission guidelines, an action plan needs to be elaborated by the UNHCR and WFP Gambia country offices, which will permit regular monitoring of progress (monthly).***

Considering all the recommendations below, **the JAM suggests that substantial joint resource mobilization efforts will be taken, including a field visit for interested donors and joint donor meetings.**

To support decision-making on programmes to be efficiently operational, the JAM recommends that:

- i) UNHCR Gambia endorse the refugee figures expected to be provided by The Gambian Red Cross Society on 18th September 2006;
- ii) UNHCR Gambia creates a refugee database from the Casamance refugees registration exercise carried out by The Gambian Red Cross Society,
- iii) the UNHCR provide a Family/Ration Card to all the refugees for assistance purposes (the JAM Team understands that the refugees have all been recognised as refugees on a group or *prima facie* basis). Information available to the JAM is that registration has effectively excluded returning Gambian nationals who were previously based in Casamance and that this group of individuals are systematically asked to return to their areas of origin in The Gambia;
- iv) sporadic arrivals continue to be registered by the Police & Immigration authorities in accordance with the procedure already described above;
- v) the mission of the UNHCR Regional Registration Officer, from the Hub Accra, early October 2006, to further train the GRCS and the UNHCR staff on data base management, creation of a refugee data base, possibly with the support of photos, in view of control processing and field monitoring;
- vi) immediate reinforcement of UNHCR staff capacity in Banjul office, by the support of a Field Officer (programme), first for a period of three months reviewed for a longer period if necessary;
- vii) in parallel, the presence of SURGE (protection) to follow up the data management;
- viii) and to re-examine the closure of the UNHCR Office in Banjul in order to support the refugees and the host families (for 6 months, until June 2007 or longer period as the situation may dictate);
- ix) the partnership with different concerned actors (Government, UN System, NGOs, local administration including *Alkalos*) should continue with

participation of refugees and host families in order to increase the common relationships between border communities.

7.2 Recommendations for repatriation, and local integration

- i) UNHCR should provide mine awareness sessions for all refugees with the support of leaflets from the British Council;
- ii) UNHCR should seek resources to ensure that the majority of the refugees will return home in safety and dignity with transport capacity and NFI while at the same time engaging the government on local integration options;
- iii) UNHCR and the UN Country Team in general should prepare the agenda, especially on support to income generating activities, education and health sectors for a proper local integration in the future;

7.3 Recommendations for food, nutrition and self-reliance

1. With respect to the *food distribution*,

- i) the JAM recommends that a food ration of 2100 Kcal is provided to all the refugees, composed of cereals, pulses, oil, salt, and CSB;
- ii) the JAM recommends that food distribution be based only on Family/Ration card distribution cards established per refugee families (including the list of family members) by UNHCR;
- iii) food distribution be organized in a location 5 km north from the border villages for security reasons
- iv) at least one Logistics Assistant and one Food Aid Monitor support the WFP office;
- v) Taking into consideration the distance between the different villages in order to review the quality of the village stores, a Logistics Capacity Assessment is undertaken or updated before the end of October 2006;
- vi) Presence of UNHCR and WFP staff is advisable as to verify the implementation of the various recommendations of the JAM;
- vii) Food will be distributed through the existing implementing partner GRCS that will prioritize the vulnerable during the distribution;
- viii) GRCS automatically eliminates the names of the beneficiaries from the food distribution list if two consecutive distributions have been missed, without prior notice;
- ix) WFP/GRCS to have the participation of women in food distribution (all immediate actions);
- x) Make weight verification by refugees possible, therefore WFP/GRCS to purchase soonest two scales, one for the distribution site, and one scale to be used during food basket monitoring;
- xi) Beneficiary should use their own bags for the collection of their salt ration; and
- xii) Losses and oil dripping should be minimized through the use of plastic sheets on the floor, to be provide by UNHCR;
- xiii) the JAM recommends that children enrolled in the Gambian schools should be integrated in the school feeding programme in dialogue with the local authorities, UNICEF and the national partners of the education; these stakeholders will assume that schooling of refugee children will be done in French.
- xiv) the JAM recommends advocating for the host families to receive food from another source as they will not benefit from the WFP food aid. As a way of laying the foundation for the eventual integration of refugees in the Gambian communities, food assistance to host families can reduce the burden of feeding the refugees in their household.

2. With respect to the **storage of food**, it is recommended that GRCS returns the remaining balances after a food distribution to the WFP warehouse; this should also be included in the next MoU (immediate action);
3. Concerning **reporting on food distributions**,
 - i) WFP to implement food basket monitoring, in conjunction with UNHCR, and post distribution monitoring report outlines, from September 2006 onwards;
 - ii) UNHCR to provide WFP with an overview of the planned number of food beneficiaries by category, gender and age group on a monthly basis; and
 - iii) GRCS to provide an overview of the realized number of beneficiaries by category, gender and age group on a monthly basis.

4. Concerning **self reliance**

The JAM recommends that FAO procures seeds (mainly maize, late millet and cash crops such as groundnuts, and vegetable) and tools by March 2007 for distribution in April 2007.

7.4 Recommendations for health, water, sanitation, education, and protection

5. The JAM recommends for the **health** the following:

- i) WHO/UNICEF ascertain that children are all covered against measles at nine months and fully immunised at 12 months, following WHO recommendations, and that outreach teams vaccinate children against measles and yellow fever as was the case for meningitis with a proven vaccination cards of the vaccines injected;
- ii) WHO assess the cost recovery system in place in the main health posts of the Western Division and the Bwiam hospital in order to quantify the generic drugs;
- iii) UNHCR ensures that from the Ministry of Health register fee is free for all refugees going to health posts;
- iv) UNHCR allocates a monthly register fee subsidy **for an agreed number of refugees with the administration of the Sibonor health centre only for the next three months as the medical structure** is a private institution;
- v) UNHCR distributes basic emergency health kits (one thousand people) for the first three months of the operation in the above medical centres, which would minimise refugees requesting cash to the host family;
- vi) WHO and other donors continue distributing mosquito nets in the 46 villages in order to have 100% full coverage; and that HIV sessions take place with distribution of pamphlets/leaflets.

6. With respect to **water and sanitation**,

UNICEF assess the situation in all villages regarding hand pump wells, concrete lined wells, and pit latrines in order to calculate the number of pit latrines needed to facilitate better hygiene conditions; ii) start chlorinating wells so that people have access to potable water; iii) distribute soap for refugees and possibly host families in particular to pregnant women and children.

7. Concerning **education**, it is recommended that **UNICEF:**

- i) assess the situation of all the schools where refugees are present in the Western Division in view of calculating the ratio of rooms/the new refugee

- children enrolled at school and augment the number of classrooms in the existing Gambian schools;
- ii) evaluate the quality of the school building and resources in view of possible repairs and/or upgrading; and with UNHCR support receives plastic sheeting to cover any schools that are deemed appropriate;
- iii) provide sufficient school materials (chairs, tables, notebooks, pencils, pens, etc.);
- iv) with the support of UNHCR, and the Gambian Department of Education, identify teachers for refugee children who already attended at least two scholarships in the Casamance;
- v) and The Gambian Department of Education a) ensure that school fees are free of charge until the end of the year, allowing refugee and host families to support uniforms and shoes first, and later regularise the entrance fee, b) through teachers, verify that all children entering school are fully covered.

8. Concerning **protection**

- i) ICRC/GRCS trace the families as soon as possible for reunification, preferably before the distributions start, which will minimise their stress in difficult environment; and UNHCR continue to interview refugees upon arrival.
- ii) UNHCR with the IP create a refugee committee in each hosting village, no later than October 2006, with a ratio of five persons in small villages and 10 persons in villages of more than 100 refugees, and for which presence of women are highly supported;
- iii) 50% of women refugees would participate in the distributions;
- iv) UNFPA with UNHCR SURGE have a common policy on training refugee committees including highly motivated refugee women against Sexual Gender Base Violence;
- v) UNFPA and UNHCR trains police and immigration officers, military personal, *Alkalos*, and IPs on SGBV at the field level and in Banjul;
- vi) UNHCR SURGE trains police and immigration officers, military personal, *Alkalos*, ten persons of refugees among the refugee committees, and IPs on code of conduct by October 2006 at the field level.

7.5 Recommended surveys and assessments

- i) UNHCR to organize a registration of refugee numbers latest in January 2007;
- ii) UNHCR / WFP to carry out a Joint Assessment Mission in January 2007 for cost and livelihood of the refugees on copying mechanisms including the issue of land promised by host communities and the level of vulnerability/food security of the host community in January 2007.
- iii) UNHCR to conduct a nutritional survey in November 2006.

7.6 Programme options

For WFP:

- i) the preparation of IRA-EMOP for three months between October and December 2006
- ii) the preparation of an EMOP to cover the period of food distribution from January to September 2007
- iii) a country specific Contingency plan

For UNHCR:

the 2007 Regional Country Operation Plan (COP) updated

For OCHA:

Contingency plan 2006 – 2007.

TERMS OF REFERENCE**Context**

Since the hostilities resumed in the western part of the southern region in Senegal (in Casamance), numbers of people fled their villages and became refugees in The Gambia. The process of population influxes in The Gambia started really since January 2006. But until June 2006, the population crossed the border regularly between the two countries. For this situation occurred after a massive and durable intervention of the Senegalese army, the installation of the refugees in the Western Division of The Gambia are hosted by Gambian families in different villages. Casamance populations fled their villages and have not possibility to go back rapidly like in the past.

Objectives

Taking into account the continue influx of refugees in the Western Division, UNHCR and WFP decide to undertake a Joint Assessment Mission in the aim to determine the amplitude of the phenomena, the distribution of the refugees into the different villages. In this sense, the main objective of the mission is to assess the situation of refugees from the Southern region of Senegal (Casamance) in the Gambian Western Division. The specific objectives are:

- to determine what measures are necessary and what assistance is required to ensure that refugees; (i) have access to food that is adequate in quantity and quality to meet their nutritional needs, and to related non-food supplies, services and protection to maintain (or restore) nutritional health in the next 6-12 months, and (ii) progressively achieve the maximum possible level of sustainable self-reliance pending a durable solution;
- to define the types of food and food-security related assistance required; the number of people to be provided for; how the food and related assistance should be delivered, targeted and distributed; how initial assistance to self-reliance should be provided;
- to assess the logistic (transport, storage and handling) means and management capacities available to acquire in-country supplies, receive imported supplies, deliver supplies to the refugee sites, and maintain operational reserve stocks, with proper accountability and minimum losses throughout the supply chain, including any logistic constraints to be considered in the design of the overall programme;
- to determine whether immediate measures are necessary and, if so, what assistance is required;
- to identify and assess the resources and capacities of potential implementing partners to undertake food distribution, self-reliance and monitoring activities;
- to assemble the data required for operational planning and budgeting, and to initiate implementation;
- to enable specific, credible project proposals (for the next 6-12 months) to be elaborated and submitted to donors for funding.

Methodology

The JAM will combine various data collection techniques, while cross-checking the information, as to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. Information will be collected by the JAM through a combination of:

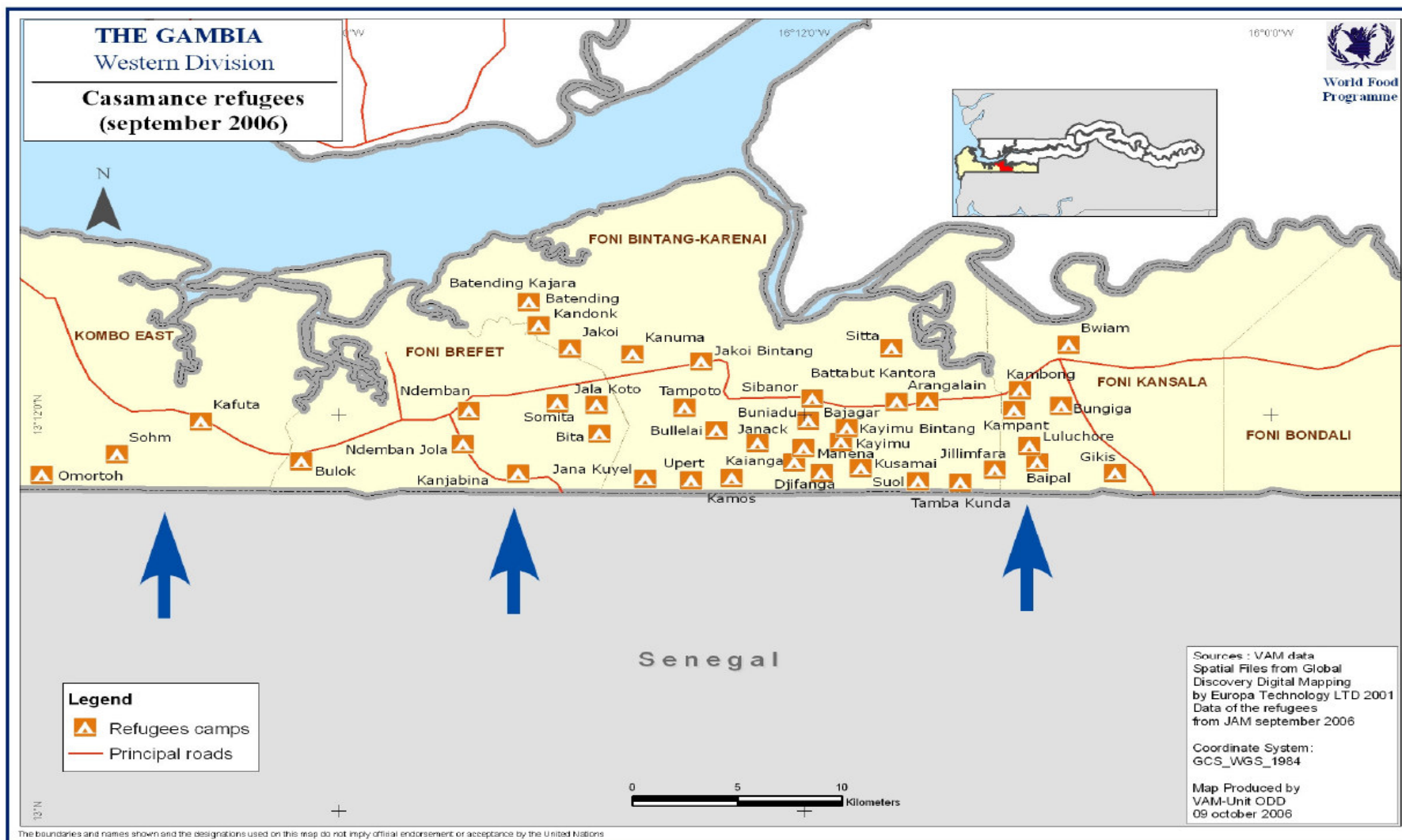
- Reviewing and analysing relevant reports;
- Meetings with national, regional and local authorities, NGOs, and other organizations working with refugees in food and related programmes;
- Meetings with UNHCR and WFP staff, as well as with representatives from the donor community;
- Visits of refugee locations in the villages, compounds and their host families (meetings with refugee leaders and representatives; discussions with groups of refugees; inspection of general conditions at the sites, including food and water availability and cooking arrangements; visits to clinics, schools and other community services and discussions with health workers, teachers and community service workers; visits to markets within the settlement and in the vicinity, and discussions with traders; and discussions with local communities and their Alkalo...)
- At the end of the mission, the JAM will summarize its key recommendations through an Aide-mémoire and presented to the respective UNHCR and WFP Country Offices, as well as to donors, governments and representatives of other relevant UN and other organizations. The final report will be approved by UNHCR and WFP in accordance with the JAM Guidelines and the UNHCR – WFP MoU.
- The JAM will be composed of joint UNHCR and WFP team with the participation of donors, Government, NGOs and other UN organizations.

Required Output

The output required is a concise report summarizing the key findings of the mission and presenting a comprehensive feeding programme, including:

- an estimate of food needs and related non-food needs,
- food beneficiary numbers (targeted by group of vulnerability and risk),
- a proposal concerning the types of food aid interventions and
- operational measures to ensure an efficient and effective intervention.

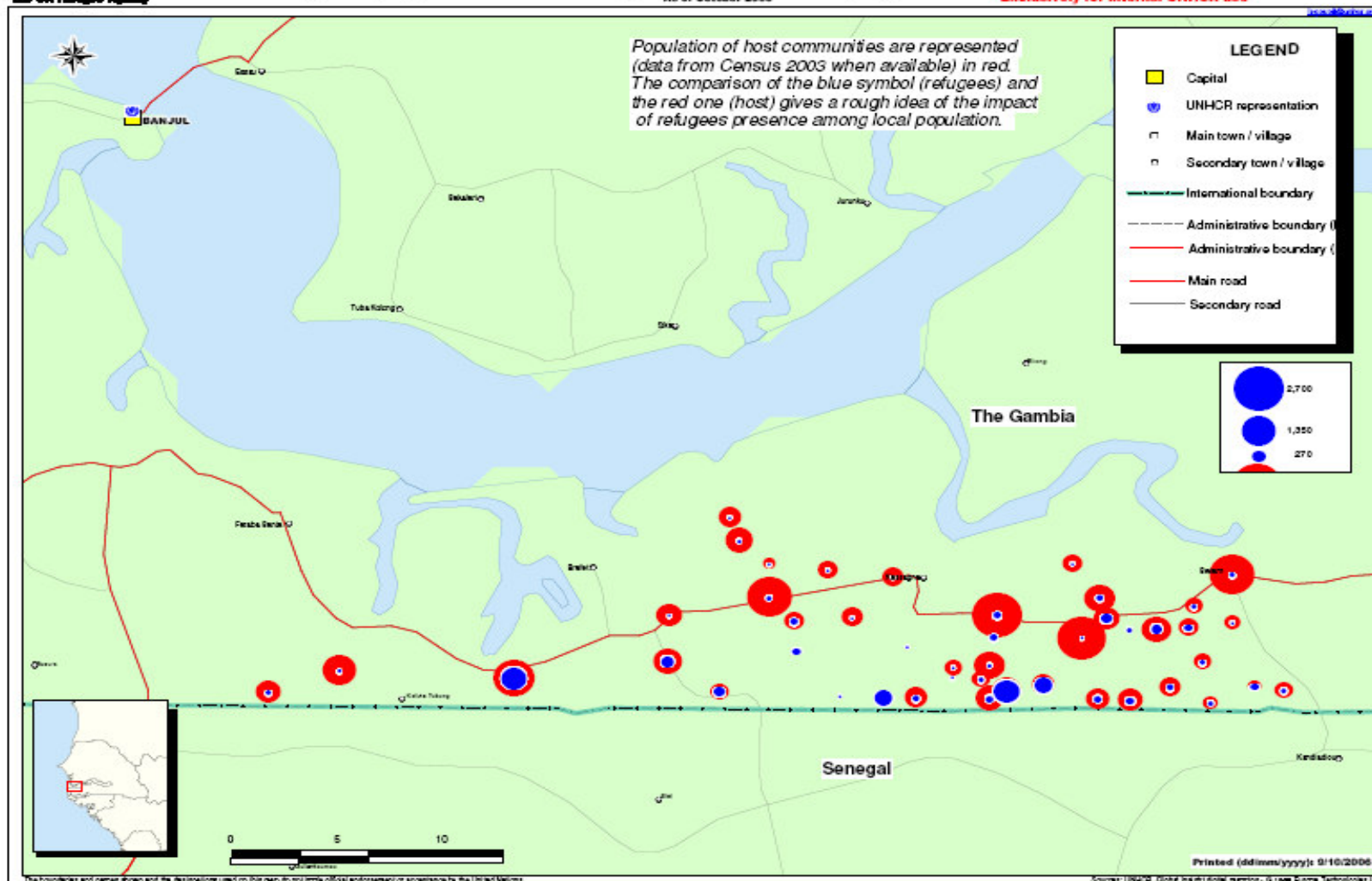
ANNEX 2.1



Refugee population compared to host population

As of October 2006

Exclusively for internal UNHCR use



List of refugee villages assessed during the Joint assessment Mission

Arrengalleh,

Batabutu Kantora,
Bitta,
Boipal,
Bulock,
Bunyadou,
Bwiam Karunai,

Deleno,

Jalokoto,
Janack,

Kaimo Karanai,
Kaimoi,
Kappa,
Karanai,

Luluchior,

Ndemban Joola,

Sibanor,
Sohm,
Sitta

Bwiam hospital
Sibanor WEC Health Post

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ANNEX 5
Breakdown Refugees Figures (September 14, 2006)

No.	Name of Village	No. of HH & Host Families	No. of Dependants of Host Families	Total No. of Refugees	Breakdown per Age Range (years)				Sex		Vulnerables				
					0 to 5	6 to 17	18 to 59	60 & Above	Male	Female	Elderly	Disability	SHH	UAMS	Total
1	Aragalian	14	176	181	44	48	74	15	84	97	15	-	-	-	15
2	Batabut Kantora	12	106	83	21	22	33	7	40	43	7	-	-	-	7
3	Bitta	10	93	140	31	43	52	14	59	81	14	-	-	-	14
4	Bajakarr	17	213	173	31	68	60	14	92	81	14	-	-	-	14
5	Bulok	52	700	837	184	250	340	63	417	420	63	-	-	-	63
6	Bunyadu	9	67	90	23	27	37	3	46	44	3	-	-	-	3
7	Bwiam Kurunlie	3	37	48	9	20	15	4	21	27	4	-	-	-	4
8	Batendeng Kajara	2	34	12	5	2	5	-	4	8	-	-	-	-	-
9	Jakoi Paima	1	15	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	1
10	Jifanga	37	604	849	146	275	362	66	456	393	66	-	3	-	69
11	Jilantar	4	93	65	10	19	34	2	35	30	2	-	-	-	2
12	Jalokoto	10	99	107	20	43	40	4	53	54	4	-	-	-	4
13	Janack	20	302	81	18	25	37	1	40	41	1	-	-	-	1
14	Janaguel	1	13	19	1	7	9	2	8	11	2	-	-	-	2
15	Kaimu Bintang	4	58	37	7	15	11	4	18	19	4	-	1	2	7
16	Kaimu Karannai	4	79	61	8	20	28	5	31	30	5	-	-	-	5
17	Kayanga	6	71	53	17	13	19	4	25	28	4	1	-	1	6
18	Kappa	9	82	126	33	29	53	11	54	72	11	1	8	-	20
19	Karunorr	3	38	115	20	38	47	10	50	65	10	-	2	-	12
20	Kusamai	22	365	443	94	112	197	40	211	232	40	-	4	-	44
21	Luluchor	6	72	39	4	11	19	5	18	21	5	-	3	-	8
22	Ndemban Jola	24	334	243	52	83	95	13	110	133	13	-	-	-	13
23	Omorto	6	101	43	6	22	13	2	25	18	2	-	-	-	2
24	Upat	14	198	418	81	153	143	41	206	212	41	-	-	-	41
25	Sibanor	8	130	99	25	26	39	9	39	60	9	-	-	-	9
26	Sitta	1	15	10	2	4	3	1	4	6	1	-	-	-	1
27	Seaul	18	186	105	11	21	65	8	72	33	8	-	-	-	8

No.	Name of Village	No. of HH & Host Families	No. of Dependants of Host Families	Total No. of Refugees	Breakdown per Age Range (years)				Sex		Vulnerables				
					0 to 5	6 to 17	18 to 59	60 & Above	Male	Female	Elderly	Disability	SHH	UAMS	Total
28	Sohm	3	39	36	8	10	15	3	18	18	3	-	-	-	3
29	Tamba Kunda	14	207	139	28	27	70	14	77	62	14	-	-	-	14
30	Denilo	7	118	58	10	14	28	6	28	30	6	-	-	-	6
31	Kafuta	1	10	16	6	6	4	-	10	6	-	-	-	-	-
32	Kanbong Madina	3	23	42	15	10	10	7	13	29	7	-	-	-	7
33	Bugingha	2	32	10	1	7	1	1	4	6	1	-	1	-	2
34	Baipah	4	100	47	1	9	30	7	32	15	7	-	1	-	8
35	Manena	2	36	29	6	4	16	3	13	16	3	-	1	-	4
36	Bulali	1	10	12	2	7	2	1	6	6	1	-	1	-	2
37	Gikess	3	29	47	10	13	19	5	26	21	5	-	-	-	5
38	Batendeng	3	26	13	4	2	6	1	8	5	1	-	-	-	1
39	Kamosor	2	29	7	2	-	4	1	4	3	1	-	-	-	1
40	Somita	7	105	52	12	18	18	4	28	24	4	-	-	-	4
41	Kanjabina	18	200	203	38	55	94	16	96	107	16	-	-	-	16
42	Kandonku	2	29	25	8	5	11	1	13	12	1	-	-	-	1
43	Ndemban	3	34	4	-	1	1	2	1	3	2	-	-	-	2
44	Tampato	3	47	20	4	7	9	-	8	12	-	-	-	-	-
45	Kanuma	1	22	7	2	2	3	-	5	2	-	-	-	-	-
46	Jakoi Bintang	1	4	2	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total		397	5 381	5 247	1 060	1 593	2 173	421	2 611	2 636	421	2	25	3	451

Mean per village	9	117	114	23	35	47	9	57	57	9	0,04	0,54	0,07	10
Percentage				20,2%	30,4%	41,4%	8,0%	49,8%	50,2%	8,0%	0,04%	0,48%	0,06%	8,60%

**WFP/UNHCR JOINT ASSESSMENT MISSION
FOR CASAMANCE REFUGEES IN THE GAMBIA
6 – 14 September 2006**

**AIDE-MEMOIRE FOR DEBRIEFING OF THE MISSION TO UNHCR AND WFP COUNTRY
OFFICES**

BANJUL: September 14, 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND MAIN FINDINGS

The Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) for Senegalese refugees (from Casamance) in The Gambia was conducted from 6 to 14 September 2006.

1. Objectives

Main objective:

Assess the situation of refugees from the Southern region of Senegal (Casamance) in the Gambian Western Division.

This consists:

- to determine what measures are necessary and what assistance is required to ensure that refugees; (i) have access to food that is adequate in quantity and quality to meet their nutritional needs, and to related non-food supplies, services and protection to maintain (or restore) nutritional health in the next 6-12 months, and (ii) progressively achieve the maximum possible level of sustainable self-reliance pending a durable solution;
- to define the types of food and food-security related assistance required; the number of people to be provided for; how the food and related assistance should be delivered, targeted and distributed; how initial assistance to self-reliance should be provided;
- to assess the logistic (transport, storage and handling) means and management capacities available to acquire in-country supplies, receive imported supplies, deliver supplies to the refugee sites, and maintain operational reserve stocks, with proper accountability and minimum losses throughout the supply chain, including any logistic constraints to be considered in the design of the overall programme;
- to determine whether immediate measures are necessary and, if so, what assistance is required;
- to identify and assess the resources and capacities of potential implementing partners to undertake food distribution, self-reliance and monitoring activities;
- to assemble the data required for operational planning and budgeting, and to initiate implementation;
- to enable specific, credible project proposals (for the next 6-12 months) to be elaborated and submitted to donors for funding.

2. Methodology

The Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) team⁴ held different meetings in Banjul with WFP and UNHCR staff, Government officials, UN Agencies (UNICEF), and NGOs (Concern Universal, CRS, Christian Children Fund, and GAFNA) and The Gambia Red Cross Society (GRCS).

To achieve the objectives of the mission, various methodologies were used including meetings with security services in Sibamor, local authorities (*Alkalos*), host population and refugees. Visits to compounds were carried out for Focus Group Discussion and to observe their living conditions. In addition, secondary data was reviewed and analyzed.

3. Main findings, recommendations and programmes options

Refugee figures

The JAM recommends that UNHCR Gambia or UNHCR Dakar shall create a refugee database for the Casamance refugees based on registration exercise carried out by GRCS that was undertaken in the Western area in parallel to the JAM.

The JAM recommends that the UNHCR Gambia endorses the refugee figures expected to be provided by GRCS on 18th September 2006.

The JAM recommends a mission by the Regional Registration Officer as soon as possible to provide support on the data base management to UNHCR Gambia/Dakar offices in view of controlling the processing and field monitoring.

The JAM recommends that a new registration exercise takes place in January 2007 prior to the recommended New JAM with database updated in a regularly basis.

To allow programmes to start efficiently and operational, the JAM recommends that UNHCR should urgently provide Identity Cards for all refugees physically present.

Human resources

The JAM recommends the reinforcement of UNHCR staff capacity in Banjul office, by a Field Officer, in charge of database management for a period of six months that could be reviewed for a longer period if necessary. Should the situation remains as it is (same figures, border closed, border insecurity for the Gambian / refugees, etc.), it is recommended to re-examine the closure of the UNHCR Office in Banjul to allow the office to support the refugees and the host families (for 6 months, until June 2007).

The JAM recommends that: i) WFP Gambia be reinforced by a Food aid monitor, ii) Logistic Assistant, iii) WFP and UNHCR should start post distribution monitoring after each distribution, iii) the implementing partner be chosen for the distribution of food and non food items, working closely with the Food aid monitor and the Field officer.

Food aid support and self-reliance activities

The JAM recommends that food support is provided to the refugees for twelve months from October 2006 to September 2007 taking into account:

- i) the exhausted community food reserve of 2005 and partly of the 2006 of the host families,

⁴ WFP: Mamadou Diouf, Regional Emergency Assessment Officer (ODD-Ouagadougou), Shioko Momose, OIC, WFP Gambia (The).
UNHCR: Véronique Genaille, Senior Regional Global (Re) Integration Officer (Accra, Ghana)

- ii) the refugees arrived during the rainy season (16th August) that largely consumed the family food needs (number of refugees is over than the number of the host family),
- iii) they left their crops/assets behind without the possibility to carry food (and non food items) to The Gambia,
- iv) when they arrived in The Gambia, although most of the host families were ready to provide land, it was too late to cultivate,
- v) the access to food is the major constraint because of lack of income and resources and higher prices of rice in the market and shops: a land-lord with over 20 people, including refugees and his own family, must buy 50 kg of rice (500-550 GD) weekly to ensure two meals a day for his family and hosted refugees,
- vi) groundnut is the main cash crop for local communities; the production of 2005 bought by the Government is not yet paid to the producers; that creates a shortage of resources for host families
- vii) the possibility of participation of refugees in rural activities (cultivation, domestic livestock development) during the next rainy season (2007) which will allow them to become more self-sufficient and less dependent to food aid support.

Food distributed will be based only on ID refugee cards and on family food distribution cards established per refugee families (including the list of family members) by UNHCR. Food will be distributed to refugees physically present.

It is recommended a ration of 550g including 400g of rice, 60g of pulses, 60g of CSB, 25g of vegetable oil, and 5g of iodised salt, per person per day to be distributed. This will be 2112 Kilocalories following the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the UNHCR and the WFP.

It is recommended that food be distributed 5 km north from all the border villages to avoid insecurity remaining in these areas. In addition, the presence of national police, WFP, UNHCR is necessary at the day of distribution.

In order to improve the distribution system, the database on beneficiaries should be updated regularly, after every distribution before the feeding list is submitted to WFP. It is proposed that feeding list be submitted one week before distribution starts, to allow partners to crosscheck the accuracy in order to enhance smooth implementation and manage time effectively.

The JAM recommends to FAO to distribute seeds and tools to refugee families during April 2007.

Further the JAM recommends advocating for the distribution of food to the host community, with development programmes as a way of laying the foundation for the eventual integration of refugees in those communities and also in order to reduce the burden of the host families.

Health

The JAM recommends:

- the WHO support to assess the cost recovery system in place in the main health posts (Brikama, Sibanor) and the Bwiam hospital in order to quantify the generic drugs.
- that UNHCR distributes basic emergency health kits (one thousand people) for the first three months of the operation in the above three medical centres.
- that: i) children are all covered against measles at nine months and b) fully immunised at 12 months, following WHO recommendations, ii) UNHCR allocates a monthly subsidy for the next three months to both the Sibanor health centre and the hospital in Bwiam. Distribution of refugee card will allow refugees not to rely on host families to pay their bills and , UNHCR will pay directly to the health institutions;

- that WHO provides an intensified distribution of more mosquito nets in all villages hosting refugees in order to have 100% full coverage,
- that UNICEF and Department of State for Education will verify through teachers that: i) all children entering school are fully covered; ii) outreach teams vaccinate children against measles as was the case for meningitis with a proven vaccination cards.

Malaria, HIV and infections such as Tuberculosis are common. Although WHO has provided 500 bed nets against malaria that will be incorporated in the Non Food Items arriving from Accra, the quantity is not sufficient.

Water and sanitation

In close coordination with UNICEF, the JAM supports that:

- UNICEF assess the situation in all villages regarding hand pump wells, concrete lined wells, and pit latrines in order to calculate the number of pit latrines needed to facilitate better hygiene conditions,
- start chlorinating wells so that people have access to potable water,
- distribute soap for specific beneficiaries especially pregnant women and children, as the UNHCR package will not be sufficient in terms of soap.

Education

The JAM recommends that UNICEF:

- assess the situation of all the schools in Western Division in view of calculating the ratio of classrooms/the new refugee children enrolled at school and augment the number of classrooms in existing Gambian school,
- evaluate the quality of the school building and resources in view of possible repairs and/or upgrading,
- provide sufficient school materials (chairs, tables, notebooks, pencils, pens...),
- and UNHCR identify teachers for refugee children already attended in French academic system in Casamance.

This a main concern to (refugee children who already attend at least two scholarship in Casamance) be discussed with UNICEF, UNHCR, Gambian Dep. of Education

Nutrition

The number of meals for refugees and their host families is reduced to lunch and dinner. The breakfast is mainly served for children from some portions saved from the previous dinner. Main components of one meal are rice with wild grass leaves. The continuation of such poor feeding in proteins and lipids can have adverse consequences on the nutritional status of children under-five years and pregnant and lactating women. The JAM recommends that the nutrition situation of children under-five and most vulnerable groups should be followed up by UNHCR, WFP and implementing partner in order to put in place most adequate support if necessary.

The JAM recommends that a nutrition survey takes place in November 2006 to better capture the nutritional situation of the refugee population.

Logistics

The JAM recommends that:

- Taking into consideration the distance between the different villages, a Logistic Capacity Assessment is undertaken or updated before the end of October 2006;
- WFP and UNHCR should take the necessary measures to ensure that food is managed and distributed in accordance with the MoU (chap. 5).

Partnership

The JAM recommends that the partnership with different stakeholders (Government, UN System, NGOs, GRCS) continues for better coordination and management of the situation. Regular meetings with local administration including Alkalos should continue with participation of refugees and host families in order to increase understandings between border communities.

Repatriation

Even if the caseload of refugees is not yet stable, the JAM recommends that UNHCR, in close collaboration with the respective Governments of The Gambia and Senegal, should look at the repatriation of refugees who voluntarily express the need in respect of UNHCR mandate in protection and preserving dignity and integrity of refugees.

Local integration

Except few cases regarding refugees hosted in Alkalo's compounds, all refugees are living with their relatives. The host families and refugees are closely related and many belong to the same families. They use the same language, share same habits and customs. It should be encouraged if refugees express the need to be locally integrated. Some of the old refugees that came in past conflicts have already acquired house and land in the Western Division. Local population are able to provide land for cultivation and housing to the refugees. The JAM recommends that UNHCR, Government and local authorities could facilitate a process of local integration of refugees and give a support if necessary.

Protection

The JAM recommends that:

- UNHCR establishes a refugee committee in each hosting village. 50% of the member of the committee are women ;
- ICRC/GRCS to trace separated refugee families in view of reunification prior to distribution by the implementing partners (IPs);
- UNHCR interviews refugees upon arrivals with the support of IPs;
- UNHCR trains police officers, immigration officers, military personal, Alkalos, and ten persons of refugees among the refugee committees, and IPs on sexual gender based violence (SGBV) at the field level and in Banjul.
- UNHCR trains police officers, immigration officers, military personal, Alkalos, and ten persons of refugees among the refugee committees, and IPs on code of conduct by September 2006 on field level.

JAM

The JAM recommends:

- that another JAM is undertaken to look at the livelihood of the refugees on coping mechanisms including the issue of land provision that was addressed by host communities and the level of vulnerability/food security of the host community in January 2007.
- the implementation of food for asset (shelter) with a family ration after the rainy season in view of increasing the local hosting capacity in a large refugee hosting villages (Bulock, Janak, Gifanga, Tambakunda, Ndemban Jola).

Programme options

The JAM recommends the following programme options:

For WFP:

- the preparation of IRA-EMOP for three months between October and December 2006
- the preparation of an EMOP to cover the period of food distribution from January to September 2007
- a country specific Contingency plan

For UNHCR:

- the Country Operation Plan (COP) for 2007

For OCHA:

- the contingency plan for 2007