

TRANSTEC



EVALUATION MISSION

SIERRA LEONE

ECHO

GLOBAL PLAN 2000

INTERVENTION PLAN 2001

SECTOR "UPROOTED POPULATION"

FINAL REPORT

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Evaluated Global/Intervention Plans

The European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) has decided to commission an evaluation of the humanitarian operations supported in Sierra Leone. The evaluation covered two consecutive plans carried out in 2000 and 2001 : the Global Plan May 2000 – February 2001, "Proposal for Community financing of humanitarian assistance to Sierra Leonean populations", and the "ECHO Intervention Plan 2001 – Humanitarian Assistance to Sierra Leone (March 2001 – November 2001)"

Date of the evaluation

The evaluation has been carried out in Sierra Leone from 15/9/2001 to 17/10/2001.

Consultant's name

Pascal Simon

Purpose and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation is to obtain the necessary information to allow ECHO to decide strategies and improve any future action in Sierra Leone, especially the future 2002 intervention plan.

The evaluation team was composed of three consultants, each of them having the responsibility to focus on a specific sector : (1) health, nutrition, water and sanitation, (2) child protection, (3) uprooted populations.

The present report will focus on the situation of uprooted populations in Sierra Leone; in addition, some operational support projects were also evaluated.

The consultant had extensive briefings at ECHO Headquarter and with the ECHO correspondent in Conakry and Freetown at the beginning of the mission. In the course of the mission, three interim reports have been sent to ECHO Evaluation Unit to inform regularly about the main findings and recommendations. At the end of the mission, a debriefing session has been organised with the organisations involved in providing assistance to displaced populations to collect remarks and recommendations about ECHO strategy in the country.

Main findings.

Sierra Leone's recent history has been dominated by military takeovers and civil war. From 1991, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) launched a military campaign against the government in place. The initial reasons for this conflict were poverty, lack of basic social services to the population, failing state, corruption and lack of economic opportunity. However, in recent years, the struggle for the control of diamonds fields in Sierra Leone has fuelled the war, with Liberia openly acting as a support to the RUF.

The conflict was characterised by widespread human rights violations and systematic attacks against civilian population which resulted in massive population displacements inside and outside of the country. In November 2000, the UN had registered more than 340,000 Internally Displaced People (IDP's) and between 300,000 and 400,000 refugees in Guinea. However, it was suspected that the number of unregistered IDP's was even more important. In 2000, the conflict spread across the border into Guinea, including RUF attacks on the refugees camps, pushing a large number of Sierra Leonean refugees to come back into their country.

At the time of the mission, there was an official caseload of 250,000 IDP's and 60,000 returned refugees. Those displaced populations have been settled in camps and in hosting communities; food aid, health services, water and sanitation and shelter assistance were provided to those vulnerable groups. In Sierra Leone, the displacements have been caused by the conflict and are the main cause of vulnerability.

Cease-fire agreements signed in September 2000 and May 2001 allowed for the resumption of the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) program. United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) is progressively deploying in all regions of the country and the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) slowly restores its authority over the whole territory. It is now possible to consider the resettlement of the displaced populations into their place of origin.

Only one ECHO project directly and exclusively benefiting displaced population was covered by the Terms of Reference (ToR) of this evaluation (provision of Non-Food Items by ICRC), the other projects being

assessed by the two other team members; however, the consultant has tried to consider the ECHO global response to the displaced populations situation beside several projects in the "operational support" sector. In 2000, ECHO released 8,7 MEURO for humanitarian assistance to Sierra Leone; it is estimated that 2,7 MEURO (31%) directly benefited displaced populations. In 2001, the budget has been increased to 11 MEURO, with an estimated amount of 2,2 MEURO for the assistance to IDP's. In 2000, several projects directly responded to the massive increase of IDP's following the escalation of the conflict after May. In 2001, the projects benefited from an improvement of the situation and took a more integrated approach.

On the overall, the consultant considers that ECHO's response to the needs of the displaced population in Sierra has been positive and appropriate.

Relevance

The projects provided assistance to IDP's in health, water and sanitation, nutrition and distribution of non-food items. As food aid was provided by other agencies and donors, the projects supported by ECHO covered the main needs of the target beneficiaries; ECHO has been flexible in its response to the increase of the IDP caseload in 2000; the strategy has been adapted to the evolution of the situation and the coordination with the other main humanitarian donors, taking into account the chaotic context, can be described as satisfactory.

With the decision to support the International Non Governmental Organisations (INGO) helicopter service, ECHO facilitated the implementation of the humanitarian operations; the dissemination of the humanitarian principles of the Code of Conduct planned to ensure that humanitarian operators and the various actors (military factions, UN, GoSL, civil society) would be informed about those principles and would respect them as far as possible. In 2001, ECHO also supported the establishment of the Sierra Leone Information System (SLIS) in order to improve the collection and dissemination of data related to the humanitarian sector.

Effectiveness

The assistance provided by ECHO partners to displaced populations has generally been delivered as expected, even if overcrowding in the IDP camps complicated some operations. The provision of NFI by ICRC has been renewed in 2001 and the budget increased.

In 2000, the INGO helicopter transported nearly 1,000 passengers and 150 tons of freight; MSF B has been the primary user of the facility. The SLIS collected information from the various humanitarian operators and published a large amount of maps and charts. The dissemination of the Code of Conduct project reports a large number of workshops, drama and sensitisation sessions to numerous groups of the Sierra Leonean society.

Efficiency

The consultant considers that, in general, operations implemented for the benefit of the displaced population have been efficient. The ICRC NFI project was implemented in close collaboration with the Sierra Leone Red Cross and concentrated mostly on the provision of concrete assistance to the target beneficiaries, with minimal running costs.

Some management problems have been reported in the operation of the INGO helicopter; as this helicopter has to fly a minimum number of hours per month, ECHO acknowledged that the system does not always guarantee the respect of strict rules. The SLIS could be more pro-active in the analysis of the information collected by the system; this would facilitate the coordination of humanitarian operations. However, it has been noticed that many ECHO partners and humanitarian operators now refer to maps and tools defined by SLIS in planning their activities.

Impact

Despite overcrowding in the IDP camps, the provision of assistance to displaced populations had an obvious positive impact in avoiding the occurrence of major outbreak of water related diseases; it has also to be noted that the malnutrition level in the camps does not differ from the situation observed in the resident communities. The provision of NFI also plays a useful role in improving hygiene conditions in the camps but also supported the resettlement of several thousands IDP's into their villages of origin.

The impact of the helicopter service has been evident in facilitating the safe transportation of staff, food and equipment to project sites where road transportation was not guaranteed. Most humanitarian operators use the maps and charts produced by SLIS to plan their activities and report about their outputs; however, the impact could be greater if analysis of the information was more developed. The impact of the dissemination activities of the Code of Conduct has not been proven; the consultant considers that this operation appears too ambitious to have a real, concrete and positive impact on the target groups.

Sustainability

Most displaced people are not in a sustainable situation as they depend from humanitarian assistance to survive. The only way to improve this situation is of course to promote and organise, when possible, the resettlement of those displaced into their place of origin where assistance will be more sustainable and will facilitate the resumption of a normal life. It should be noted that some activities implemented in the camps will have a positive impact in the long term for the beneficiaries (e.g. hygiene promotion).

The helicopter service will normally stop by November 2001 as the partner will not submit a new proposal; no other ECHO partner seems ready to take over. As there is a second helicopter available for the humanitarian community in country (managed by WFP), this confirms that the need for two helicopter services has decreased considerably. UNOCHA plans to hand over the SLIS to an official institution of the GoSL; the partner in charge of the dissemination of the Code of Conduct also presented recently an exit strategy in favour of local civil society groups.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In relation to assistance to uprooted population, the consultant recommends to actively support the resettlement of IDP's into their place of origin when this process will take place (provision of non-food items, shelter). Assistance to the communities where people will resettle is also necessary and should include distribution of seeds and tools, water and sanitation infrastructures and nutritional support. The consultant recommends to provide this assistance on a community based approach. A minimal support will have to remain for those IDP's still living in camps in the Southern and Eastern regions.

The consultant confirms that the need to have two helicopters for the humanitarian community has likely disappeared as the country is gradually opening up. Regarding the SLIS, the consultant recommends to continue to support UNOCHA with the objective of improving the analysis and dissemination of the information collected by the system, as well as preparing its hand over to an official national structure. The consultant recommends to suspend the support to the Dissemination of the Code of Conduct project to allow the partner to have an independent evaluation of the activity; if it is demonstrated that the project has a positive impact, ECHO could consider the possibility to facilitate the hand over to civil society organisations.

The EC Delegation and ECHO have been actively looking for solutions to link ECHO funded projects to longer term EC programs. It has to be said that results have been modest so far and this situation means that, in the absence of other EC budget lines, ECHO assistance to Sierra Leone will remain necessary in the near future. For the future, some solutions have been worked out in the health and rehabilitation sectors; food security and child protection budget lines may also be available.

Lessons learned

The consultant noticed that it would be worthwhile, in case ECHO contribution is part of a larger project co-funded by other donors, to clearly identify a logical set of activities within this project to be funded by ECHO in order to adapt the inputs to the expected outputs of the operation and keep a balanced budget.

In a very volatile situation as Sierra Leone, flexibility in the operations and the management of a global plan is a necessity to make sure that the projects respond to the evolution of humanitarian needs.

Some humanitarian agencies seem to be reluctant to collaborate genuinely with the GoSL, arguing that they could lose their independence and impartiality. INGO's have certainly to stick to their humanitarian mandate and make sure that humanitarian assistance is not diverted for political purpose; however, it should be recognised that the GoSL should take responsibility for the general coordination of the assistance to the Sierra Leonean population. In addition, a fruitful collaboration may also have a positive impact on capacity building of national counterparts.

2. EVALUATED GLOBAL/INTERVENTIONS PLANS

The mission has evaluated two consecutive global/intervention plans :

- the ECHO Global Plan May 2000 – February 2001, "Proposal for Community financing of humanitarian assistance to Sierra Leonean populations" (which will be referred to as the "Global Plan 2000" in this report)¹, and
- the "ECHO Intervention Plan 2001 – Humanitarian Assistance to Sierra Leone (March 2001 – November 2001)", which will be referred to as the "Intervention Plan 2001" in the report².

3. DATE OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation has been carried out in Sierra Leone from 15/9/2001 to 17/10/2001.

4. NAME OF THE CONSULTANT

Pascal Simon

5. PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The global objective³ of the evaluation was to obtain the necessary information to allow ECHO to decide strategies and improve any future actions in Sierra Leone, bearing in mind the need to react to a sometimes rapidly changing situation.

The evaluation team was composed of three consultants. Each consultant had the responsibility to focus on a specific sector :

- health, nutrition, water and sanitation,
- child protection and war victims,
- uprooted population (Team Leader).

The present report will focus on the situation and the needs of uprooted populations in Sierra Leone (IDP's and returnees) and will assess the projects directly targeting those beneficiaries and which are not taken into account by other team members ("Health, Nutrition, Water and Sanitation", "Child protection"); basically, there will be only one such project (ICRC Non-Food Items).

In addition, the consultant in charge of this sector, who also acted as the Team Leader, looked at the strategic framework of the humanitarian assistance in Sierra Leone and at some "operational support" issues (the INGO helicopter, the Sierra Leone Information System (SLIS) and the dissemination of the Code of Conduct).

The Team Leader also took responsibility to visit and assess two ECHO partners involved in water and sanitation activities (Oxfam and Tearfund) in order to decrease the workload of the team member in charge of the "Health, Nutrition and Water/sanitation" sector. The conclusions of this assessment have been included into the report of that team member with an indication that the field visits and assessments were made by the Team Leader.

The Team Leader also assessed the rehabilitation activities of Handicap International in favour of physically disabled people; the conclusions of the assessment have been included into the report of the team member in charge of the "Child Protection and War Victims" sector.

The evaluation team spent two days at ECHO Headquarter for briefing. On arrival at Conakry, the team had a briefing by the ECHO correspondent on the Guinean context of the crisis. In Freetown, the team had an extensive briefing by ECHO Sierra Leone before engaging in meetings with ECHO partners in the country as well as with various representatives from national and international organisations⁴.

In the course of the mission⁵, team members prepared three interim reports (every 10 days) including main findings and recommendations; those interim reports were particularly important as ECHO was preparing the 2002 Intervention Plan in Sierra Leone while the evaluation was carried out.

At the end of the mission, the three team members organised three separate debriefing sessions in Freetown with the ECHO partners involved in the three main sectors covered by the evaluation. Those sessions provided the possibility for the partners to make remarks and recommendations to the mission regarding the future involvement of ECHO in Sierra Leone.

6. MAIN FINDINGS

6.1. General context

Sierra Leone became a republic in 1971, with Siaka Stevens as President for a five-year term. In 1978, it became a one-party state under Steven's APC party. In April 1991, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) launched a military campaign to overthrow the APC government in place. Sierra Leone's recent history has been dominated by military takeovers and civil war.

In January 1999, the RUF attacked and held Freetown but were later repelled by the Economic Community of the West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) troops. During the rebel invasion and occupation, over 5,000 people were killed and most of the Eastern suburbs of Freetown destroyed. Both the rebels and ECOMOG forces committed widespread human right abuses.

A cease-fire was agreed in May 1999 and led to a peace agreement signed in Lome in July. The agreement offered amnesties for crimes committed before the agreement signature, planned for a Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) program and allowed for RUF representatives to enter into the Government. In November/December 1999, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was deployed to monitor the peace agreement.

The implementation of the Lome agreement remained limited; attacks on civilians by rebel forces continued and DDR process remained slow. In May 2000, with the capture by RUF forces of some 500 UNAMSIL troops and the destruction of DDR camps in central and eastern Sierra Leone, hostilities resumed. Government forces comprised the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) and the Civil Defence Forces (CDF). Rebel forces included the RUF and renegade soldiers from the Armed Forces Military Council (AFRC). United Kingdom troops were deployed to Freetown to stop RUF and allow for the arrival of UN reinforcements.

In 2000, the war also spread across borders and engulfed Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia into a regional conflict⁶. Tension escalated between Guinea and Liberia following attacks in southern Guinea by forces opposed to the Guinean Government; Guinea accused Liberia of backing the dissidents. The authorities in Monrovia, on the other hand, charged that Guinea's government was supporting the rebel "Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy" (LURD) who have been carrying out attacks in Northwest Liberia in recent years.

A struggle for the control of diamonds fields in Sierra Leone has been at the heart of the crisis in recent years⁷. Traditional economics, political science and military history are of little assistance in explaining Sierra Leone's conflict. The point of the war may not actually have been to win it, but to engage in profitable crime under the cover of warfare. Diamonds have fuelled Sierra Leone's conflict, stealing its patrimony and putting the country last on the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI). From the outset of the war, Liberia acted as banker, trainer and mentor to the RUF. By the end of the 1990s, Liberia had become a major centre for massive diamond-related criminal activity, with connections to guns and drugs traffic and money laundering throughout Africa. In return for weapons, it provided the RUF with an outlet for diamonds. Liberia's open support to RUF in Sierra Leone has finally resulted in UN Sanctions and in an embargo on Sierra Leonean "stolen" diamonds exported from Liberia⁸.

In September 2000, the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) and the RUF signed a new cease-fire agreement in Abuja, Nigeria. The agreement mainly stick to the terms of the Lome agreement. The Abuja agreement was reiterated in May 2001. Although the rebels, who still controlled nearly two-third of the country, have been slow to comply with the terms of the cease-fire, the DDR process resumed in May 2001; UNAMSIL

troops are now progressively deployed in all regions of the country and RUF seems to transform itself into a political party which could participate into the national and presidential elections scheduled in 2002.

The DDR process is crucial to restore peace and stability in the country. The National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR) reported that, from May to August 2001, a total of 16,000 combatants have disarmed⁹ on an estimated total of 45,000. DDR operations are now completed in Kono and take place in Makeni district; some incidents and delays have been recently reported in those areas but the process seems however to continue. It is believed that DDR may also be tense in Kailahun district as this region will be the last RUF stronghold to be subject to demobilisation.

6.2. Populations movements in Sierra Leone

The armed conflict and the widespread human rights abuses associated with it are the main causes for movements of population in Sierra Leone. The civilian population has been deliberately targeted by rebel groups and severe atrocities have been well documented¹⁰. Additional movements have also been caused by counter-insurgency operations by troops loyal to the Government.

The pattern of population movements in Sierra Leone often happened in two steps¹¹ : first, individuals under threat flee to temporary safe-heavens such as remote settlements or bush-camps; when they have exhausted their coping mechanisms, they often move on to sites under government control such as IDP camps or public buildings. Others look for shelter and support with relatives while others chose to leave to neighbouring countries. The number of refugees in Guinea reached between 300,000 to 400,000.

During the second half of 2000, the conflict spread across the border to Guinea, including RUF attacks on Guinean villages and camps hosting Sierra Leonean refugees, leading to armed activities by Guinean troops inside Sierra Leone. A result of this situation has been additional internal displacements as well as return of Sierra Leonean refugees in their country (there are now around 80,000 refugees left in Guinea).

All those population movements have been massive and complex : IDP's moved from unsafe areas to IDP camps or to hosting communities within governmental control; due to insecurity in the refugees camps in Guinea, refugees came back to Sierra Leone : some settled into RUF areas, many ended up in a situation of internal displacement being settled into returnees camps in governmental areas or into hosting communities. In the same time, several thousands Liberians, fleeing the fighting in Lofa County (North-West of Liberia), are seeking refuge in Kailahun district just across the border. Since May/June 2001, several thousands IDP's have been moving back into their place of origin.

Despite the current - relatively - positive evolution of the peace process, limited access to large areas of the country continues to restrict the opportunities to promote and organise the resettlement of IDP and returnees.

6.3. Situation of the Internally Displaced population in Sierra Leone

Reflecting the cyclical nature of this conflict, many Sierra Leoneans have been displaced and returned several times as rebel forces have advanced or withdrawn. The conflict was first confined to the southern and eastern parts of the country but quickly spread throughout Sierra Leone. Rebel forces have twice entered the capital, firstly in May 1997 and secondly in January 1999 when they terrorised and looted Freetown before retreating. As a result of this latest attack on the capital, many civilians were mutilated by the rebels and around 150,000 people were displaced in and around Freetown¹²; the deterioration of the security situation also hindered access of humanitarian assistance to most of the country.

By November 2000, the UN had registered an IDP caseload of 341,000 people¹³, two thirds of those IDP's being registered after the May 2000 conflict escalation. It should be noted that a large number of non-registered IDP's live with host families or in hiding; in November 2000, the UN indicated that there could be as many as one million non-registered displaced Sierra Leoneans¹⁴.

The majority of registered IDP's have sought refuge in Tonkolili district, Port Loko district, Freetown, Kenema, and Bo townships. A substantial part of the displaced population is composed of women and children.

Due to the complexity of those population movements and due to the fact that food assistance is so crucial for survival, figures about displaced populations remain difficult to verify¹⁵. In addition of those who are not registered (probably a large majority), some IDP families managed to get registered in two different camps or split in order to get two assistance packages; some have "rented" their booth or have sold their registration cards to non-IDPs, etc.. This situation can lead to substantial differences between official figures and the actual caseload. As an example of this situation, the consultant visited the Port Loko IDP camp which, in October 2001, was supposed to officially accommodate between 7 and 8,000 IDP's; it was obvious during the visit that the camp population was much lower than the official figure; the consultant has been informed later that less than 3,000 people actually live permanently in the camp. IDP's who have been settled in hosting communities have naturally been mixed within non-displaced populations. For obvious reasons, when assistance is to be provided to those IDP's, the number of people claiming to be displaced has a tendency to increase dramatically.

Despite all these uncertainties, there is no other choice than to take into consideration the latest available "official" figures provided by SLIS/OCHA on the IDP caseload in Sierra Leone¹⁶.

SIERRA LEONE	IDP Population	Caseload on 4/8/01
District	In Camps	In Communities
Western	52,150	-
Port Loko	8,172	32,634
Tonkolili	591	78,465
Moyamba	0	7,971
Bo	10,458	1,561
Kenema	55,588	-
Total	126,959	120,631
Grand Total		247,590

For most of those IDP's, resettlement into their area of origin is not yet possible as they are afraid to return into RUF controlled regions.

6.4. The situation of the returnee populations in Sierra Leone

In the Sierra Leonean context, an "official returnee" is a person who has been a refugee outside the country, has returned to Sierra Leone and is registered with UNHCR. Some returning refugees could not be registered as they have settled into RUF controlled areas and their number remains unknown. In addition, the statistics provided by SLIS/OCHA and UNHCR¹⁷ sometimes mention 26,000 returnees currently located in the district of Kailahun; it should be noted that those returnees are not included into the official statistics as they are not officially registered by UNHCR.

SIERRA LEONE (UNHCR)	
Returnees in camps and hosting communities on 1/10/01	
TC Waterloo	1,408
TC Jui	2,636
TC Lumpa	3,420
HC Lungi	16,028
HC Barri	8,625
TS Jembe	4,147
TS Gerrihun*	4,941
TS Bandajuma*	2,995
TS Taiama	548
Kenema Registr.	10,270
Resettled in safe areas	4,488
TOTAL	59,506
* Those two camps also include Liberian refugees	

Although there are still some slight differences between the various figures provided to the consultant, at the end of September 2001, there are around 60,000 returnees registered by UNHCR in Sierra Leone. Apart from the legal protection aspects related to the UNHCR mandate, the situation of the returnees is basically similar to the situation of the IDP's : they also stay in camps or in hosting communities and receive a similar level of assistance.

As for the IDP's, it is not yet possible to organise the resettlement of this returnee population as most of them come from districts which are not yet officially declared "safe for resettlement" (Kono and Kailahun); this explains why those returnees end up in the same situation as IDP's.

Considering the total of the IDP's and the returnees caseload in Sierra Leone, the total number of officially registered "displaced people" can therefore be estimated at around 310,000 people. The displacement is in itself the first cause of vulnerability of those populations who have lost their usual livelihood and therefore depend on external assistance to survive.

6.5. Assistance to the uprooted population in Sierra Leone.

A large number of international organisations, international non-governmental organisations and local agencies provide assistance to the numerous displaced populations in Sierra Leone.

Each camp is managed by a "camp manager" organisation; in addition, various agencies are in charge of providing food assistance, health services and water/sanitation infrastructures.

One of the major problems encountered in the camps is overcrowding and lack of available space; the capacity of most IDP camps had been planned with the assumption that the July 1999 peace agreement would lessen the shelter needs. By the end of 2000, the shelter capacity was over-stretched and the new flow of displaced caused by the insecurity at the Guinean border area was settled in hosting communities rather than in camps.

It is worth noting that, in one of the poorest countries in the world, the massive concentration of displaced populations in the government controlled areas, barely a third of the country's territory, puts an extreme pressure on the existing scarce resources, being in camps or in hosting communities. The displacement is in itself the reason for the vulnerability of the displaced but also adds to the burden of already impoverished and war-ravaged communities, who possess limited coping mechanisms and resources and who had to absorb additional vulnerable groups. In many cases, agencies targeted both IDPs and host families, as there is no discernible difference in their vulnerability status.

Assistance to displaced populations can be divided into four sectors : health, food security, water and sanitation, shelter.

6.5.1. Health

Sierra Leone's health indicators are among the worst in the world¹⁸; the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MOHS) lacks the financial resources and infrastructure to deliver adequate health services to the population. Mass displacement of the population in safer areas and the emigration of trained staff have put an additional burden on an already fragile medical system.

In the areas of IDP's and returnees concentration, medical services are supported by various agencies responsible for each location : IMC in Port Loko, Merlin in Kenema IDP's camps, MSF-F in Gerihun returnees camp, etc.. Most important health problems encountered in those populations include acute respiratory infections (ARI), diarrhoea, malaria and sexually transmitted diseases (STD). Some cases of Lassa fever have been identified in Freetown although that disease is typically confined to the Eastern Province.

Medical and psychological services for women victims of violence are also a serious concern for humanitarian agencies, especially in view of the high prevalence of rape and sexual abuses during the conflict. Many women and girls in IDP camps require treatments for STD's contracted as a result of rape.

In addition, it is expected that the incidence of HIV/AIDS will be high among those women, resulting, in the near future, in a large number of orphans, many of them being also infected.

A MSF study¹⁹, released in January 2000, showed that a high percentage of Freetown residents directly experienced at least one event threatening their physical integrity, either by maltreatment (39%), torture (16%) or amputations (7%). 40% of the surveyed respondents have seen their houses burned down; 33% were taken hostage. The study indicates high levels of traumatic stress among the population surveyed.

6.5.2. Food security

There are 4 Food Pipeline Agencies in charge of providing food assistance to the IDP's : WFP, Care, Catholic Relief Service (CRS) and World Vision. Each of those agencies is responsible for the provision of food assistance in pre-defined districts²⁰.

As often witnessed in acute humanitarian crisis, the nutritional status of displaced populations is not really different than the situation of resident communities; this is due to regular food distributions to IDP's. A study conducted by Action Contre la Faim (ACF) in Port Loko confirms that the prevalence of malnutrition in the town and camp are similar and not unduly elevated²¹.

But there are also socio-economic differences among the camps population : in a report published in July 2001²², the same organisation found out that 50% of camps population in Freetown were not relying on food distribution to sustain the food needs of their families but used food aid as an additional source of incomes. On the contrary, the remaining 50% of poorer households still relied on food distribution to meet their daily food requirements. In addition, part of those poor IDP families staying in camps used to share some relief food items with other family members scattered in the country.

6.5.3. Water and sanitation

Access to clean water and sanitation facilities is extremely limited in Sierra Leone. A 2000 study found that only 54 % of the population had access to safe water while 53% of the rural population has access to adequate sanitation facilities, compared to 88% in urban areas²³. Areas of origin for refugees and IDPs have currently limited water and sanitation facilities to support the return of these people to their communities.

Many IDP camps are extremely overcrowded and lack the space necessary to increase water and sanitation facilities; sometimes, especially during the dry season, water supply in some camps must be supplemented through the trucking of water. The lack of available space in camps also complicate the construction of new latrines when new holes have to be dug.

6.5.4. Shelter

IDP's and returnees camps are made of plastic sheetings or mud walls with plastic roofing. Generally, each "tent" or shelter includes 4 booths for 4 different families. As already mentioned, most of the camps were designed with the assumption that the signing of the peace agreement in July 1999 would provide the opportunity to phase down camps after a period of 3 to 6 months. There was therefore no planning for longer-term maintenance of camp facilities, or expansion to accommodate new caseloads beyond this period. As a result, most of those camps can be described as overcrowded; this situation does complicate the work of agencies in charge of providing and maintaining water and sanitation facilities.

6.6. Coordination of the humanitarian assistance.

Due to the numerous actors and the quick changes in the political and military situation, coordination of the humanitarian operators is obviously not an easy task in Sierra Leone. For few years, due to the GoSL incapacity to ensure effective coordination, INGO's were operating where and how they decided in an institutional "no-man's land". Fortunately, this disorganised situation is now changing and some improvements have been acknowledged, even if a lot remains to be done.

The overall coordination of the humanitarian assistance is now mainly ensured by the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Reintegration (NCRRR). NCRRR is officially in charge of the policy making, the planning and the coordination of the operations in the sectors of relief assistance, rehabilitation, reconstruction, repatriation and reintegration. NCRRR is represented at the national, regional and district levels; the institution chairs a monthly national Consultative Forum attended by all humanitarian agencies; regular Technical Committees are also organised for the numerous sub-sectors (food aid, water and sanitation, health, non food items, education, camp management, child protection, etc.). The system, although complex, represents at least a valuable tentative by the Government to improve coordination²⁴.

Recently, the GoSL has decided the creation of the "National Recovery Committee"²⁵ (NRC), chaired by the Vice-President; NRC focuses mainly on the restoration of the civil authority in the areas where the Government has progressively regained control; but the committee has also other responsibilities in the humanitarian sector. NRC is flanked by a Technical Committee chaired by the Ministry of Development (MODEP) and co-chaired by NCRRR which is now supposed to report to NRC.

There is therefore a clear mix of humanitarian and political objectives in the mandate of this new NRC; organisations operating in Sierra Leone have to remain vigilant to make sure that humanitarian assistance is not diverted from its initial purpose for political objectives.

However, some humanitarian agencies, arguing about the respect of their strict humanitarian mandate, seem to be reluctant to maintain a normal collaboration with the GoSL. It should sometimes be reminded that governments have to take responsibility for the coordination of the assistance provided to their population.

In absence of any official donors coordination system like traditional "consultative groups", donors took the decision to have their own informal regular meetings. It is particularly important for the EC, DFID and OFDA to have those contacts as they are the most important humanitarian donors in Sierra Leone. Those donors supports more or less the same agencies than ECHO; DFID supports SCF, Concern, Care, Oxfam, World Vision, CAD and ICRC; OFDA supports ACF, Africare, Care, CRS, Merlin, IMC as well as various UN agencies.

6.7. Resettlement of uprooted populations.

NCRRR has developed a resettlement strategy²⁶ to provide a framework in which partner agencies can support the resettlement and reintegration of internally displaced, returnees and ex-combatants with their dependants back into their communities and strengthen their livelihood security.

Most of IDP,s and returnees who could not resettle into their place of origin come by definition from "unsafe" areas; basically those people fear to return into RUF controlled regions. The GOSL and UN agencies cannot officially promote resettlement in areas considered as "unsafe"; however, nothing prevent displaced people from returning spontaneously; some of those spontaneous returns have been witnessed but no figures are available to document those movements.

Areas are officially declared "safe for resettlement" by both the District and National Assessment Committees comprising representatives from Government Line Ministries, NCRRR, NCDDR, local authorities, UNAMSIL, UNOCHA and UNHCR.

Areas are only declared safe for resettlement after the following conditions have been observed :

- There has been stability and peace in a chiefdom for an extended period of time,
- Ongoing disarmament programs in the chiefdom,
- Maintenance of law and order by the Police,
- Presence of UNAMSIL Peace Keepers/SLA Security forces in the area,
- Unhindered access for humanitarian agencies and NCRRR in the area,
- Presence of local administration functionaries,
- Spontaneous return of IDP's and returnees to the area²⁷.

In April/May and June 2001, returns from IDP camps have been organised under the auspices of IOM; two movements have been organised, mainly from Western area and Port Loko (North). The first movement took place between 17/4 and 4/5 and concerned around 22,000 people; the second movement took place by the

end of June and concerned around 5,000 IDP's. Those IDP's went back into "safe" areas controlled by the GOSL (Western area, Port Loko, Moyamba, Bo, Pujehun and Kenema)²⁸.

As the Government has regained control over some areas previously under rebels control, it becomes now possible to consider the resettlement of at least parts of the large IDP caseload into their place of origin. In September 2001, 6 of 7 chiefdoms of Kambia districts were declared "safe for resettlement"; it is reported that some 30,000 additional IDP's could therefore be returned to this area.

It is obvious that the resettlement process will be the next humanitarian challenge and will have to be strongly supported to encourage displaced population to leave the camps and move back to their place of origin. However, in those areas, the destruction of homes and public infrastructures, the lack of social and medical services, the limited livelihood opportunities constitute the major obstacles to an immediate return. IDP's also expressed the wish that local administration, police and justice system are also in place before they return.

6.8. ECHO response to the humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone.

The report will analyse successively the Global Plan 2000 and the Intervention Plan 2001; the analysis will first try to consider the projects entirely or partially targeting displaced populations and secondly the projects in the "operational support" sector.

6.8.1. The Global Plan 2000.

Covering the period May 2000 to February 2001, the Global Plan 2000 mobilised a total of EUR 12 million by the decision ECHO/TPS/210/2000/12000 dated 9/6/2000 to support a total of 31 projects in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia : 23 projects took place in Sierra Leone, 5 of them in Guinea and 2 in Liberia²⁹. As already mentioned, the present report only concerns Sierra Leone.

This Global Plan has been prepared in the beginning of 2000 when the humanitarian situation was expected to improve and displaced population to return to their place of origin. In the wave of the conflict escalation in May 2000, some projects were cancelled or reduced while several other projects were launched, using the reserve to respond to the additional massive influx of IDP's into governmental areas.

In the original plan, only one project targeted exclusively IDP's :

- **Oxfam** (ECHO/TPS/210/2000/12006) : water and sanitation in Bo and Kenema IDP camps (EUR 200,000); this project was planned from the beginning into the Global Plan and started on 1/5/2000;

However, other projects mixed the provision of assistance to IDP's as well as to resident populations (which, in some cases, may host IDP's). A part of the budget of those projects may be considered as allocated to IDP's :

- **ACF** (ECHO/TPS/210/2000/12004) : Nutrition in Bo (EUR 650,000);
- **MERLIN** (ECHO/TPS/210/2000/12007) : Medical support to Kenema hospital (EUR 1,300,000);
- **CAD** (ECHO/TPS/210/2000/12013) : Health and nutrition in Port Loko (EUR 425,000).

Finally, some projects responded directly to the dramatic influx of new IDP's after May 2000, most starting in August and September 2000 :

- **IMC** (ECHO/TPS/210/2000/12016) : Health care services for the Port Loko IDP camp (EUR 375,000);
- **ICRC** (ECHO/TPS/210/2000/12017) : Provision of non-food items to IDP population (EUR 500,000);
- **ACF** (ECHO/TPS/210/2000/12020) : Therapeutic feeding centre in Port Loko (EUR 180,000);
- **Oxfam** (ECHO/TPS/210/2000/12024) : Provision of water and sanitation in Port Loko IDP camp (EUR 230,000);
- **Oxfam** (ECHO/TPS/210/2000/12029) : Continuation of project 12006 (EUR 230,000);
- **MSF-H** (ECHO/TPS/210/2000/12026) : Health care in Mile 91 (EUR 200,000).

It is noted that, all of those projects, except one (ICRC Non Food Items), actually entered into the ToR of the team member in charge of the "Health, Nutrition and Water/Sanitation" sector. There will be a mention about the ICRC project into the paragraph 7.8. devoted to the Evaluation of the ECHO response.

Under ToR of this mission, some projects aimed at providing some "operational support" to the international agencies operating in Sierra Leone are also included into the plan³⁰ :

- **MSF-B** (ECHO/TPS/210/2000/12028 : EUR 230,000) and (ECHO/TPS/210/2000/12031 : EUR 203,000) : Support to the INGO helicopter service in Sierra Leone;
- **MERLIN** (ECHO/TPS/210/2000/12027) : Dissemination of the Code of Conduct (EUR 120,000);
- **UNHCHR** (ECHO/TPS/210/2000/12030) : Support to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) in order to promote human rights and provide human rights training to the various actors in the humanitarian sector (EUR 50,000). This project has finally not been implemented by the partner.

The two MSF-B projects supported the INGO helicopter service operated by this partner from 1/10/2000 to 28/2/2001; this service had already been partially funded by ECHO in 1998 and 1999. The use of this helicopter is restricted to all international humanitarian organisations and to UN agencies (no governmental officials, no military) and allowed access to some areas which remained difficult to be reached by road.

The humanitarian community of Sierra Leone has adopted a "Code Of Conduct" in 1997 in order to set out the principles of humanitarian assistance and to ensure that all actors involved would respect those principles. ECHO supported a project implemented by Merlin to largely disseminate those principles to all civil society groups, military factions and the general public in Sierra Leone. The project started on 1/12/2000 and was planned for an initial duration of 6 months; an extension has been granted until 31/8/2001.

6.8.2. The Intervention Plan 2001

The Intervention Plan 2001 supports 24 projects in Sierra Leone only³¹. Support to refugee camps in Guinea has been channelled through a separate decision. A total of EUR 11 million has been provided through the decision ECHO/SLE/210/2001/01000 dated 22/3/2001; the plan covers the period March 2001 to November 2001.

The political and military situation has been improving in Sierra Leone since the beginning of 2001, especially after May when the peace process resumed and the DDR re-started. Therefore, the ECHO 2001 operations have been developed in a more favourable environment than in 2000. The plan took a more integrated approach with only few projects targeting exclusively IDP's³².

Projects targeting directly displaced population are :

- **Oxfam** (ECHO/SLE/210/2001/01009) : Water and sanitation into IDP camps in Kenema district (EUR 500,000);
- **ICRC** (ECHO/SLE/210/2001/01013) : Provision of non-food items (EUR 1,000,000);

Four projects indirectly target some displaced populations :

- **ACF** (ECHO/SLE/210/2001/01006) : Nutrition, water and sanitation (EUR 730,000);
- **CAD** (ECHO/SLE/210/2001/01007) : Health and Nutrition in Port-Loko District (EUR 500,000);
- **Goal** (ECHO/SLE/210/2001/01021) : Water, Sanitation and Health Promotion (EUR 370,000);
- **MSF-H** (ECHO/SLE/210/2001/01022) : Emergency Health Care in Bombali and Tonkolili Districts (EUR 180,000).
- **ACF** (ECHO/SLE/210/2001/01025) : Emergency Nutrition program in Kailahun (EUR 140,000).

Again, the only project entering into the ToR of this report is ICRC (01013) while the other projects are analysed in the reports of the other team members.

In addition, the plan also funded some operations in the sector "coordination and operational support":

- **UNOCHA** (ECHO/SLE/210/2001/01002) : Support to the SLIS (EUR 150,000);
- **MSF-B** (ECHO/SLE/210/2001/01003) : Support to the INGO helicopter (EUR 900,000).
- **MERLIN** (ECHO/SLE/210/2001/01024) : Dissemination of the Code of Conduct (EUR 90,000)³³.

The Sierra Leone Information System (SLIS) has finally been supported in this Intervention Plan; the project allowed the purchase of material and the appointment of staff to collect and disseminate information about humanitarian situation and assistance. This tool should also contribute to improving coordination of humanitarian operations.

6.9. Evaluation of ECHO's response

6.9.1. Relevance

Uprooted populations

Globally, an important part of the ECHO contribution to Sierra Leone supported activities benefiting displaced populations³⁴. Assistance to those vulnerable populations has been crucial to ensure access to clean drinking water and sanitation, health services and provision of non-food items; food aid being ensured by other agencies.

The 2000 Global Plan has been quite responsive to the deterioration of the humanitarian situation and the consequent massive influx of new IDP's; in 2001, the Intervention Plan maintained an acceptable level of assistance to those beneficiaries while taking a more integrated approach mixing assistance to displaced, hosting communities and resident communities. Taking into account the fact that, with the stabilisation of the situation, all those groups share more or less the same level of vulnerability, it is considered that ECHO's strategy was relevant.

ECHO's assistance to displaced has been relatively well coordinated with the other two main donors in the sector (OFDA and DFID). Even in the absence of an official donor coordination system, frequent meetings took place between those major donors and complementarity has been ensured between them. ECHO partners also participate into regular coordination meetings under the auspices of the NCRRR as well as into the sub-sectors technical committees. Coordination of humanitarian assistance is probably not the most efficient in Sierra Leone, but the situation has been improving recently; it should at least be recognised that ECHO made some efforts to ensure an acceptable level of coordination among its partners.

The two ICRC NFI projects allowed to improve living conditions for the camps population; the second phase also supported the resettlement of IDP's from Western area and Port Loko into their villages of origin.

Operational Support

Due to the security situation and the bad conditions of road transportation in some parts of the country, the INGO helicopter has certainly been useful for the NGO community. The presence of the INGO helicopter allowed for safe transportation of staff and cargo to various difficult locations and therefore contributed positively to the expansion of humanitarian assistance to the North and the East.

Due to the ever changing political and security conditions, coordination among the numerous actors involved in delivery of humanitarian assistance has not been easy; GoSL tried to play a more active role in this sector and UNOCHA also decided to be more pro-active. In a country where data are scarce and information collection not easy, the constitution of the Sierra Leone Information System (SLIS) is a very important tool for the operators in order to centralise all available data related to humanitarian assistance, ensure the circulation of this information and strengthen the coordination of activities within the different locations of operations.

The Code of Conduct provides useful guidance for humanitarian operators and tries to ensure that basic humanitarian principles are respected. However, the dissemination of those principles to numerous groups of the Sierra Leonean society may appear too ambitious. The project proposal planned for the elaboration of a dissemination plan; it could have been more appropriate to discuss the dissemination objectives before the approval of the project to make sure that it would be realistic and target the most relevant groups.

6.9.2. Effectiveness

Uprooted Populations

The assistance provided to displaced populations by ECHO partners has generally been delivered as expected; provision of water and sanitation facilities took place as initially planned in the camps; the delivery of the non-food items by ICRC has been made to ensure better living conditions to the beneficiaries; the presence of those NFI has been noticed by the consultant in some of the visited projects sites. In some cases, access to health services may have been less effective³⁵.

Operational support

The INGO helicopter flies on request. The report provided by the partner in annex to the new request for the year 2001³⁶ shows that, in 2000, the INGO helicopter made 271 trips, transported 950 persons and 152 tons of cargo. MSF-B has been the primary user of this facility with 319 passengers and more than 45 tons of freight. Unfortunately, the reports does not provide figures about the number of hours the helicopter has been used per month; this information is important though, as the budget is calculated on that basis. It should nevertheless been mentioned that reporting remains very poor for this project.

SLIS is centralising the information provided by the various humanitarian operators in Sierra Leone; in addition, information is treated, put on maps and eventually circulated in order to facilitate the coordination among the sector. The consultant collected many useful information from SLIS and noticed the high competence and capacity of the international staff in charge of the service.

The Dissemination of the Code of Conduct project reports a very large number of workshops, drama and sensitisation sessions to INGO, LNGO, UN agencies, ex-combatants, SLA, CDF, SLP, UNAMSIL, UK troops, newspapers, radio and TV stations, general public, paramount chiefs, religious leaders, etc.. The report explains that the project encountered some difficulties at the beginning and could not achieve its objectives at the end of the planned duration³⁷; a 3 months extension has therefore been granted by ECHO.

6.9.3. Efficiency

Uprooted populations

The consultant considers that, in general, operations implemented for the benefit of the displaced population have been efficient. The ICRC NFI project was for example implemented in close collaboration with the Sierra Leone Red Cross and concentrated mostly on the provision of concrete assistance to the target beneficiaries, with minimal running costs.

No major problem has been noted about the water and sanitation projects; again, some health projects may have been less efficient.

Operational support

Despite the fact that the helicopter service has been quite useful to the humanitarian community in Sierra Leone, it has been mentioned to the consultant that some "problems"³⁸ had occurred in the past in the use of that facility. Following those problems, the partner decided to strengthen its control on the use of the helicopter and imposed new stricter rules to all potential users. During the mission, it was however noticed that the main preoccupation was to make sure that the helicopter would fly the planned number of hours per month in order to not "waste" funds; in addition, the consultant also noticed that those strict rules supposed to rule the management of the helicopter were not always respected. It should also be mentioned that ECHO disbursed a total of 2.515 MEURO for the helicopter service since 1998; 1.333 MEURO were used for 2000 and 2001 only³⁹.

The SLIS could certainly do more in the analysis of the information collected by the system; this analysis would increase the efficiency and impact of the system by facilitating the coordination and the planning of the operations. UNOCHA is said to be determined to improve this aspect of the project in the future. A positive sign is also the fact that more and more ECHO partners now use the maps and the geo-codes defined by the system to plan and carry out their operations.

There is no particular remark to make about the Dissemination of the Code of Conduct at this point; the main issue is the impact of such a project.

6.9.4. Impact

Uprooted populations

As already mentioned, the massive displacements of populations in Sierra Leone are the cause of the vulnerability of those populations who remain dependent on the provision of humanitarian assistance for survival. It was noted that the nutritional status and the health indicators among the IDP camps population and resident communities were not much different. It has also been noted that no major outbreak of water related diseases has been witnessed in those camps. This shows the positive impact of the assistance provided to IDP's despite the fact that the camps are overcrowded and would therefore favour the appearance of such problems. The provision of non-food items is important for those beneficiaries as this assistance also participates into a better hygiene in the camps; those non-food items also benefited several thousands IDP's who resettled into their place of origin.

Operational support

The helicopter service certainly facilitated the development of partners operations in areas otherwise difficult to reach by vehicles; food and essential freight have also been transported safely to projects sites. That facility also contributed to ensure a minimum of security for the teams operating in RUF controlled areas or in governmental enclaves within rebels zones.

Collection, centralisation and dissemination of information has certainly contributed to the improvement of the planning and coordination of the humanitarian operations; the charts and maps produced by SLIS are used by most of the operators and represent a valuable effort to standardise the information system in Sierra Leone. But impact could be greater if UNOCHA improves the analysis and the use of the information collected; UNOCHA could also play a more pro-active role in the coordination of the humanitarian operations. It should be noted that UNOCHA is already actively supporting NCRRR to ensure that coordination.

With the Dissemination of the Code of Conduct project, the main problem is the impossibility to measure the impact of the operation. The consultant already mentioned that the overall objective of the operation appears too ambitious; but, in addition, the partner could not provide any indication of any positive impact of the dissemination effort. This is partly due to the lack of accurate indicators in the project proposal.

6.9.5. Sustainability

Uprooted populations

By definition, most of displaced people in Sierra Leone are not in a sustainable situation; most of them remain heavily dependent on the provision of humanitarian assistance. With the reasonably positive evolution of the political situation and the peace process, it will gradually become possible to consider the resettlement of the displaced into their communities of origin, where assistance will be provided in a more sustainable way.

It should be noted that the efforts made in the IDP's camps to train "camp hygiene promoters" to the "Blue Flag Volunteers" standards and to sensitise the population about better hygiene practices will have a long term positive impact on those communities when they will be resettled.

Operational support

The partner in charge of the helicopter management decided to not re-submit a new proposal to ECHO; no other potential partner indicated it was ready to take over. This seems to indicate that the need for such a facility has probably decreased, even if the need to ensure evacuation of humanitarian workers from potentially unsafe areas will remain for several months, at least until after the elections. The second humanitarian helicopter, operated by WFP and managed by a special committee⁴⁰, will continue to respond to the needs of the humanitarian community; it is however obvious that the pressure will increase on that remaining helicopter, even if road transportation becomes more and more easy in the country.

An exit strategy should be developed by UNOCHA to gradually transfer the SLIS to an official institution of the GoSL; NCRRR is a possibility which has been mentioned to the consultant. However, so far, no real effort has been made into that direction.

The partner in charge of the dissemination of the Code of Conduct has recently presented an exit strategy to hand over the dissemination exercise to various national civil society groups. It is however unfortunate that this effort has not been made during the first phase of the project; in addition, such a hand over would be worthwhile only if it can be proven that the operation has a real impact within the Sierra Leonean society on the respect and understanding of the humanitarian principles.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Uprooted populations

Resettlement of displaced populations has now to be organised and supported. NCRRR has recently revised the National Resettlement Plan which is currently circulated for consultation.

This plan is a classical resettlement plan and seems globally satisfactory. The particularity of this planned operation in Sierra Leone is the fact that it will only support the resettlement into officially declared "safe" areas. In order to be declared "safe", a chiefdom has to satisfy several conditions, among them are the on-going disarmament, the presence of UNAMSIL, police, SLA and governmental administration. A complex mechanism has been set up to examine those conditions and make official declarations.

Another positive point of the plan is the standardisation of the assistance provided to resettling populations (transportation, food rations for two months and provision of non-food items). The plan also calls for assistance into resettlement areas.

All those dispositions make sense and, hopefully, this resettlement exercise will effectively be carried out at the end of this year and in 2002. ECHO partners should of course be encouraged to support this resettlement exercise in order to decrease the important number of displaced people in the country and allow those populations to regain more sustainable livelihood security.

However, this "official" plan does not target areas which are currently not under GoSL control; and it is reported that some spontaneous returns are currently taking place into those areas, especially into Kono district. Although those resettling populations are not entitled to assistance according to the governmental plan, ECHO partners have the possibility to provide them with a similar level of assistance. ECHO and its partners have not to be limited to areas controlled by the GoSL but should target all resettlement areas where important needs are reported.

A minimum level of assistance will of course have to be preserved for the IDP's and "displaced" returnees who do not wish to go back in a region which is not yet officially declared "safe for resettlement". It is for example expected that Kono district will not be declared "safe" before February/March 2002; most of the IDP's coming from this particular district will probably wait for the official resettlement program before moving back. ECHO's assistance can however be decreased to a minimum level as partners still involved in camps currently try to hand over their responsibilities.

For the ECHO 2002 plan, the consultant recommends :

7.1.1. To continue the provision of a minimal support, when and if necessary, to IDP's/returnees who are still located into the Southern and Eastern regions.

7.1.2. To support the resettlement process, in providing non-food items or shelter assistance, to ease the reintegration of the displaced populations into their place of origin, being officially declared "safe for resettlement" or not.

7.1.3. To provide assistance into the communities where important resettlement movements take place. The assistance should target the most affected and vulnerable chiefdoms and districts. Some criteria could be used to select those areas (the level of destruction; number of displaced resettling or expecting to return). According to those criteria, districts of Kambia, Kono and Kailahun will probably emerge as potential target areas.

Assistance into those areas may include water and sanitation, nutritional support, distribution of seeds and agricultural tools⁴¹.

Assistance should be provided on a "community-based" approach and the current categorisation of the Sierra Leonean population into various groups like "IDP's", "returnees" or "ex-combatants" has to disappear. Instead, ECHO partners should pay special attention to traditionally vulnerable groups as female-headed households, pregnant and lactating women, separated/abducted women, children/orphans, disabled, elderly.

7.2. Operational support/coordination.

7.2.1. INGO Helicopter

No new proposal has been introduced to ECHO for the continuation of this operational support. The consultant can indeed confirm that the for two humanitarian helicopters in country has strongly decreased. As the country is gradually opening up, road transportation becomes possible everywhere, even if roads rehabilitation is imperative in a near future.

In case of a sudden deterioration of the security situation, INGO have already developed alternative plans to ensure the evacuation of their teams through UNAMSIL, WFP or private charters.

7.2.2. SLIS/OCHA

In a context where coordination of humanitarian operations is difficult, the consultant considers that the SLIS is a valuable tool which can contribute to the improvement of the existing situation.

It is therefore recommended in principle to continue the ECHO support to the SLIS with the objective of improving the analysis and the dissemination of the data collected by the system as well as looking for a solution for its future hand over.

UNOCHA explained to the consultant that there was a need to increase the international staff employed under the project and purchase a satellite communication equipment. The consultant would recommend not to support the provision of the communication facility (used to communicate mainly with New York) and would recommend to check first if Sierra Leonean staff could not be hired instead of international staff.

7.2.3. Dissemination of the Code of Conduct

In the chaotic military and humanitarian context of Sierra Leone, the consultant considers that the basic principles of humanitarian assistance should indeed be underlined within the humanitarian community. The Code of Conduct (CoC) Committee plays that role and provides advice and support to agencies which would inquire about interpretations of those principles. This activity does not require any financial support.

It remains uncertain if the effort of disseminating the humanitarian principles had any impact on the target groups (virtually all the Sierra Leonean population) and the consultant doubts that so ambitious objectives are realistic.

The partner has apparently re-submitted a four month proposal (until 31/12/01) and plans to have an independent evaluation of the project in November. The consultant certainly welcomes such an evaluation if it can be done independently.

The partner developed an exit strategy for this project (through a recent concept paper) which plans for the hand over of the dissemination activity to local civil society groups. The consultant considers that this hand over could have been prepared and implemented during the first phase of the project and regrets that the partner already plans to request an additional 6 month project phase in 2002 for that purpose (after the 4 months phase already mentioned).

In the light of the limited ECHO resources for humanitarian activities in Sierra Leone, the consultant recommends to suspend temporarily the financial support to the dissemination exercise, to wait for the

results and recommendations of the evaluation to be carried out in November and, in line with the conclusions of the evaluation, to carefully consider the possibility to support the four month phase in 2002 with the objective to implement the hand over to national organisations.

7.3. The Link between Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD).

ECHO Sierra Leone and the EC Delegation are quite active in trying to look for solutions to link ECHO funded projects to longer term EC programs. It has to be recognised that, for the time being, the results remain very modest although some interesting ideas have been developed :

- The Health Sector Support Program (HSSP) will probably start only around the last quarter of 2002 and it remains to be seen how this project could for example support and relay activities currently implemented by ECHO partners;
- The EC/Sierra Leone Resettlement and Rehabilitation Program (SLRRP) mainly focuses on physical rehabilitation or construction; it can therefore provide some assistance in the rehabilitation of medical facilities and support water and sanitation infrastructure. However, the TA team contract expires on 24/12/2001 and it is feared that the new team will not be in place before 31/3/2002.
- Food Security budget line may also be very useful during and after the resettlement process; apparently, some proposals are still waiting for a final decision from the Commission.
- Human Rights/Child Protection budget line could also be used in order to continue operations in the Child protection sector.

Most of those long term programs are not yet ready to start very soon, it appears therefore that ECHO assistance will remain a necessity for a while if the EC wants to ensure the recommended LRRD. Due to the absence of other EC budget lines, the LRRD process remains slow and painful. Hopefully, the devolution exercise currently operated by the Commission will facilitate and improve the current unsatisfactory situation. The key role of the Delegations should be underlined in this particular issue in order to mobilise other services of the Commission as soon as an ECHO operation is in place.

8. LESSONS LEARNED

8.1. Co-funding

The consultant noted that, in some cases, ECHO support was considered as a contribution to a larger project co-funded by another donor (DFID or OFDA). In these cases, the "ECHO project" remains difficult to assess in itself and does not always have a balanced budget between funded inputs and the expected outputs. In case the ECHO support is a contribution to a larger operation, the consultant advises to clearly identify a logical set of activities to be funded and to adapt the inputs accordingly (expat staff, vehicles, etc..).

8.2. Flexibility

In a very volatile situation like Sierra Leone, flexibility is crucial to ensure that operations effectively respond to the actual needs. The 2000 Global Plan showed a certain level of flexibility which allowed for an adaptation of the plan to a dramatic increase of the displaced populations. This positive example shows that all the plans, though carefully elaborated well in advance, have sometimes, maybe often, to be changed in order to remain efficient.

8.3. Working with the Government

The consultant noticed that some international agencies in Sierra Leone appeared reluctant to collaborate with national authorities. They seem to say that they would loose their independence and therefore their "NGO status" if they collaborate with the GoSL⁴². The consultant would certainly recommend to ECHO partners to stick strictly to their humanitarian mandate and avoid any political manipulation.

However, it should be recognised that the GoSL has to take responsibility for the coordination of the provision of assistance to the Sierra Leonean population; INGO's have to recognise the presence and the authority of the GoSL and therefore to collaborate with the officials in charge of this coordination. A fruitful

collaboration may result in an increased capacity building of the civilian official administration and ensure better sustainability of the ECHO funded operations.

END NOTE

¹ See in Annex 2 the list of the project funded by the Global Plan 2000.

² See in Annex 3 the list of the project funded by the Intervention Plan 2001.

³ See the ToR of the Evaluation Mission in Annex 4.

⁴ See the List of persons contacted during the mission in Annex 5.

⁵ See the Mission Routing in Annex 6.

⁶ The three countries form the Mano River Union (MRU).

⁷ On the "conflict-diamonds" issue see "The Heart of the Matter : Sierra Leone, Diamonds and Human Security", Ian Smillie, Lansana Gberie, Ralph Hazleton, Partnership Africa-Canada, January 2000.

⁸ It should be noted that the timber trade was exempted from the sanctions package; apparently, the Government of Liberia has therefore replaced the diamonds incomes by timber trade incomes. See "How a tyrant's 'logs of war' bring terror to West Africa", Peter Beaumont, The Guardian, 27/5/2001.

⁹ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Sierra Leone Humanitarian Situation Report 11 Jul – 8 Aug 2001; on the DDR process, see also the documents provided by the NCDDR in Annex 8.

¹⁰ Amnesty International, Annual Report 2000, Sierra Leone.

¹¹ Report on the "Workshop on the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement", Freetown, Sierra Leone, 12-14 March 2001.

¹² United Nations Security Council, 4 June 1999, Paras. 28-29.

¹³ Norwegian Refugee Council/Global IDP Project, Profile of Internal Displacement : Sierra Leone, July 2001.

¹⁴ Norwegian Refugee Council, Idem. As the Sierra Leonean population was estimated at around 4.5 million, it was said that nearly half of the population had been displaced.

¹⁵ In some cases, camps population strongly opposed verification exercises that international organisations wanted to carry out to review the quantity of food provided to those camps.

¹⁶ See the complete OCHA/SLIS IDP's statistics in Annex 9.

¹⁷ See SLIS/OCHA and UNHCR statistics about returnees in Annex 10.

¹⁸ WHO, Current Health Situation in Sierra Leone, 6 March 2001.

¹⁹ Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), Assessing Trauma in Sierra Leone, Psychosocial Questionnaire: Freetown Survey Outcomes, 11 January 2000.

²⁰ See the areas of responsibility of the Food Pipeline Agencies in Annex 11.

²¹ Action Contre la Faim, Nutrition survey Port Loko, Sierra Leone, December 2000.

²² Action Contre la Faim, Food Security Update, Sierra Leone, March-June 2001, July 01.

²³ Survey Report on the Status of Women and Children in Sierra Leone at the end of the Decade, Government of Sierra Leone, November 2000. The accuracy of data are to some extent subject to caution as the sample frame is based on population estimates by local informants. The mission believes that those figures are overestimated.

²⁴ The report will leave out other bodies like the "Council for Displaced People" which is represented in each camp of Western area and is mainly involved in information and sensitisation.

²⁵ See the ToR of NRC in Annex 12.

²⁶ "Sierra Leone Resettlement Strategy", NCRRR, Revised Draft, October 2001.

²⁷ From OCHA published map of "Areas declared safe for resettlement, September 17", See the map in Annex 14.

²⁸ See IOM figures about the resettlement process in Annex 15.

²⁹ See the analysis of the GP 2000 budget in Annex 16.

³⁰ The plan initially included a support to the Sierra Leone Information System (SLIS) operated by UNOCHA; this project has finally not been funded in 2000 but will effectively be funded in 2001.

³¹ All projects included in the Intervention Plan 2001 have been implemented in Sierra Leone, except the budget ECHO/SLE/210/2001/01001 which is devoted to the ECHO Regional Office in Abidjan (EUR 280,000). As some funds remain available, it is expected that some additional emergency projects may be funded.

³² See in Annex 17 the analysis of the IP 2001 budget.

³³ That phase of the project did not start yet at the time of the evaluation.

³⁴ More than a third of the general ECHO contribution can be considered as targeting displaced populations; this figure remains an estimation only due to the difficulty to precisely identify the correct amounts within integrated projects and the impossibility to clearly identify displaced beneficiaries among the total beneficiaries of ECHO supported interventions.

³⁵ On this issue, see report of the consultant in charge of the "Health, Nutrition and Watsan" sector.

³⁶ "Budget request : Helicopter service for Humanitarian Community, Sierra Leone", MSF B, 25/1/2001.

³⁷ The project was initially planned from 1/12/00 to 31/5/01 (6 months); at the end of this period the project had only disbursed 45% of the total budget.

³⁸ The partner in charge of this project did not want to elaborate on those "problems" but this may partly explain why this particular partner announced on 20/9/01 that it decided to not re-submit a new proposal to ECHO for the continuation of the helicopter service.

³⁹ ECHO acknowledged those difficulties but questioned the existence of an alternative to the system used in Sierra Leone.

⁴⁰ This committee is composed of two INGO, two donors and two UN agencies.

⁴¹ In relation to health, MSF-H is already supported by ECHO for Kambia district since July 2001; a number of INGOs, including ICRC, MSF-F, and IMC already started health activities in Kono and Kailahun. Further ECHO involvement should take into account the existing NGOs operations and the implementing capacities of partners and of the MoHS.

⁴² This attitude may be the result of the past situation when the Government and the RUF were considered as two "waring factions"; it should now be recognised that this situation has changed as the authority of the GoSL is internationally recognised on the all Sierra Leonean territory.