

UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

DONOR UPDATE

4 JULY 2006

FIRST ELECTIONS IN 40 YEARS BRING NEW HOPE,
BUT AT LEAST 10 MILLION CONGOLESE PEOPLE
CONTINUE TO SUFFER

UNICEF aims to:

- Provide life-saving emergency assistance to internally displaced populations.
- Prevent child morbidity and mortality
- Ensure access to education for conflict affected children



1. ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

Overview

The year 2005 in the DRC was characterized both by progress towards stability, peace and democracy and, at the same time, the persistence of conflict and emergency situations that define the country as one of the most serious humanitarian crises in the world. The long lasting war has led to the deaths of some 4 million people, while 1,200 people are estimated to die in silence every day due to ongoing epidemics and conflict-related emergencies, according to the International Rescue Committee¹. Yet the Congolese people have clearly signalled their desire for change: in December 2005, the constitution was approved through referendum by a majority of the population and 25.6 million citizens have registered to vote for the upcoming elections scheduled in July 2006.

Despite the hope for peace and stability, the DRC remains in a perpetual chronic emergency with episodes of acute humanitarian crisis affecting vulnerable civilians. Grave human rights violations, abuses and violence, including rape and sexual violence are far too common for many women, men and children in the DRC. Furthermore, continued and repetitive displacements of populations due to conflict, regular outbreaks of deadly epidemics, severely limited access to even the most basic health care, lack of access to safe water and sanitation for over half of the population, and persistent malnutrition, indicate that the DRC still requires sustained humanitarian support to save the lives and reduce the vulnerability of its poorest and most vulnerable residents. More than 1.66 million people remain displaced in the DRC, most of whom are women, adolescents and children, and a further 1.68 million recent returnees are only now starting to rebuild their shattered lives. An estimated 120,000 people flee their homes every month, mostly in Ituri, the Kivu provinces and Katanga². Homes, villages, markets, fields, health structures and schools have been looted and often destroyed, leaving families without access to basic services or shelter.

On-going humanitarian crisis in central Katanga

The current fighting opposing Mayi-Mayi armed groups and FARDC (DRC Armed Forces) in the four territories of Manono, Malemba-Nkulu, Mitwaba and Pweto, is taking place within a long lasting and very complex conflict. Major economic and political issues are at stake at the provincial level but also at national level in a context of rampant corruption, total impunity, ethnic manipulation and political scheming. In a province approximately the size of France, there is hardly any way to reach main towns of the central part of Katanga except by plane. According to OCHA's most recent estimates, around 165,000 people have been displaced during the past few months in the central part of the province alone. The MONUC peace keeping force is very limited in number, and it cannot be deployed over the entire affected area. A few international NGOs have a permanent presence in Mitwaba, Dubie, Pweto, Manono and Malemba-Nkulu but cannot patrol the area due to the poor roads conditions and the very dangerous security situation.

Fighting has resulted in waves of displacement, severe food shortages and malnutrition, high morbidity and mortality rates reported for both the displaced and the host population, sexual and gender based violence and family separations. The humanitarian response is unanimously reported as insufficient, although it is recognized that resources available are limited in the light of challenging logistical constraints and an unpredictable security situation.



The very recent surrender of Gedeon, the main Mayi-Mayi leader in the area, represents a great opportunity for the stabilisation of the area and an increase in humanitarian access. Despite remaining tensions within the community and residual insecurity, it is reasonable to expect that many IDPs will soon consider returning to their places of origin. This represents new challenges for UNICEF. In addition to the release and the reintegration of hundreds of children formerly associated with fighting forces, houses and public infrastructures have been destroyed and basic services are in tatters. It is essential to implement sustainable stabilizing programmes and strengthen the protection of civilian in order to combat the roots of this long lasting conflict.

Continuing clashes in Ituri and in the Kivus

¹ The International Rescue Committee Mortality study Dec 2004

² According to OCHA, 2006 Humanitarian Action Plan

Eastern DRC continues to be one of the most serious humanitarian crises in the world. With continuous and repetitive displacement of populations due to conflict, regular outbreaks of deadly epidemics, severely limited access to even the most basic health care, lack of access to safe water and sanitation for over half of the population, and persistent malnutrition, the DRC requires sustained humanitarian assistance to save the lives and reduce the vulnerability of its poorest residents.

The politico-military situation in North Kivu has been increasingly unstable since the end of 2005. Over 37,000 families have been acutely affected as a result of recent crises, the majority due to the offensive against the ADF / NALU (Allied Democratic Forces/National Army of Liberation of Uganda) in the north-east of the province in January, and the ongoing militia activity by dissident FARDC officer Laurent Nkunda in the south-east.

The current waves of insecurity and political instability in Ituri may be viewed as a consequence of the increased military pressure placed on armed groups present in Ituri by the government armed forces. The ongoing operations against illegal armed groups jointly implemented by FARDC and MONUC have resulted in several senior militia commanders being apprehended. This has led to both a splintering of armed groups in the region, and an unpredictable shifting of alliances within former rival armed groups united against the government. Given these politico-military developments, it is extremely difficult to ensure the safe movement for humanitarian actors throughout much of the district, and more importantly of security for Congolese children and women.

Since the beginning of 2006, insecurity has continued to cause large population displacements across South Kivu. The causes remain the same as were seen in the latter half of 2005: threat of violence due to offensives against FDLR (Rwandan Democratic Liberation Forces) and fear of subsequent crimes and abuses perpetrated by both FARDC and FDLR against the community.

2. UNICEF RESPONSE: ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

UNICEF has continued to build on its emergency response capacity through the implementation of multiple projects in collaboration with key NGOs in affected zones. The response has been focused on shelter and non-food items, health and nutrition, education, protection and water and sanitation. More than 100,000 families affected by conflict or natural disaster have been assisted with life-saving shelter and household items, and some 200,000 people have access to safe water and sanitation services as a result of UNICEF interventions. In health, routine immunization services have been improved through increased technical and supply assistance to the Ministry of Health and other partners. Some 7,800,000 children were immunized in a major measles campaign. More than 45,000 children have received life-saving emergency nutrition assistance in some 86 therapeutic feeding centres. UNICEF has supported schools through the distribution of educational supplies and rehabilitation of classrooms, distribution of school supplies to 200,000 internally displaced children and training teachers, as well as to 'non-formal' educators in the alternative education curriculum. UNICEF, in cooperation with different actors, has also initiated activities for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of 2,845 former child soldiers; 1,746 unaccompanied minors were identified and reunified with their families; 15,765 children and women survivors of sexual violence were provided with medical care and/or psychosocial support; and 24,466 street children and children who work in mines were provided with psychosocial care and assistance for education.

120,000 affected people assisted every month in 2006



Since the beginning of 2006, 71,249 vulnerable families have been assisted via the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM), co-managed by OCHA and UNICEF. The aim of RRM is to provide immediate and life saving short term assistance to victims of rapid-onset emergencies in the DRC, including non-food items and emergency shelter, education and water and sanitation. The mechanism is largely implemented by three operational INGO focal points: Solidarités, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and CESVI, which cover North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri respectively. A partnership with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has just been concluded to ensure rapid response capacity for the province of Katanga. Over 356,000 individuals (based on an average of five members per family) have been assisted by the RRM for the first three months of 2006; almost 120,000 per

month. In 2005, the monthly average was 37,000 vulnerable people assisted through RRM, representing an increase of 250% this year to date.

The recent upsurge of IDPs in eastern and southern DRC has stretched UNICEF's financial capacity to the limit. In fact, the various waves of population movements have largely surpassed the forecast of 40,000 IDPs per month for 2006, and thus the preparedness and response plans put in place to face this situation.

UNICEF response to IDPs and conflict-affected populations is not limited to the RRM. UNICEF, with its network of partners, is also able to implement multi-sectoral interventions to assist and protect populations displaced and /or affected by conflict or natural disaster. In addition, displaced people need assistance upon return to restart their lives. UNICEF is also supporting these situations as part of a broader multi-sectoral approach in association with other agencies such as WFP, UNHCR, UNDP, FAO, WHO and partnering NGOs.

Opportunities for strengthening the assistance and protection to vulnerable children

The 2006 Action Plan

2006 is seen as crucial for the consolidation of the country's stabilization and peace and the acceleration of initiatives aimed at the country's recovery, longer term development and reconciliation. In this context, three key objectives have been adopted by the international community in its 2006 Humanitarian Action Plan: 1) saving the lives of those threatened by conflict and other emergency situations, 2) building a protective environment for vulnerable communities and people, and 3) promoting stability to strengthen the transition towards development. These three lines of action have been integrated into UNICEF's humanitarian work in 2005 and will continue to guide its programmes throughout 2006. UNICEF strongly believes that the concurrent implementation of humanitarian actions, recovery and development programmes will ensure a positive and sustained impact on the lives of the most vulnerable populations in the DRC. UNICEF's main strategies and activities aim to strengthen the overall protective environment for children and young people, in particular the most vulnerable amongst them, with particular focus on peace-building and education.

Three months on from the launch of the 2006 Action Plan for the Democratic Republic of Congo, the international community has met just 21 per cent of identified needs.³ Ross Mountain, the Humanitarian Coordinator in the DRC, has said, "The Congolese people deserve better, first and foremost from their own Government in terms of the protection of civilians, respect for humanitarian principles and human rights, provision of basic social services and the restoration of state order. From the international community, they deserve more funding - and the time for that is now."

Coordination and cluster leadership

UNICEF works in close collaboration with other UN agencies as well as with local and international NGOs, state authorities and religious entities throughout DRC. Constantly willing to contribute to the strengthening of the effective, timely and well-coordinated inter-agency response to humanitarian crisis, UNICEF is actively contributing to the Humanitarian Reform agenda, including by participating in the new "cluster approach" to emergency response, which aims to improve the timeliness, predictability and effectiveness of humanitarian action. UNICEF is assuming leadership in five out of the ten "clusters" in the DRC, namely: 1. Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), 2. Education, 3. NFI/emergency Shelter, 4. Nutrition, 5. Emergency telecommunications.

All clusters have been set up at the national level with all partners, including NGOs and national authorities, and are in the process of being set up in the provinces. In addition to these clusters, UNICEF will continue to play a significant role in the coordination of several technical sectors in humanitarian response, such as emergency epidemic control, vaccination activities, sexual and gender based violence, HIV-AIDS, food security, return and reintegration of refugees and IDPs, mine action and protection in isolated or conflict-affected zones.

3. APPEAL REQUIREMENTS AND RECEIPTS

The first two lines of action of the DRC Humanitarian action plan 2006 have been addressed by UNICEF's humanitarian work in 2005 and will continue to guide its programmes throughout 2006:

- **Line of Action 1: "Saving lives"** – Ensuring that there is an adequate and rapid emergency response and immediate protection capacity to meet the needs of those at acute risk.
- **Line of Action 2: building a protective environment for communities** – Safe guarding the ability of existing local structures and communities to function.

³ As of 15 June 2006 according to OCHA/FTS.

Table 1: Funds Received against Appeal

Summary of UNICEF financial needs for 2006 as outlined in the DRC 2006 Humanitarian Action Plan		
Sector	Funds Requested in USD	Percentage funded as of June 2006
Component 1: Saving lives: Humanitarian actions to address immediate life-threatening needs	48,421,240	
Health	30,958,600	4%
Nutrition	3,830,000	14%
Protection: Survivors of sexual-gender based violence	3,136,000	0%
Mine risk awareness and education	1,030,000	0%
Water and sanitation	6,675,200	43%
HIV / AIDS	2,791,040	10%
Component 2 :Building a Protective Environment for Communities: Humanitarian actions designed to minimize the impact of life-threatening situations by improving the coping capacities of vulnerable populations	45,249,872	
Assistance to internally displaced and vulnerable children and women	15,382,080	55%
Education (the total amount requested out of the HAP has been increased by 2 millions given the high number of displaced children requiring emergency education assistance)	6,088,000	61%
Vulnerable orphans and children	1,232,000	0%
Child protection: Unaccompanied/separated children	5,812,800	49%
Return, Reintegration, Rehabilitation	15,156,992	0%
Cluster Leadership and Coordination	1,578,000	0%
Total	93,671,112	24%

Table 2: Funds received by Donor

Donor	Pledged (USD)	Received (USD)	Grand Total (USD)
Ireland Government	-----	1,184,830	1,184,830
Japan Government	-----	10,951,875	10,951,875
Belgium Government	600,000	152,843	752,843
UN OCHA	-----	3,400,800	3,400,800
UN OCHA	-----	975,150	975,150
UNDP (Pooled Fund)	6,219,719	5,060,614	11,280,333
UNDP (Pooled Fund) CERF	5,700,000	-	5,700,000
USA Government	-----	1,000,000	1,000,000
UK National Committee for UNICEF	-----	86,956.50	86,956.50
Global Thematic Humanitarian Fund	-----	75,870.24	75,870.24
GRAND TOTAL	12,519,719	22,888,938.74	35,408,657.74

4. IMPACT OF UNDER-FUNDING AND CURRENT PRIORITIES

The on-going humanitarian crisis in Katanga illustrates relatively well the current gaps and weaknesses of the humanitarian response in the DRC. Life-saving assistance to internally displaced populations and returnees, education and emergency health, have clearly been identified as priority sectors where UNICEF human and financial capacities need to be strengthened.

Assistance to IDPs and affected population (Non-food Items)

Out of the more than 15 million requested for overall humanitarian assistance activities in the DRC (including support to our Rapid Response Mechanism and NFI/Emergency Shelter support to displaced and IDP returnee populations), as well as 15 million for the return and reintegration of returning displaced populations (which includes multisectoral interventions in the fields of education, health, NFI/Emergency Shelter, watsan), we have so far only received funds/pledges for about 9.6 million approximately 35% of the overall needs). With the increasing numbers of IDP populations (250% increase in the first quarter of 2006 vis-a-vis 2005) and our role as Cluster lead in the field of non-food items and emergency shelter, a gap in funding will mean a serious limitation in our ability - together with our implementing partners - to provide emergency assistance to the most vulnerable populations, a majority of whom are children and women.

At the same time, and despite setbacks, families are steadily returning to their villages and plans to rebuild and repair existing infrastructures are underway. While recognizing that the road towards the election for July 2006 will undoubtedly cause at least a short-term increase in instability, the deployment and reinforcement of MONUC in Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu and reinforcement in Katanga, should continue to increase security and access to vulnerable populations. Families that have been displaced for many years will continue to take steps to return to their villages. In this context, it is critical to continue to provide conditions and services that facilitate and encourage these returns and contribute to lasting peace and security for the most vulnerable populations in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Education

Education has chronically been under resourced over the years of the Congolese crisis, often wrongly being considered as a second priority. Sending back children to school is actually an investment for the recovery of the country. While the country is preparing for elections and prospects for peace and recovery are especially favourable, it is estimated that over 1.4 million children are missing the crucial last part of the school year and will not be able to sit their final exams. This situation is mainly due to the general extreme poverty and, in the east, due to the instability.



In order to tackle this huge loss, UNICEF has integrated emergency education into its rapid response mechanism package of activity in 2006. In initiating these activities, UNICEF found that ensuring primary education to internally displaced children had much more impact than providing education only. A classroom is indeed a peaceful and fulfilling space that revealed to be very effective in providing relief to children who have been traumatised by violence and displacement. Moreover, opening a school is the first step for the displaced people to recover some hope. Experience shows that the IDP community is much more dynamic and is enthusiastic to contribute to participatory humanitarian assistance. It also contributes to reducing tensions between displaced and host communities, especially thanks to the introduction of peace and reconciliation components in the refreshing training events for the teachers. It is moreover expected that providing education prevents

some children from becoming involved with armed groups.

In integrating education as an integral part of the emergency response package, UNICEF not only provides education but relieves traumatised children and develops resilience capacity for the most vulnerable and affected communities.

An additional funding of about 2 million is immediately needed in order to ensure access to quality education to displaced children in the eastern and southern parts of the country. The new needs will be covered under the Mid-Year Review of the DRC Humanitarian Action Plan in order to adequately cover the increase in displacements.

Emergency health

The Democratic Republic of Congo has one of the highest under-five mortality rates in the world with 213 deaths per 1,000 live-births among 13 million children under five. This is an increase from 190 per 1,000 live-births in 1995, clearly illustrating deterioration in the health situation of the population of DR Congo. Total child deaths per year were estimated at 484,000, ranking 5th in the world, and the current figure is likely to be even higher. Only 30% of the population has access to health care services.

Ten years of conflict have left the primary and secondary health systems in tatters. IDPs, returning and host populations, in particular women and children, are extremely vulnerable to malaria, acute respiratory infections, diarrhea and worm diseases, the top causes of morbidity and mortality in the country. Vulnerability of children has dramatically increased, especially to common preventable and treatable diseases and conditions such as malaria, measles, malnutrition, respiratory tract infections that are resulting in thousands of infant deaths per year.

Out of the 31 million requested for activities in the field of emergency health interventions (including prevention of malaria in emergency settings, access to emergency medicine and support and immunization) UNICEF DRC has only received 6.4 million. Additional funding is urgently required.

TABLE 3: PRIORITY REQUIREMENTS AS OF 31 MAY 2006

Project	Beneficiaries/coverage	Amount Required (US\$)
Assistance to IDPs and affected Population	90,000 IDPs and conflict-affected families (about 450,000 people) 125,000 returning refugees and IDPs families (about 600,000 people)	21,000,000.00
Education	125,000 conflict affected children and 2500 teachers	2,000,000.00
Emergency health	12 millions vulnerable people: IDPs, returning refugees and IDPs, conflict affected women and children, vulnerable children	24,000,000.00
TOTAL		47,000,000

Further details of the Democratic Republic of Congo Emergency Programme can be obtained from:

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