



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION

REGIONAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL ISSUES

SUB-PROGRAMME 1: FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE TO IDPS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

PROJECT NO. 4.1.4

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND RESTORATION AND REHABILITATION OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, PARTICULARLY IN AND AROUND REFUGEE/IDP CAMPS AND SETTLEMENTS

AUGUST 2006

1. Contextual Framework

The increasing occurrence of armed conflicts in Africa during the last two decades has caused extensive loss of lives, damage to human settlements, and harm to the environment. In most instances these conflicts have forced countries to postpone national development programmes and contributed to the worsening of social, economic and environmental conditions, particularly in human settlements. Conflicts in the Great Lakes Region have crossed state boundaries, resulting in about 2 million refugees and between 10 to 12 million internally displaced persons, of whom women and children bear an inordinate burden.

In most cases, IDPs and refugees are living in fragile ecosystems or densely populated settlements, including coastal and slum urban areas. Factors such as inappropriate land use, poorly designed and constructed buildings and infrastructure, in addition to an increasingly degraded environment put human settlements at risk. Virtually all of these settlements were not planned for such an influx of displaced people within a short period, and the impacts on fragile ecosystems, including protected areas, is believed to be significant. Until recently, the main thrust of refugees and internally displaced people's settlement programmes has been the provision of social services and basic services such as water and sanitation, and relief aid to the refugees and the displaced people.

Little attention has been paid to the stress on the environment and the impact on human vulnerability, particularly of the local/host communities. Localized conflicts around camps and settlements have, therefore been inevitable.

The impact of displacement camps on the environment has been a raging debate among policy makers and humanitarian organisations. Refugees and IDPs rely on wood fuel and construction materials critical for cooking and shelter. Some trees and forms of vegetation are used for food. Illegal logging for timber and firewood decimate forests and vegetation in a relatively short time. Farming communities soon start cultivating around the camps, while pastoralists arrive with their livestock. Consequent pressures placed on the land due to the imbalance of population to available resources accelerate environmental degradation, especially where the settlements exist for several years. Concurrently, environmental degradation increases vulnerabilities in high-risk populations, and triggers resource-based conflict among and between displaced and host communities.

In the Dar Es Salaam Declaration, Heads of state and government expressed their concerns about the destruction of basic services, especially the health and education infrastructures, and the degradation of the ecosystem and human settlements. They have committed themselves to encourage the International Community in assisting host communities and refugee-affected areas, in the spirit of burden-sharing, in mitigating the adverse effects of protracted refugee presence.

Regional and national authorities and environmental management groups in the region have expressed concerns over excessive exploitation of water resources and wetlands, deforestation, and poaching. There is also concern over pollution and contamination resulting from unplanned and unmanaged extraction of minerals. With the loss of forests and surface vegetation, soil erosion and desertification set in, and are exacerbated by excessive grazing and dry land cultivation. During the rainy season, flooding is a real threat especially in urban slums and informal settlements, and farmers exploring new possibilities for gardening face the danger posed by the presence of anti-personnel land mines and unexploded ordnance.

The salience of environmental and human settlements issues in development is only just gaining prominence in most of the 11 core countries. Civil society groups have spearheaded campaigns for environmental conservation and restoration and rehabilitation of human settlements, particularly in areas hosting refugees. In order to ameliorate tensions and conflicts between displaced populations and host communities over environmental issues, the extent of degradation should be measured and ways found to minimize it, or restore its natural viability. In this regard, relevant UN agencies, implementing partners and humanitarian organizations in collaboration with national, sub-national and local government departments and civil society organizations have, or need to, incorporate environment considerations and rehabilitation of human settlements into their programming. For instance, firewood is provided in some camps, and efforts made to encourage the use of improved stoves, communal kitchens, and alternative sources of energy, particularly solar and kerosene. Efforts are constantly made to ensure the supply of clean water and adequate sanitation in both rural and urban areas.

In recent years, some member countries have established environmental management institutions, to provide advice and expertise on environment and human settlements concerns, as well as develop strategies to manage human activities that affect environmental sustainability. Such organisations and authorities have initiated management and conservation practices at local and national level to strengthen local communities' ability to manage and use their natural resources.

Furthermore, recent efforts addressing the dismantling of refugee camps indicate that rehabilitation of both the natural environment and the institutional capacities within local governments formerly hosting camps is a critical factor in ameliorating further conflict and building sustainable settlements.

2. Objectives

Overall objectives

- The overall objective of the project is to undertake a comprehensive environmental assessment of the countries of the Great Lakes Region, particularly the impact of refugees and internally displaced people on ecosystems and human settlements integrity in the Great Lakes region and provide early warning information to support mitigation planning and strategic approaches and actions for environmental management in situations of populations displacement and encampment.

- The project will strengthen the national and sub regional integrated environmental assessment and reporting processes in the Great Lakes region within the context of the NEPAD principle of enhancing access to relevant data and information to supporting vulnerability assessments and issuing early warning on issues and threats of environmental emergencies and emerging issues in Africa.

Specific Objectives

- Ensure environmental sustainability in regions hosting large numbers of displaced people
- Incorporate environmental issues and prevention measures into the post-conflict reconstruction policies and strategies of the countries of the GLR
- Assess the state of the environment in the GLR and ascertain the scope and the impact of conflicts and natural disasters on the environment, especially when and where they occur simultaneously
- Strengthen environmental policy development and implementation as well as legal and institutional frameworks in the GLR countries emerging from armed conflicts.
- Elaborate a plan of action, policies and strategies for environmental restoration and human settlements rehabilitation in areas already devastated by the pressures of overpopulation, especially due to the current (or past) presence of IDPs and refugees
- Provide support to refugee host countries in rehabilitating human settlements and the environment, including the ecosystems and habitats that were damaged in the process of receiving and settling refugees
- Promote the understanding of linkages between poverty, health and environment especially as it relates to human settlements
- look at environment and security concerns to address the issue of restoration and rehabilitation of the environment and human settlement in the region
- assess poverty and its role in fanning conflict and over-exploitation of the environment,
- assess the gender dimensions of human displacements and generally human vulnerability to an over-exploited environment

3. Strategy

- Creating strategic partnerships for human settlements rehabilitation
- Assessing environmental impact of population displacement from the perspective of both natural environment, and institutional capacities of local, sub-national or national governments.
- Identifying the major refugee and internally displaced people's settlements in the region and tracking the impacts and changes such settlements have had on the ecosystem in the past two decades and how such changes are likely to impact on the regional progress in terms of meeting the environmental targets set by the international community under the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).
- Providing an integrated analysis of the impact of refugee settlements on ecosystems, focusing on the driving forces and the impacts on the vulnerability of the indigenous population.

- Using selected indicators, highlight some policy actions that would mitigate refugee impacts on ecosystems and reduce human vulnerability.
- Providing early warning in terms of sitting (establishing) refugee settlements and planning for an influx of large numbers of people.
- This project will establish links with existing mechanisms and programmes for refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in the region and will constitute a basis for lessons learned activities
- Providing early warning in terms of how armed conflict exacerbates extreme poverty, contributing to even more overexploitation of the environment.
- Elaboration of plans to restore affected environments and human settlements to a level of sustainable viability in areas hosting displaced populations over long periods of time
- Elaboration of safeguards against environmental and human settlements degradation in situations of displacement
- Elaboration of regional legal and oversight mechanisms to guarantee compliance by stakeholders including economic operators.

4. Activities

At the regional level

- (i) Undertake integrated regional post-conflict environmental and human settlements assessment: desk as well as using time series satellite data analyses around the major refugee and IDPs settlement areas to determine the changes in land cover and land use (GRID-Africa will undertake satellite imagery interpretation for change detection, including a comprehensive mapping of refugee and IDPs settlements in relation to protected areas and ecologically sensitive areas).
- (ii) Organize regional consultations for stakeholders (including local communities and NGOs) to develop consensus on the major environmental and human settlements issues associated with refugee and IDPs settlements in the host countries, and to agree on an assessment methodology and targeted consultations.
- (iii) Organisation of regional training Workshops on environmental assessment for stakeholders including local communities and NGOs
- (iv) Develop policies, strategies and plan of action as well as formulate guidelines and their support application to restore the environment and rehabilitate affected human settlements in post conflict zones
- (v) Agree on a mutually consistent framework for environmental governance
 - Facilitate the signing of relevant multilateral and regional environmental agreements and provide support for their implementation
 - Capacity building in meeting their requirements
 - Develop collaborative enforcement and compliance measures

- Organize exchange of knowledge and technical capacity on human settlements rehabilitation in post conflict zones
- (vi) Outline a regional strategy for reconstruction and development of devastated areas
- Develop education tools to raise public awareness on environmental awareness issues including the understanding of the linkages between poverty, health and the environment
 - Strengthen environmental and human settlements management institutions
 - Coordinate environmental and human settlements assessment and monitoring in the region
 - Create awareness among decision makers and communities on the necessity of spatial and strategic planning in the reconstruction of human settlements in post conflict zones
 - Preparation of technical input on environment and human settlements and identify priority needs and establish short and long-term environmental and human settlements plans of actions
- (vii) Facilitate and coordinate specific case studies in refugee and IDPs settlement areas (Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola and Burundi). The case studies will focus on ecological conflicts and vulnerability of indigenous population as a result of refugee and IDPs settlements.

At national level

- (i) Post conflict assessment
- With National experts designated to undertake a desk study of all related issues and produce a background document that will highlight the issues and also form a basis for discussions at a regional workshop
 - Assess the displacement impacts on the environment and on human settlements in post conflict zones
- (ii) Harmonize laws on environmental and human settlements issues
- Recognize environmental and human settlements rights in the national constitution
 - Enact legislation on environmental protection and sustainable use of resources as well as rehabilitation of human settlements

- Mainstream environmental and human settlements impact assessment procedures for all programs and projects in the most affected areas
 - Integrate planning for implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Disaster Reduction¹
 - Mainstream Gender in environmental and human settlements policies and programmes
- (iii) Undertake Capacity building in Integrated environmental assessment and human settlements for all Stakeholders including local communities, NGOs and local authorities
- Develop and or consolidate skills of national/local builders and small contractors for the implementation of human settlements rehabilitation Programme in post conflict zones
- (iv) Establish an effective institutional framework with a clear mandate to:
- Coordinate environmental and human settlements assessments and monitoring
 - Establish participatory processes and community-based management approaches in post conflict zones
 - Coordinate mechanisms for sectoral environmental and human settlements management e.g. water, sanitation, forests, housing
 - Facilitate assessment and capacity building in local authorities (inc rural/urban/settlement/formal and informal mechanisms) to ensure implementation, compliance and oversight
- (v) Facilitate and coordinate specific case studies in refugee and IDPs settlement areas
- (vi) Establish and strengthen a national environmental information Network
- (vii) Development and production of National Environmental (and human settlements) Outlook reports
- (viii) Formulate and implement environmental restoration and rehabilitation of human settlements strategies and programmes in the most affected areas

¹ The World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe Japan, in January 2005 concluded among other declarations, the Hyogo Framework for Action to which the African Union was a signator. See: www.isdr.org

- Provide and/or strengthen local government, civil society and the private sector capacity for environmental restoration and spatial planning of human settlements development in zones with insufficient cultivable land
- Establish woodland protected areas and buffer zones around protected areas in post conflict zones
 - Reintroduce community-based warden system and control access to forests
 - Introduce afforestation and reforestation programs
 - Support to private initiative in forestation and establish award system for the best projects
 - Promote the use of alternative environmentally friendly sources of energy like solar etc.
 - Undertake soil stabilization measures to reduce the risk of soil erosion

(ix) Promote and implement water demand management and sanitation programme in the most affected areas

- Develop and implement waste management strategies and programmes in the most affected areas
- Introduce /or reinforce water demand and waste management in school curricula at all levels in post conflict zones

(x) Create greater public awareness of environmental and human settlements issues in post conflict zones

- Promote media coverage of environmental and human settlements issues
- Introduce environmental and human settlements issues in the national school curriculum
- Initiate training within both host communities, and international assistance programme personnel
- Educate the public

(xi) Estimate future timber and firewood demands

- Introduce and plant fast-growing varieties of shrubs for firewood and alternative fuel for cooking
- Encourage alternative building materials
- Promote fuel-saving cooking methods
- Supply firewood in camps to minimize depletion of nearby forests and protect women from risk of SGBV

5. Opportunities

- Good will and commitment to address environmental issues
- Commitment to meeting MDGs
- Peaceful co-existence between displaced and host communities

6. Risks

- Refugees and IDPs viewed as temporary phenomena, hence reluctance to fund such programmes
- Natural disasters may undo progress made
- Lack of political will and resources
- Lack of renewable sources of energy
- Competition between refugees and host populations for limited natural resources
- Location/sitting of refugee/IDP camps in protected areas

7. Beneficiaries

Refugees

IDPs

Host communities

The region' environment for the African continent and the world community at large

8. Financing

The financing of this project will mainly come from contributions from member states of the International Conference on the Great Lakes region. Bilateral and multilateral partners will also be approached to contribute to the funding. The private sector contributions and private donations will also be mobilised.

9. Institutional arrangements and partnerships

A Regional Project Co-ordinator (RPC) will be responsible for overall execution, follow-up and co-ordination of the project at regional level. He will be assisted by the National Programme Co-ordinators (NPC) of each member state, who will be in charge of day-to-day activities at the national level as well as ensuring proper involvement by local institutions and authorities and concerted participation of relevant stakeholders.

An expert sub-committee working under the overall umbrella of the Coordination Committee on Humanitarian and Social Issues will serve as Steering Committee for the project (see project 4.1.2). These experts will come from the relevant Government ministries (such as housing, land and environment). In the course of their deliberations, these experts will benefit from the inputs from relevant UN agencies such as UNEP, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, OCHA and UNDP, the AU/NEPAD, regional economic communities, NGOs and community based organisations and individual experts.

II RESULTS FRAMEWORK

	Expected outcome	Indicators	Activities	Resources
	Regional Post Conflict Environmental (including human settlement) Assessment Report			
	Improved Environmental management	National Environmental management institutions established	Establish viable regional institutions to coordinate environmental and human settlements management activities	Relevant government ministries and departments
	Increased technical interventions offered by various agencies	Community participation	Formulate regional framework for environmental and human settlements governance	Relevant United Nations agencies (UNEP, UN-HABITAT, UNDP, UNHCR...)
	Biodiversity conservation and ecosystem protection.	Green belt coverage and protected areas	Institute regional monitoring mechanism	The AU Commission, NEPAD and relevant departments in regional economic communities
	Availability of generic environmental education materials easily adaptable to specific locations in the GLR	Number of human settlements facilities rehabilitated		Non-Governmental Organizations
	Rehabilitated human settlements	Number of women and children benefiting from rehabilitated human settlements	Develop local capacities for implementation and oversight	Research institutions on environmental and human settlements issues;
	A comprehensive regional report (in English and French) on issues highlighted and identified as well as policy briefs for policymakers.		Rehabilitation --repair, upgrading of dilapidated houses.	Community-based organizations
	National Environmental (including human settlement) Outlook Reports			

ACTION PLAN

ACTIVITIES		YEAR 1				YEAR 2				YEAR 3				YEAR 4				YEAR 5			
		QUARTER				QUARTER				QUARTER				QUARTER				QUARTER			
		I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
	Post Conflict Environmental (including human settlement) assessment			X																	
	Situation analysis including case studies, identification of partners and formulation of regional framework				X	X															
	Development of regional guidelines/tools on environmental issues			X	X																
	Integrated environmental assessment and reporting in each country of the Great Lakes Region			X	X														X	X	
	Conference, training sessions, capacity building, regional workshops						X				X			X					X		
	Monitoring and evaluation											X								X	

Budget

Double click on the icon below to view the budget

Microsoft Office
Excel Worksheet
