



Evaluation of UNHCR's returnee reintegration programme in Angola

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Summary of findings and recommendations

Introduction

This evaluation is one of a series being carried out by UNHCR's Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES), focusing on the organization's role in the return and reintegration of refugees and other displaced people. These evaluations are being used to test and refine UNHCR's reintegration policy; to improve the effectiveness and enhance the impact of UNHCR's reintegration programmes; and to deepen UNHCR's understanding of the reintegration process.¹

Summary of findings

Since the end of the Angolan conflict in 2002, more than 400,000 of the country's refugees have been able to return to their homeland.² Around 225,000 of that number repatriated in an organized manner and with UNHCR assistance between 2003 and 2007.

The voluntary repatriation of this large refugee population was a major achievement given the levels of destruction and displacement that had taken place during Angola's 30-year war, the immense size of the country, the number and variety of areas to which the refugees were returning and the extremely poor state of the infrastructure. The repatriation operation also had to contend with Angola's very limited institutional capacity, both governmental and non-governmental.

In addition to assisting with the repatriation of a very large refugee population, UNHCR undertook a broad range of reception and reintegration activities in areas of return. These included the establishment of transit centres and way stations; infrastructural repairs and rehabilitation; the distribution of food and non-food items, as well as seeds and tools; the construction of water points, health posts and women's centres; as well as the provision of training and awareness-raising on issues such as landmines, HIV-AIDS and sexual and gender-based violence.

These activities provided Angola's refugees with an incentive, the means and confidence to repatriate. They provided a cushion for former refugees and local residents who were confronted with the hardships of return and helped to kickstart the reintegration process by giving them a sense of security and by assisting them to establish new livelihoods.

Despite these achievements, the current status of the reintegration process can best be described as 'limited' and 'patchy'. Limited because many of the returnees have encountered serious obstacles in their efforts to reestablish themselves in Angola, and patchy because the progress made in the reintegration process differs considerably from one location to another.

¹ The reintegration policy has been shared with UNHCR's Executive Committee. See 'UNHCR's role in support of the return and reintegration of displaced populations: policy framework and implementation strategy', EC/59/SC/CRP.5, February 2008.

² Some UNHCR sources put the figure at 450,000. The numbers are unclear because of the difficulty of assessing the scale of spontaneous repatriation.

The difficult nature of the reintegration process has been manifested in a variety of ways: low levels of food security amongst returnees and their communities, poor access to jobs, income-generating opportunities and public services; and a significant movement of returnees from rural to urban areas. These circumstances have had particularly adverse consequences for returnee women, girls and others with special needs.

An especially serious constraint to the reintegration process has been the inability of most returnees to procure national identity documents and to validate the academic and vocational qualifications that they gained while living in exile. As a result of these problems, coupled with the inability of many returnees to speak Portuguese, the former refugees tend to feel marginalized from Angolan society and alienated from the state.

The process of returnee reintegration has also been constrained by several features of UNHCR's Angola programme. During the first two years of the repatriation operation, the organization was heavily focused on the logistics of return. There was no dedicated reintegration capacity within the UNHCR structure, and systematic reintegration planning did not commence until the beginning of 2005, when UNHCR engaged the authorities and UN Country Team in the formulation of a Sustainable Reintegration Initiative (SRI).

The SRI was in many senses a model of participatory reintegration planning. But by the time it was officially launched in March 2006, UNHCR was already under pressure from donors and other actors to phase out from the Angola reintegration programme. As a result of these pressures, the organization's staffing levels and field presence were rapidly reduced in the months that followed the launch of the SRI. By the end of 2007, UNHCR's involvement in the reintegration programme had effectively come to an end.

In the absence of other actors that were prepared to fund and implement the SRI, the initiative's impact has regrettably been negligible. In these circumstances, moreover, it seems likely that many of the reintegration projects implemented by UNHCR will prove to be unsustainable.

A number of additional concerns can be identified in relation to the return and reintegration of Angola's refugees.

First, UNHCR currently has no means of monitoring the protection and welfare of the country's returnees, despite their difficult circumstances and despite the fact that refugees are continuing to return to Angola in a spontaneous manner.

Second, large numbers of Angolans remain in exile and UNHCR is currently engaged in a discussion with the states concerned with respect to their eventual repatriation. Should such returns prove possible, UNHCR will be hard pressed with its current staff and structure to play a significant role in the repatriation and reintegration process.

Finally, UNHCR's activities in Angola are increasingly oriented towards the issues of asylum and migration, a development prompted by a substantial influx of people from other African countries, most of them economic migrants but including a smaller number of refugees and asylum seekers. While this mixed migration

movement is of evident concern to UNHCR, it would be irresponsible of the organization to abandon its interest in the situation of Angola's returnees.

Reintegration policy and programmes

The recommendations of this report have been divided into two groups: those relating generically to UNHCR's reintegration policy and programmes, and those relating specifically to Angola.

With respect to the former, this evaluation of UNHCR's Angola programme has confirmed both the broad thrust of the organization's reintegration policy as well as its more specific provisions. It is therefore recommended that UNHCR proceed with the finalization, dissemination and operationalization of that policy, taking full account of the following lessons learned from the Angola programme.

1. Reintegration planning

Reintegration planning should begin from the earliest possible stage of a repatriation operation. It should be as inclusive and participatory as possible, engaging national and local authorities from the outset, as well as development actors and donors, NGOs and civil society institutions, as well as returnees and local residents. Such planning should adopt an area and community-based approach that will bring benefits to former refugees, IDPs and local residents alike. UNHCR should develop a roster of implementing partners with expertise in reintegration that could be invited to work with the organization when the planning process reveals that there is a scarcity of such actors. At the same time, and in the interest of sustainability, the planning process should wherever possible include capacity-building activities at the national and local levels.

2. Reintegration strategy

A principal outcome of the planning process should be a coherent reintegration strategy paper which can be shared with all relevant UNHCR offices (both in the country of origin and countries of asylum) and with other stakeholders. The strategy document should set out the objectives of the reintegration programme and the principles on which it is based, the activities that will be undertaken to achieve those objectives and the division of labour to be established amongst the different actors involved in the programme. Updated as and when necessary, the strategy paper should be supported by other documents, providing UNHCR and partner staff with more detailed advice with respect to specific reintegration issues, such as returnee monitoring, documentation, land and property and livelihoods promotion.

3. Protection and solutions

When UNHCR is involved in large-scale repatriation operations, it should explain and demonstrate to other stakeholders that the organization has a mandate for refugee protection and durable solutions. UNHCR should avoid an excessive focus on the logistics of return and the speed and scale of the repatriation movement. When engaged in such operations, UNHCR should also ensure that its efforts to

address the socio-economic dimensions of reintegration are matched by an equally active involvement in protection, human rights and rule of law issues. In the same vein, UNHCR should articulate its involvement in the reintegration process more frequently in terms of 'peacebuilding', 'human security' and 'reconciliation' and less frequently in terms of 'development'.

4. Catalytic role

UNHCR should emphasize from the beginning of any reintegration programme that its role is a limited and primarily catalytic one, intended to encourage and assist other actors to assume responsibility for the longer-term and developmental dimensions of the reintegration process. In countries such as Angola, which have experienced such high levels of devastation and displacement, it is unrealistic to imagine that the reintegration process can be completed in the two or three years that normally characterizes UNHCR's involvement in that process.

5. Monitoring

Protection and reintegration monitoring should be reaffirmed as core UNHCR activities in post-repatriation situations, especially when there is evidence to suggest that returnees are confronted with any form of discrimination or systematic disadvantage. In accordance with this principle, monitoring activities should be funded from the refugee pillar (Pillar One) of the new UNHCR budget structure. UNHCR should engage in a dialogue with donor states and other stakeholders about the limitations of a purely quantitative approach to reintegration monitoring and emphasize the need to focus on the degree to which returnees feel safe, secure and welcomed by their society and state.

6. Responsible disengagement

UNHCR's reintegration policy expresses reservations about the concept of 'exit strategies', given its implication that the organization should aim for an early withdrawal from reintegration programmes, irrespective of the circumstances of the returnees. On this basis, the policy commits UNHCR instead to a strategy of 'responsible disengagement', suggesting that this will normally be within a three-year period. The Angola experience suggests that further consideration is required with respect to the interpretation and operationalization of this commitment, especially in situations where other actors are unable or unwilling to make a meaningful contribution to the reintegration process. The Angola programme also demonstrates that disengagement can only be undertaken in a responsible manner if effective reintegration monitoring systems are in place.

7. Staffing and structure

Experienced UNHCR Reintegration Officers should be deployed to the field in countries that are receiving significant numbers of returnees, supported whenever possible by a dedicated Reintegration Unit in the Branch Office. UNHCR Representatives and other senior staff members responsible for reintegration

programmes should ideally have prior knowledge of early recovery, rehabilitation and rule of law issues, as well as first-rate inter-agency skills.

8. Information programmes

UNHCR should ensure that accurate information is provided to prospective returnees with regard to the conditions they will encounter in their country of origin and the forms and levels of assistance they will receive on arrival there. UNHCR should monitor such assistance programmes closely so as to ensure that returnees are provided with the support they had been promised.

9. Documentation

Provisions relating to the acquisition or reacquisition of national identity documents should become a standard feature of Memoranda of Understanding and Tripartite Agreements relating to voluntary repatriation. This is of particular importance in the context of protracted refugee situations, where returning adults and children are at risk of becoming stateless.

10. Certification

Tripartite and other agreements relating to the return and reintegration of refugees should always incorporate provisions relating to the validation of diplomas that have been acquired abroad. UNHCR and its partners should provide tangible support to this process.

11. Language

As well as learning the language of their country of asylum, refugees living in protracted situations should be encouraged and assisted to retain the language of their country of origin, so that they will not be disadvantaged when they are able to repatriate.

Recommendations for the Angola programme

1. Prioritization

While recognizing the growing importance of the migration and asylum issue in Angola, UNHCR should not lose interest in the situation of the country's existing and prospective returnees. Their return and reintegration must continue to be a UNHCR priority.

2. Documentation

UNHCR should make every effort to resolve the circumstances that are currently preventing many returnees from receiving national identity documents and from having their qualifications recognized in Angola. To attain these objectives, UNHCR

must work in close partnership with the full range of national, regional and international organizations that have an interest and involvement in these issues.

3. Monitoring

UNHCR must establish a returnee and reintegration monitoring system, even if, in the absence of a field presence, it has to be limited in scope and regularity. In addition, the findings of this evaluation should be complemented by a more detailed reintegration survey, focusing on (a) food security and livelihoods in areas of return; (b) the presence and movement of returnees to urban areas; and (c) the current status of UNHCR-funded reintegration projects. The modalities of this survey should be discussed with MINARS, the UN Country Team, relevant NGOs and academic institutions.

4. Sustainability

Despite the serious difficulties UNHCR has encountered in relation to this issue, UNHCR should make a renewed effort to encourage the authorities, development actors and donor states to support the rehabilitation and reconstruction process in areas of return. Such action is required both to assist the reintegration of the existing returnee population and to create conditions that will facilitate the return and reintegration of Angola's remaining refugees. .

5. Remaining refugees

UNHCR should continue to participate in tripartite discussions concerning the voluntary repatriation of the remaining refugees, establish an estimate of the number that may wish to return and formulate contingency plans with respect to UNHCR's role in the movement, reception and reintegration of those people. At the same time, UNHCR should vigorously pursue local settlement options for those refugees who are disinclined to return, especially those that have established close social and economic links to their country of asylum.

1. Introduction: the evaluation

Objectives

1. This evaluation is one of a series being carried out by UNHCR's Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES), focusing on the organization's role in the return and reintegration of refugees and other displaced people. More specifically, the evaluation seeks to fulfil three objectives:

- to review the relevance and feasibility of the draft UNHCR policy on return and reintegration which the organization has presented to its Executive Committee;
- to learn lessons from Angola that can be applied to the design and implementation of future return and reintegration programmes; and,
- to assist UNHCR in its efforts to develop a better understanding of the reintegration process.

2. The focus of the evaluation can consequently be summarized in terms of three 'Ps': policy, programme and process. Every effort has been in this report made to devote equal attention to each of these issues.

3. A more detailed outline of the scope of the evaluation is set out in the Terms of Reference, reproduced as Annex I.

Methodology

4. The evaluation was undertaken by two members of PDES and an independent consultant. Following consultations between the evaluation team, UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Africa and its Branch Office in Luanda, a mission itinerary was established that would enable the team to visit a mixed sample of returnee areas and to encounter a variety of different returnee scenarios (see Annex II).

5. More specifically, during a three-week mission to Angola in May 2008, the evaluation team visited those areas that have received the largest concentrations of returnees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zambia, as well as a region where a mixture of former refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are to be found. These included:

- areas in the north (Mbanza Congo and Cuimba, Zaire Province) populated by large numbers of returnees from DRC;
- areas to the east of Luanda (Malange, Saurimo, Luena, Moxico Province) hosting returnees mainly, but not exclusively, from Zambia;
- the city of Huambo and its environs, which hosted large number of IDPs during the armed conflict in Angola but which also received large numbers of returnees from neighbouring asylum countries.

The principal methods employed by the evaluation team consisted of:

- meetings with relevant staff members at UNHCR Headquarters;
- telephone interviews with staff members formerly deployed in Angola;
- a review of programme documents;
- a review of secondary sources and comparative literature; and,
- site visits, interviews with key informants in the field and focus group discussions with returnees and local residents.

6. In field locations, the evaluation team took every available opportunity to meet with returnees, both individually and collectively, sometimes in groups convened in cooperation with local elders (sobas), returnee leaders, government officials and former UNHCR implementing partners.

7. The evaluation team adopted a gender and age sensitive approach, enabling the female member of the team to undertake enquiries into the specific reintegration challenges facing returnee women and girls, as well as the roles that they have assumed since returning to their country of origin.

8. Wherever possible, members of the team visited returnee homes, as well as schools, health centres, markets, water points and electoral registration facilities in returnee areas, so as to develop a better appreciation of living conditions in areas of return. In this regard, the evaluation team profited greatly from the excellent knowledge and social networks of UNHCR's national staff members, who accompanied the team throughout its 4,200 kilometre road journey. The evaluation team wishes to place on record its deep appreciation to all members of the UNHCR Branch Office in Luanda, who provided excellent support to the mission.

Constraints

9. The mission was confronted with a number of constraints, which rendered the evaluation complex but which ultimately did not compromise its thoroughness.

10. A major constraint was the dispersal of UNHCR staff members who had previously served in the Angola repatriation and reintegration programme and who are now to be found in other locations throughout the world. To take advantage of their knowledge, the preparatory phase of the evaluation included a large number of telephone interviews and e-mail exchanges with such personnel. This preparation was particularly helpful as only one of the three international staff members in Luanda at the time of the mission had first-hand experience of the programme.

11. A second constraint was the absence of a UNHCR presence outside of Luanda. Six field offices were closed in 2006, leaving only three in operation during 2007. Following the official termination of organized repatriation in March 2007, UNHCR closed these remaining offices by the end of the year. As a result, the evaluation team visited numerous locations where UNHCR had not had a presence for an extended period of time.

12. Limited implementing partner presence in returnee areas accounted for a third important constraint. In preparing for the mission, the evaluation team learned that UNHCR had been confronted with a scarcity of experienced NGOs in areas of return, especially in the more remote locations. As funding for reintegration activities effectively ceased in 2007, most of the implementing partners who had been working with UNHCR had either terminated or substantially reduced the scale of their programmes.

13. A final constraint was the time needed for in-country travel, owing to the long distances that had to be covered by road and the very poor state of most roads outside the capital city. Unexpected airport closures compounded this problem. An inordinate amount of time was therefore spent on road travel (including, for example, a four-day drive from Mbanza Congo to Luena via Luanda) limiting the amount of time that could be devoted to site visits, interviews and focus group discussions.

14. Finally, the evaluation team did not visit the countries of asylum which had hosted (and continue to host) Angola's refugees, and could therefore not benefit from the insights of UNHCR staff and other stakeholders working in these locations. This constraint was not deemed to be significant, since the primary focus of the evaluation was on the post-repatriation phase of the programme. The team did, however, benefit from interviews with returnees who informed the team about their experience during the time they had spent in exile.

2. Operational environment and achievements

15. Angola has had a turbulent and violent history. After a long period of harsh colonial rule, a national liberation struggle took place between 1961 and 1975, when Portuguese rulers left the country and allowed a coalition of three nationalist groups to assume power. That coalition quickly broke down, however, and the country descended into a long civil war involving two principal protagonists: the MPLA government and the UNITA opposition movement. As a result of this intense armed conflict, up to 600,000 Angolans fled the country, most of them taking refuge in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia and Zambia.

16. Peace finally came to Angola with the death of Jonas Savimbi, the UNITA leader, in February 2002. Just two months later, the MPLA and UNITA agreed to a ceasefire, and in August 2002 a comprehensive peace agreement was signed. Thousands of refugees responded to these developments by returning spontaneously to their homeland, and in June 2003, UNHCR launched an organized voluntary repatriation and reintegration programme that was to be allocated around \$100 million by the time that it closed in 2007.

17. During the past five years, UNHCR's efforts to support the return and reintegration of Angola's refugees have been facilitated by a number of positive factors.

- a) In comparison with many other 'post-conflict' countries, Angola has experienced relatively little violence since the peace agreement was signed.
- b) Since the end of the war, the country has had an expanding economy.
- c) Angola's fertility and the low density of its rural population have assisted the returnees in their efforts to secure access to land and engage in subsistence agriculture.
- d) During the initial phase of the UNHCR programme, donor states were relatively generous in their allocation of funds.
- e) The refugees themselves were eager to repatriate and demonstrated a remarkable resilience and resourcefulness during the repatriation and reintegration process.

18. In every other respect, however, both the returnees and UNHCR have been confronted with enormous challenges. In an interview with one member of the evaluation team, the Director of UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Africa, who had previously served as the organization's Representative in Luanda, described Angola as "the most difficult reintegration context in the whole of the continent". While the evaluation team would certainly concur with this statement, it would perhaps go further and describe Angola as one of the most difficult reintegration contexts to be found anywhere in the world.

The context

19. When the voluntary repatriation movement to Angola began, the country had been at war for some four decades, during which time up to a million people had died of conflict-related causes. In addition to the many people who had left Angola as refugees, a further four million had been displaced within the country, many of them flocking to the relative security of Luanda and other urban centres. A significant proportion of the refugees who were now 'returning' to Angola had in fact been born in exile and had never set foot before in their putative country of origin.

20. Large-scale human displacement was not the only consequence of the armed conflict. During the war, many of the country's schools, hospitals, roads, bridges, buildings and commercial enterprises had either been destroyed or fallen into disuse. Landmines and unexploded ordnance littered much of the country, making it even more difficult for returnees to settle in their chosen location and to establish livelihoods such as agriculture, fishing or trading.

21. Establishing a major repatriation and reintegration programme in these circumstances stretched UNHCR to the limit. While the organization had a longstanding presence in Angola, it had not had access to many of the main areas of return during the country's long civil war. Refugees were returning to many different parts of Angola, requiring UNHCR to establish offices in many different locations, hundreds of kilometres apart. Needless to say, logistics, communications, security and the provision of adequate accommodation to UNHCR personnel all posed serious problems for those staff members deployed in the operation.

22. At the political level, the operational context was equally challenging. While peace had returned to Angola in a very definitive manner, the country was unsurprisingly characterized by continued political and social tensions. Many of the returnees and their principal areas of return were associated with UNITA, limiting the government's interest in devoting resources to them.

23. Moreover, the official development policy pursued by the state in the aftermath of the war has been heavily oriented towards urban areas and the maximization of revenues from the offshore oil industry. While this strategy has led to some very tangible signs of economic growth and prosperity, especially in Luanda, they are generally not to be found in areas where the returnees have settled.

24. Finally, UNHCR found itself working in an extremely difficult organizational context. As later sections of this report will explain in more detail, the capacity of the authorities was limited, especially at the local level. Civil society was weak, a problem compounded by the general absence of experienced international NGOs in UNHCR's area of operations. The return and reintegration programme was not strongly supported by other members of the UN Country Team, and those agencies that did enter into partnership with UNHCR sometimes performed in a disappointing manner.

25. Despite the difficult conditions described above, UNHCR was able to record a number of achievements between 2003 and 2006. These included:

- a) The establishment of 10 new UNHCR offices in the north, south, east and central parts of the country, employing up to 120 international staff members.
- b) The establishment of a complex transport and logistics network for the repatriation programme.
- c) Extensive repairs to road, bridges and airstrips throughout the area of refugee return.
- d) The construction of more than 20 reception centres and way stations for the use of returning refugees.
- e) The distribution of wet food rations, non-food items, seeds and tools to the returnee population.
- f) The provision of training in issues such as malaria, HIV-AIDS, sexual and gender- based violence and landmine awareness to returning refugees.
- g) The construction and rehabilitation of 220 wells and water points, 1,750 latrines, 75 health posts, and eight Women's Empowerment Centres.

26. According to interlocutors interviewed by the evaluation team, these activities served a number of important purposes.

27. First, they provided Angola's refugees with both an incentive and the confidence to repatriate. Having lived in UNHCR-administered camps for many years, they knew and trusted the organization, had benefited from the services it provided, and were motivated to return by the knowledge that UNHCR would be waiting for them on the other side of the border.

28. Second, the UNHCR programme provided some 400,000 refugees with the means to repatriate, 225,000 of whom returned with UNHCR assistance, travelling by both land and air from six countries of asylum. Without the activities described above, the repatriation to Angola would certainly have been smaller in size, slower in pace and involved much greater hardship for the returnees.

29. Third, the initiatives taken by UNHCR in Angola served to provide a 'cushion' for returnees and local populations in the early days of return, providing them with basic goods, resources and services which would not have otherwise been available to them. At the same time, the UNHCR programme helped to 'kick start' the reintegration process, not least by providing returnees with a sense of security and by assisting them in their initial efforts to establish new livelihoods.

30. Finally, the repatriation and reintegration activities undertaken by UNHCR were of particular importance because all the other actors in Angola - national and local governments, development agencies, NGOs and civil society organizations - were generally either unable or unwilling to provide the same kind of services. In that respect, UNHCR's contribution to the resolution of the Angolan refugee situation, one of the largest and longest in Africa, has been unique.

31. This is not to suggest that the programme has been without some serious challenges. In the course of its work, the evaluation team identified a range of issues that gave cause for concern:

- a) UNHCR's predominant focus on the logistics of return and the lower level of attention given to sustainable reintegration, especially in the early stages of the repatriation movement;
- b) The extensive period of time that elapsed before comprehensive reintegration planning commenced;
- c) The abrupt way in which UNHCR closed its reintegration programme and dismantled its presence in the field;
- d) The current absence of any meaningful system of returnee protection and reintegration monitoring; and,
- e) The general failure of other key actors to provide substantive support to the reintegration process in areas of return.

32. These and other aspects of the programme are examined in more depth in subsequent sections of the report, following an examination of the reintegration process that has taken place over the past five years.

3. The reintegration process

“While Gross Domestic Product continues to rise consistently at more than 10 per cent a year, the economy, based almost entirely on extractive industries (oil and diamonds) offers few prospects for employment. Living conditions remain extremely difficult for the large majority of the population, with 68 per cent living below the poverty line, severely restricted access to basic services, particularly in rural areas, and maternal and child mortality rates are among the highest in the world. At the same time, urban poverty continues to rise with an explosion in informal settlements around Luanda and other major urban centres in the country.”³

33. Several efforts have been made in the past to define and measure the ‘reintegration process’, none of which have proved to be entirely satisfactory. This evaluation employs the definition found in UNHCR’s draft reintegration policy statement, namely “the progressive establishment of conditions which enable returnees and their communities to exercise their social, economic, civil, political and cultural rights, and on that basis to enjoy peaceful, productive and dignified lives.”

34. The evaluation team cannot claim to have measured the reintegration process in Angola in a particularly scientific manner. On one hand, the evaluation team had access to virtually no data that was current, reliable and expressed in a quantitative form. On the other hand, the practical constraints confronting the evaluation were such that it was not possible for the team to employ even small-scale and random sampling techniques, let alone more comprehensive surveys.

35. The analysis that follows is consequently based on extensive interviews and focus group discussions with returnees, local residents and other stakeholders. In the course of these conversations (which involved women and men, younger, older and disabled people as well as members of different ethnic groups) the evaluation team concentrated on a mixture of subjective and objective reintegration indicators: the extent to which returnees felt content to be back in their country of origin and had been welcomed by other members of the community; the extent to which they felt safe and secure and protected by the authorities; the extent to which they had been able to establish new livelihoods, attain food security and generate a cash income; and the extent to which they had access to goods, services and information which they considered essential to their well-being.

36. On the basis of the evidence collected in this manner, the two words that best describe the Angolan reintegration process are “limited” and “patchy”. Limited because many of the returnees have encountered serious obstacles in their efforts to enjoy a progressively greater degree of human security. And patchy because the returnee experience has differed quite considerably from one location to another.

³ UNHCR, ‘Background note on the Angola operation’, March 2007.

Patterns of reintegration

37. With respect to the patchiness of the reintegration process, the evaluation team reached three principal conclusions. First, those refugees who had returned from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) appeared to have had a more positive reintegration experience than those who had come back from Zambia. Providing a coherent explanation for this difference is not easy, but appears to be associated with the fact that DRC provided a more dynamic and entrepreneurial socio-economic environment than Zambia, and that the refugees who returned from the former country brought with them a greater determination to exploit whatever opportunities they could find in Angola.

38. In addition, the deteriorating security situation in DRC has meant that the returnees from that country have a more positive appreciation of their life in Angola, whereas many of those who came back from Zambia compare their quality life in Angola unfavourably with that which they had in their country of asylum.

39. Moreover, while the evaluation team is reluctant to talk in terms of a 'dependency syndrome', it became evident that the returnees from Zambia were generally more inclined to view UNHCR as the provider of all resources and to present the team with a 'shopping list' of assistance requests than those who repatriated from the DRC. Indeed, a consistent complaint of the Zambia returnees, unlike those from DRC, was that UNHCR had given them false information concerning the forms and levels of support they would receive on arrival in Angola. UNHCR staff members have, however, refuted this assertion.

40. Second, the evaluation team found that those refugees who had returned to rural communities and who were living alongside former IDPs and people who had not been displaced expressed relatively high levels of satisfaction with their current circumstances. This is a somewhat surprising finding given the very low level of economic activity in rural areas of Angola and the difficulty of accessing public services there.

41. The most convincing explanation for this situation seems to be that there is at least a degree of equality and social solidarity to be found in the villages, that returnees from asylum countries recognize that they are no worse off than other members of the community, and that a basic level of food security can at least be maintained by means of subsistence farming. The evaluation team also collected some evidence to suggest that the sobas, 'traditional' village elders who also act on behalf of the authorities, have played an important role in the allocation of land to returnees and have been active in resolving disputes and promoting cooperation amongst different groups within their communities.

42. Third, and by way of contrast, returnees who have congregated together in and around Angola's urban centres appear to be the most poorly reintegrated of all the former refugees. This situation is a result of several factors.

43. Many of those returnees who have chosen to settle in an urban area have skills and qualifications that were learned in exile, but because they do not speak Portuguese, and because they have experienced problems in gaining Angolan identity documents and having their qualifications recognized, they are unable to

find work. They consequently experience a particularly high level of frustration and dissatisfaction.

44. Because they are living in urban areas, these returnees may have limited access to land or have to travel long distances (two hours walk in some instances) in order to engage in agricultural production. They consequently find it difficult to meet their basic food needs. At the same time, by living in or near a town, they are exposed to the very sharp inequalities of life in urban Angola, and have a regular opportunity to observe goods and services which they are not in position to purchase or consume.

45. By living with other returnees, and because they are often unable to converse with other members of the population, these former refugees have adopted a collective identity and mentality in which they are portrayed as disadvantaged, second-class citizens, whose interests have been ignored by the state and by UNHCR. As a later part of this section will explain, there is some validity to this perception.

46. To conclude this examination of the patchiness of the reintegration process, the evaluation team wishes to recall a 'worst case' reintegration scenario which it encountered on the fringes of the town of Luena in eastern Angola. Some 5,000 returnees had been settled in this location by the authorities since early 2007, congregated together in a confined space, with little access to arable land, limited contact with members of the local population, and few opportunities to engage in income-generating activities.

47. The level of social solidarity was low, as evidenced by the absence of community support for vulnerable members of the population, and, even more strikingly, by the fact that returnees from DRC and Zambia had settled in separate and segregated parts of the settlement and refused to have anything to do with each other. In these circumstances, it was difficult to avoid the conclusion that by repatriating to Angola, these people had swapped life in a refugee camp for a new and perhaps even more difficult life in what was, to all intents and purposes, a returnee camp.⁴

Dimensions of reintegration

48. As well as examining the reintegration experience of different groups of Angolan returnees, the evaluation team found it useful (and consistent with its terms of reference) to analyze some specific dimensions of that process, including food security and livelihoods, access to services, mobility, documentation and diversity issues.

Food security and livelihoods

49. The evaluation team concluded that many returnees were still struggling to attain a basic level of food security. While there was no evidence of serious malnutrition in the principal areas of return, and even less so a humanitarian crisis, the ability of the returnees to feed themselves remains an important concern.

⁴ Those who repatriated by air from DRC claimed that life has been made more difficult for them because the 40 kilogramme per family baggage allowance imposed by UNHCR had prevented them from returning with all of their possessions.

50. Food has been a persistent problem since the early days of the repatriation and reintegration programme. As Alexandra Kaun has reported in a recent study published by UNHCR, WFP's food ration programme had to be cut back in 2004 as a result of funding constraints. Moreover, access problems, the poor identification of beneficiaries and blockages in the food pipeline led to serious inequities in the distribution of rations. In Moxico Province, for example, "some received full rations, others received rations for only a few months, and others did not receive any at all."

51. Similar inequities were recorded in the distribution of seeds and tools, a task undertaken by FAO. In these circumstances, many returnees were obliged to resort to a variety of livelihoods strategies, including "fishing, hunting, trading, piecework, farming on other peoples' land, or relying on family members' rations."⁵

52. Moving beyond the most basic level of subsistence remains a considerable challenge for many returnees. While the land which they farm is generally fertile, agricultural inputs remain scarce, limiting the amount of land under cultivation. Moreover, the terrible state of the country's rural infrastructure often prevents the returnees from marketing any surplus which they might be able to produce.

53. Experience in Angola demonstrates that such constraints can be overcome by means of appropriate interventions. As one international NGO reported from Moxico in February 2008, "it was remarkable to observe the increase in the area cultivated by the families who used the seeds distributed by the project with funding from UNHCR."⁶ Unfortunately, however, and as a later section of this report will explain, such projects are now conspicuously absent in the main areas of return.

54. Returnees generally find it very difficult to establish non-farm livelihoods and income-generating activities. While many returned to Angola with skills they had learned in the refugee camps of DRC and Zambia, job opportunities are very scarce. Self-employment is also problematic, due to shortages of raw materials, poor access to credit and the difficulty of engaging in trade in a context where goods are scarce and the roads are so bad, especially during the rainy season.

55. While the evaluation team witnessed many signs of Angola's economic growth and reconstruction, these were to be found almost exclusively in urban areas. In many cases, moreover, the skilled and semi-skilled workers needed for construction projects are recruited in Luanda.

56. Paradoxically, the large Chinese companies that have arrived in Angola to work on major infrastructural rehabilitation projects are importing their own labour force. Thus while hundreds of thousands of Angolans are desperately looking for a job, Chinese workers are filling in the many potholes in the country's roads.

Mobility

57. As Kaun has reported in her study, the issue of livelihoods is closely linked to that of mobility. "Unemployment has strongly affected repatriation and migration

⁵ Alexandra Kaun, 'When the displaced return: challenges to reintegration in Angola', *New Issues in Refugee Research*, No. 152, January 2008.

⁶ World Vision, 'Moxico food security project: socio-economic reintegration of recent returnees in the province of Moxico', February 2008.

patterns," she writes, "with many former IDPs and refugees choosing to remain in host countries or settling in urban areas where they think employment opportunities are greater. This is particularly the case for youth, the majority of whom have some education or training but no opportunities."⁷

58. A number of other factors have contributed to the urbanization of the returnee population. When they first arrived in Angola, many returnees were unable to settle in their area of origin because of the presence of landmines and delays in receiving security clearance to travel. Others, especially those who had been born in exile and who had lost their parents, did not know where their 'area of origin' was.

59. Some feared that they would receive a hostile reception if they went back to a rural area, and in a number of cases, returnees found that it was simply too difficult and expensive to travel to their intended area of settlement. For all of these returnees, remaining in an urban area has represented the best, and perhaps the only real option available to them.

60. Returnee movements to urban areas have also been prompted by the lack of essential services in Angola's sparsely populated countryside, where it is simply not viable to provide schools and health centres that are within easy reach of every village. The quality of such services acts as another disincentive to remain in a rural area. As Kaun reports, "even if health posts exist, they are not necessarily stocked with appropriate staff or materials. In Luau, for example, health posts were built in some surrounding villages, but they lack both technically qualified personnel and medications, rendering the posts virtually useless."

61. The educational sector is plagued by similar problems, a situation which currently represents a serious source of anxiety for the many returnees who benefited from relatively good educations in DRC, Namibia and Zambia. One of these returnees, a university graduate who is now employed by an international NGO, provided the evaluation team with a convincing summary of the frustrations of daily life in Angola:

Medicines that are supposed to be free can only be bought for a high price in local pharmacies. It takes hours just to queue for water and people become so frustrated that fights break out at the pump. The roads are so bad that we can't get treatment for sick people and it's impossible to do any kind of business. You have to pay a bribe even to be considered for a job. And the schools are so overcrowded that classes have to be held in shifts, meaning that some of the children can't walk home until 10 p.m., which is very dangerous for the girls.

62. Confronted with these difficult circumstances, an unknown number of returnees, primarily young men, have left Angola, either to return to Zambia (DRC is generally considered too dangerous) or to travel further afield in the search for employment, particularly to South Africa.

63. While mobility is not necessarily a negative phenomenon, especially if it enables former refugees to access new livelihoods opportunities and improve their standard of living, these return and onward movements must be regarded as a

⁷ Alexandra Kaun, op cit.

troubling feature of the reintegration process, not least because they entail the separation of family members and irregular forms of migration. It is also disappointing to note that some skilled returnees have gone back to Zambia because their qualifications are not recognized in Angola, thereby depriving the country of their talents.

Age, gender and diversity

64. The evaluation team made strenuous efforts to explore the age, gender and diversity dimensions of the reintegration process, holding separate meetings with female and male returnees in a variety of different locations. The mission was greatly assisted in this task by the inclusion of a Portuguese-speaking woman in the evaluation team.

65. It became evident to the team that many of the reintegration difficulties identified in this report have a disproportionate impact on women, given the unequal division of labour in most Angolan returnee households. Feeding and caring for a family in a context of food insecurity and cash scarcity, for example, places an evident burden on women, as does the absence of health provision and other basic social services.

66. As with many displaced populations, moreover, female-headed households are over-represented amongst the returnees, partly because of events during the armed conflict but also because many of the male returnees who move to urban areas to look for work do so by themselves. While women and children sometimes benefit from this strategy through the receipt of cash remittances, the absence of the male partner also places an additional physical and psychological burden on the females who stay behind in Angola's isolated rural villages.

67. At the same time, with so many men separated from their families, and with job opportunities so hard to come by for male returnees, women have to some extent been empowered. As a knowledgeable local UNHCR staff member informed the team, "women are becoming stronger and creating new economic opportunities in order to support themselves and their families."

68. Less positively, the team heard that female heads of households and women living alone are often confronted with difficulties in accessing land (even though Angolan law allows women to own land). And if they do have access to land, they encounter problems in cultivating it. As Human Rights Watch pointed out in an earlier review of the reintegration programme, "unless women have enough children to help them farm, subsistence agriculture... is virtually impossible."⁸

69. According to informants, female returnees whose partners have abandoned them are in some cases obliged to resort to survival sex in order to make ends meet, especially when they have children to support. Returnee girls living in urban areas were also considered to be particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse. In this respect, the evaluation team's findings confirm that of a UNHCR staff member, who reported from Menongue in August 2006:

⁸ Human Rights Watch, 'Coming home: return and reintegration in Angola: the responsibility to assist returnees', 2005.

Women are affected by SGBV. No rape cases but women-beating and abusive language. Polygamy and girl prostitution is rife. Mothers voiced strong disappointment and concern towards their daughters who passed grade 7 and 8 in Zambia but have nothing to do. The girls were open to talk about their gender relationships, saying they go with men in order to have some money to buy food and other needs.⁹

70. More generally, a number of people interviewed in the course of the evaluation mission pointed to the atmosphere of suspicion and violence that had developed in Angola during the long period of the armed conflict, and in that respect drew attention to the particular vulnerability of women and children who are alleged to be engaged in witchcraft.¹⁰ In one location, the evaluation team met an NGO that had felt obliged to establish a 'safe house' for older women who had been put at risk by this phenomenon. Significantly, a simultaneous UNHCR evaluation mission examining the reintegration programme in southern Sudan returned with similar findings on this neglected gender, age and protection issue.

71. More generally, the evaluation team concluded that elderly returnees (some of whom acknowledged that they had repatriated so that they could die in their own country) constitute an especially vulnerable group. This is particularly the case with respect to those who are alone (because they have lost or been separated from family members) and who are obliged to take care of orphaned grandchildren.

Documentation and certification

72. In the evaluation team's interviews with returnees, the most frequently cited obstacle to sustainable reintegration was the lack of an Angolan national identity card ('Bilhete de Identidade'), for which the possession of a birth registration document ('Cédula Pessoal') is a pre-condition.

73. Without a Bilhete, returnees are unable to apply for public or private sector employment, cannot get married, suffer de facto limitations on their freedom of movement, are exposed to discriminatory treatment and are even at risk of expulsion as illegal aliens. For want of a Cédula, returnee children are unable to register for school and access other services. These conditions evidently place an enormous constraint on the returnees' efforts to establish new livelihoods and to become full members of Angolan society.

74. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Government of Angola and UNHCR relating to the voluntary repatriation of refugees sets out "such measures, arrangements and matters as are necessary within Angola to facilitate the orderly return and reintegration, in conditions of safety and dignity, of Angolan refugees."¹¹

⁹ UNHCR, 'Menongue-Kuando Kubango Province mission report, 16-20 August 2006'..

¹⁰ For the historical context of this issue, see Inge Brinkman, 'War, witches and traitors: cases from the MPLA's eastern front in Angola', *Journal of African History*, vol. 44, no. 2, 2003.

¹¹ 'Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Angola and UNHCR for the voluntary repatriation of Angolan refugees', June 2003.

75. Article 8 of the MoU recognizes that non-Angolan refugee spouses and children born abroad would not be considered as Angolan nationals. The article therefore provides that “the Government shall adopt the necessary measures to preserve the unity of the returnees’ families, by allowing the entry and regularizing the residence in Angola of respective non-Angolan spouses and children, according to the provisions of the Immigration Law and other applicable legislation.”

76. The MoU also extends this principle to the spouses and children of deceased Angolan refugees. The MoU is silent, however, on the question of documentation and the acquisition of proof of Angolan citizenship.

77. The evaluation mission found that the vast majority of returnees have not been able to secure a Bilhete since arriving in Angola. Indeed, the only form of identification possessed by many returnees, including those who repatriated five years ago, is their UNHCR voluntary repatriation form.¹²

78. The reasons given for this situation included the expense involved (although the exact amount cited varied substantially from one returnee to another), the need to bribe officials and bureaucratic delays. Some returnee heads of household who had been able to acquire a Bilhete, especially those with large families, stated that they were unable to meet the costs of acquiring a Bilhete for their spouses and children.

79. More generally, the issue of identity and citizenship is evidently a particularly sensitive one in the Angolan context. As the evaluation mission was told by a senior government official in the city of Huambo, “you are not an Angolan just because you say that you are an Angolan.”

80. This important obstacle to the reintegration process has been known for some time. It was pointed out, for example, in a Human Rights Watch report published in August 2003, just as the UNHCR repatriation operation was getting under way. “Many of these Angolans,” it stated, “do not have documents to prove their Angolan identity... their children, born in countries of refuge, are often seen as non-Angolan, even though they are the children of Angolan parents.”¹³

81. In January 2005, a UNHCR Headquarters mission to Angola observed that “documentation provides access to political rights, social services, formal employment, allocation of land and access to commercial services. Despite the fact that the existing legal framework for return and reintegration makes reference to the provision of documentation for all returnees, this is only taking place with regard to children under 18... Adult returnees are not being provided with documentation.”¹⁴

82. The problem of documentation was singled out again in the report of an inspection mission undertaken in October 2006, six months before the formal closure of the repatriation operation. “Lack of citizenship and identity documentation,” it observed, “is the single most compelling protection issue for returnees in Angola

¹² The evaluation team was also able to verify that these forms have enabled returnees to register to vote in the general election that is scheduled for September 2008.

¹³ Human Rights Watch, ‘Struggling through peace: return and resettlement in Angola’, August 2003.

¹⁴ ‘Mission report: consolidating an approach to reintegration’, UNHCR Angola and RLSS, January 2005.

today... Until returnees have effective access to a national identity document, their reintegration will not be complete.”¹⁵

83. Prompted by the report’s findings, and in accordance with its recommendations on this issue, the UNHCR Branch Office in Luanda, with the strong support of the Regional Bureau for Africa at Headquarters, designed and launched an important initiative to ensure that returnees could gain free access to these key documents.

84. The provision of documentation for returnees aged 18 and under was made UNHCR’s top priority in 2007, and a campaign was implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and Jesuit Refugee Service which resulted in the delivery of Cédulas to some 100,000 returnee children.¹⁶ The problem of the Bilhete remains to be resolved, however, demonstrating the need for UNHCR to encourage and assist the authorities in countries of origin to provide birth registration and identity documents to returnees from the very outset of any repatriation programme.

85. During its mission to Angola, the evaluation team heard numerous expressions of appreciation from returnees about the excellent education and training opportunities they had received from UNHCR and its partners while they were living in exile. As well as practical skills such as carpentry, construction and motor mechanics, many had acquired professional qualifications as teachers or nurses. A number of these returnees had been able to learn Portuguese, acquire a Bilhete and find employment.

86. The mission also discovered, however, that the problem of documentation, combined with strict age requirements for sitting government examinations, as well as lengthy procedures for validating professional qualifications acquired abroad, make it very difficult for many returnees to find a job and make use of their skills. While UNHCR has provided some support to returnees who wished to validate their foreign diplomas, this function does not appear to have been given a sufficient degree of priority in the reintegration programme.

Unmet expectations

87. The assessment of the Angolan reintegration process presented in this report may appear to be uniformly bleak. That is not intended to be the case.

88. Prior to the establishment of the 2002 peace agreement, for example, no fewer than 250,000 people in the area of Luena were dependent on WFP food assistance. Agricultural production had all but ceased, as had the supply of water and energy. The population was unable to leave the city because of the continuing armed conflict and the presence of land mines. Three thousand IDPs had taken refuge in the city’s principal hotel. And needless to say, those Angolans who had fled to countries such as DRC and Zambia had no intention of returning to Luena, Moxico Province or any other part of the country.

¹⁵ ‘Standard inspection of UNHCR operations in Angola: final report to the High Commissioner from the Inspector General’, March 2007.

¹⁶ This is the figure reported by the authorities.

89. While Luena still bears the scars of war, and while many of its citizens continue to live in dire poverty, the situation in the city today is immeasurably better. The population enjoys freedom of movement, security is relatively good, basic services are being restored, Chinese and other companies are repairing the roads (although not to a very high standard), the hotel has been partly refurbished and is once again open for business.

90. Within three years of the peace agreement being signed, moreover, most of the refugees from Moxico Province had returned to Angola. While there are indications that many have taken up residence in urban areas (as have 50 per cent of all Angola's citizens) they remain in their country of origin.

91. If there has been a failure of the reintegration process in Angola, it is perhaps best described as a *failure of expectations*. As far as UNHCR is concerned, there had been an expectation that short-term relief activities programmes in areas of return would transition into longer-term development programmes, providing equitable benefits to returnees and other members of the population.

92. There was also an expectation that the Angolan state would assume responsibility for the welfare of the returnees, recognizing them as fully-fledged citizens of the country, supporting their efforts to establish new livelihoods and devoting a proportion of the state's colossal oil revenues to the essential services they need. For reasons explained elsewhere in this report, these expectations have in many senses not been fulfilled.

93. As far as the returnees themselves are concerned, the sense of unmet expectations is even stronger and more tangible. While the vast majority interviewed by the evaluation team confirmed that it had been the right decision to repatriate and that they were content to be in Angola, many also stated that the conditions they had encountered there were far more difficult than they had envisaged when they made the journey home. A significant proportion placed at least some of the blame for this situation on UNHCR. According to one returnee, "what we were told to expect is not what we found." In the words of another, "UNHCR told us that the time was right to come back and received us when we returned. But then UNHCR suddenly left us and we are now in a very difficult situation."

94. An even more disturbing finding of the evaluation was the strong sense of alienation expressed by many returnees in relation to Angolan society and the state. Some said that they were resented by other members of the population because they had lived in exile, received training and education, and had generally experienced a better and more secure life than those who had remained in Angola.

95. It was a source of friction that they spoke English or French as a result of their time in Zambia and the DRC, and were perceived as monopolizing the relatively few well-paid jobs provided by international organizations and NGOs. Social relations between the returnees and resident populations were also constrained by the fact that a large proportion of the former refugees spoke little or no Portuguese. As a result, they were dismissively referred to by other Angolans as 'Zambianos' and 'Zairenses'.

96. With regard to the state, many returnees informed the evaluation team that they felt "isolated", "discriminated" and "unwanted" by the authorities, not least

because of the problems they had experienced with documentation and certification. Those originating from parts of Angola associated with UNITA or who had lived in refugee camps where the movement had a presence suggested that they were seriously disadvantaged in gaining access to jobs and other scarce resources, as priority was invariably given to MPLA members.

97. In one telling incident, the evaluation team asked a large group of returnees what assistance they had been receiving from MINARS, Angola's Ministry of Assistance and Social Reintegration, and UNHCR's official counterpart in the return and reintegration programme. On hearing the question, the crowd spontaneously burst into laughter. The situation is indicative of the limited influence of MINARS in the state structure and the scarcity of resources made available to it since UNHCR withdrew from the reintegration programme.

98. The absence of government services in a context of extreme poverty and social fragility has particularly negative consequences for returnees and others with special needs, such as women, children, the elderly and disabled. As Human Rights Watch has reported, there is "no evidence of any government assistance to these vulnerable persons when they reach their final destinations. Instead, they rely upon the support of their families and neighbours where resources are already stretched thin, and on international NGOs that are in the process of closing their operations in many areas of return."¹⁷

¹⁷ Human Rights Watch, *op cit.*

4. The reintegration programme

“The government does not have a strong presence in the field, and as a result there is limited local administrative capacity. There is also a limited presence of international organizations and UN agencies in the areas of return. Those areas are characterized by remoteness and isolation, non-existent or destroyed infrastructure and basic services... These issues have created a context where the reintegration of the returning population cannot be assured, sustainability cannot be secured, and new movements of the population in search of sustainable livelihoods cannot be ruled out.”¹⁸

Programme planning

99. Planning for the return and reintegration of Angola’s refugees presented UNHCR with a number of challenges. As a result of the long armed conflict and the devastation which it caused, UNHCR had not had a presence in or even access to many of the areas to which refugees were expected to return.

100. While the death of Jonas Savimbi quickly paved the way for a peace agreement between the MPLA and UNITA, ceasefires had come and gone before and it was not easy to know whether the situation would remain sufficiently stable for the refugees to return. And Tripartite Agreements had to be negotiated with the governments of Angola, DRC and Zambia before organized returns could begin.

101. By the time those agreements were in place, Angolan refugees had already decided to vote with their feet, returning to their country of origin in a spontaneous manner. By July 2003, one month after UNHCR’s organized repatriation programme was launched, some 130,000 refugees had made their back to Angola, often at great risk to themselves and in the absence of international assistance.

102. UNHCR’s first priority in this context was to plan for organized returns and to establish the field offices, reception centres, logistics and communications systems required for the organized repatriation to take place. For the first two years of the programme, relatively little time was spent in planning for the sustainable reintegration of the returning refugees. According to one staff member, “reintegration activities were taking place, including road and infrastructure repair, demining, as well as the rehabilitation of schools and health centres. But we recognized that this was being done in a reactive and haphazard way, without a very systematic needs assessment.”

103. A more concerted approach to the task of reintegration was adopted in mid-2004, when UNHCR’s Reintegration and Local Settlement Section (RLSS) undertook a one-week mission to Angola. The report of that mission emphasized the need for more “durable solutions analysis,” and recommended the introduction of a “4R’s

¹⁸ UNHCR, ‘Reintegration in Angola: linking practical application to the 4Rs conceptual framework’, December 2006.

approach," linking short-term repatriation and reintegration activities to longer term rehabilitation and reconstruction.

104. The mission also emphasized the need for other actors – national and local authorities, other UN agencies, multilateral and bilateral donors, as well as the World Bank, to work with UNHCR in formulating "a concrete reintegration strategy" that would be linked to Angola's UNDAF and PRSP processes, so as "to ensure that returnee areas are fully integrated into these programmes."¹⁹

105. Six months later, a second RLSS mission reaffirmed the need for a "comprehensive reintegration strategy for areas of return" and pointed out that "UNHCR staff remain highly focused on the logistics of repatriation."

There is no reintegration officer post in Luanda. The only reintegration officer post in the operation is a P3 in Luena. Despite having several professional staff with extensive repatriation and reintegration experience, limited progress has been made in systematizing and implementing reintegration. Government capacity on reintegration is limited both at national and provincial level... UNHCR at all levels needs to think beyond refugee returns and to look at mechanisms to maximize our contribution to reintegration. Partnerships, alliances and linkages with other actors are essential to support the consolidation of reintegration.²⁰

106. To address these weaknesses of the programme, a consultant was engaged and deployed in Angola for the first five months of 2005. Working closely with MINARS, where he was based, and with other members of the UN Country Team, the consultant prepared a 'Collaborative Strategy for Sustainable Reintegration', supported by detailed profiles of returnee-populated areas which provided "a quantitative and qualitative diagnostic of the present situation" and presented "data regarding social, economic, cultural, infrastructural, judicial, political and related conditions that affect or determine effective reintegration in areas of return."²¹ The consultant's work formed the basis of the Sustainable Reintegration Initiative (SRI), which was launched by the Angolan government and UNHCR in March 2006.

107. The process which led to the formulation of the SRI was in many respects an admirable and even a model one. It was undertaken in a participatory manner and used as a means of engaging with national and local authorities. It provided a better understanding of where the returnees were to be found and provided a wealth of information about the reintegration realities that existed on the ground. It provided a potential lobbying tool to attract funding and promised to reorient the reintegration programme away from its existing focus on infrastructural rehabilitation and towards self-reliance, productive activity, capacity building and peacebuilding. The real difficulty was that it came too late in the day.

108. By the time that the SRI was launched, events were conspiring to bring the UNHCR operation in Angola to an end. The majority of Angola's refugees, some

¹⁹ UNHCR, 'Preparation of 4Rs process in Angola', June 2004.

²⁰ UNHCR, 'Mission report: consolidating an approach to reintegration in Angola', January 2005.

²¹ UNHCR, 'Sustainable reintegration in areas of return with support from all relevant actors: final mission report', May 2005.

360,000 refugees, had now returned to their country of origin. While donor states had been prepared to fund the repatriation and initial reintegration process, they were now turning their attention to other operations (such as Liberia and Sierra Leone) and losing patience with the Angolan state, which (a) appeared unwilling to devote a meaningful portion of its rapidly rising oil revenues to the development of returnee-populated areas; (b) demonstrated little transparency in the way those revenues were actually being used; (c) had shunned the IMF and was in the process of developing a strategic economic relationship with China.

109. Other events added to the constraints experienced by the SRI. As explained elsewhere in this report, the UNHCR office in Angola was suffering from some difficult management problems, and relations with other members of the UN Country Team were less than optimal. WFP was also experienced funding problems, and in 2006 abruptly decided to terminate its air operation in Angola - a service on which UNHCR was highly dependent for the safe movement of personnel and materials. According to one internal report, UNHCR's reintegration efforts were also constrained by "the unplanned continuation of voluntary repatriation movements in 2006, which have consumed an inordinate amount of UNHCR and its partners' human and financial resources."²²

110. As a result of these considerations, UNHCR brought its reintegration activities to a speedy end. Field offices were closed and staff redeployed, leaving UNHCR unable to implement a programme, even though the funding available to the operation had not been exhausted and refugees were continuing to return to Angola.

111. Almost every staff member and other stakeholder interviewed by the evaluation team commented negatively on this sequence of events. The reintegration operation, one said, "was dismantled in a very violent way." According to others, "UNHCR exited too soon", "closed prematurely", and "simply vanished from the scene". "Once UNHCR had gone," said a final commentator, "then the reintegration programme was over."

112. Interestingly, the evaluation team heard only one dissenting voice on this matter, and it came from a well-educated returnee employed by an international NGO. "UNHCR had to leave quickly because funding was not available, and I can't blame the donors for that," he said. "Angola has a huge amount of money at its disposal and there is no need for donors to use their funds here when so many people are suffering in African countries that do not have the benefit of oil reserves."

113. While the rationale for UNHCR's decision to close its reintegration programme can be debated, there is little doubt about the ultimate outcome of the planning process which led to the SRI. As UNHCR closed its field offices, so did many of the NGOs with whom the agency had been working. Other UN agencies were pursuing different priorities, had a very limited presence and programme in areas of return, and had not forged particularly close links with UNHCR.

114. With the government focusing its efforts on oil production, other extractive industries, and large-scale urban infrastructural works, those areas did not feature at all prominently on the official development agenda. These conditions made it

²² UNHCR, Angola mission report, 23 November to 4 December 2006: Southern Africa Desk Office', December 2006.

impossible to meet the objectives set out by UNHCR in its 2007 Global Appeal, which stated:

In 2007, UNHCR will focus on the consolidation of the Sustainable Reintegration Initiative, primarily by building support for it among other UN agencies, bilateral development bodies, NGOs and ministries... The long-term success of the Angola voluntary repatriation programme... rests on the comprehensive and sustained development of areas of return. However, it is clear that it is the Government of Angola, assisted primarily by its development partners, that will have to take primary responsibility in this regard.²³

115. During the time that it spent in returnee-populated areas of Angola, the evaluation team collected little substantive evidence to suggest that the SRI had been implemented by any other actor following the closure of the UNHCR return and reintegration programme. And when asked by the team to assess the impact of the SRI on the reintegration process, a top-level MINARS official replied with a single word: "Zero."

116. In this respect, there appears to have been a fundamental disconnect between UNHCR's perception of the SRI and that of other relevant actors. As suggested by a very insightful paper prepared by a staff member in December 2006, "UNHCR's role in the Sustainable Reintegration Initiative was designed to be catalytic rather than active, its purpose being to promote returnees' basic rights, ensure effective advocacy with other stakeholders and the mobilization of resources."²⁴ As far as those other stakeholders were concerned, however, primary responsibility for returnees and their reintegration continued to be held by UNHCR, even though it was leaving the scene.

Programme implementation

117. In addition to the challenges associated with the planning process for the Angolan repatriation and reintegration programme, UNHCR was confronted with a variety of difficulties in the implementation of that programme. This section examines these difficulties, focusing primarily on the issues of logistics, implementing partners, human resource management, development linkages and returnee monitoring. The section also provides some observations with respect to those Angolan refugees who remain outside their country of origin.

Logistics

118. Logistics are central to any repatriation and reintegration programme established by UNHCR in a post-conflict situation. On one hand, refugees will not have the ability or incentive to go home unless they can physically access their country and community of origin. On the other hand, effective logistics are required if UNHCR is to facilitate the reintegration of returnees once they have returned to their homeland.

²³ UNHCR, 'Global Appeal 2007'.

²⁴ 'Reintegration in Angola', op cit.

119. In Angola, the logistical challenges confronting UNHCR and its partners were particularly severe. According to a February 2008 report from an NGO implementing partner, “the project has to cover great distances between villages in order to reach the beneficiaries... Due to bad road conditions, which were exacerbated during the rainy season, motorcycles were constantly having to be repaired and fuel was very expensive and difficult to obtain... There is a lack of local seed production initiatives, one has to travel far away to get quality seeds and improved crop varieties.”²⁵

120. When UNHCR’s evaluation mission visited the country four months later, such statements were more than verified. Impassable roads, airport closures, fuel shortages, non-existent and erratic supplies of water and electricity continue to be predominant features of daily life in both rural and urban Angola, even for international organizations and personnel.

121. The evaluation team cannot offer an easy solution to such difficulties, but wishes to pay tribute to the way in which UNHCR staff members were able to adapt to these conditions and deliver on the basic organizational objective of securing the return and to some extent the initial reintegration of the Angolan refugees.

Implementing partners

122. The logistical problems noted above were compounded by the general scarcity of NGO implementing partners who were on the ground in Angola, who had some familiarity with the work of UNHCR, and who were able to perform in a satisfactory manner.

123. One result of this situation was that UNHCR was obliged to become involved in a considerable amount of direct implementation and, in the words of one UNHCR staff member, “to offer a lifeline to NGO partners who lacked the expertise and capacity required to do what they were engaged to do.” Moreover, implementing partners who performed reasonably well during the return phase of the programme did not necessarily have the skills or resources required to make a useful contribution to reintegration activities.

Human resource management

124. UNHCR’s Angola programme is generally recognized to have attracted some of the organization’s most talented staff members, some of whom had gained valuable previous experience in other repatriation and reintegration operations. In other respects, however, human resource management proved to be problematic.

125. The first problem was that of retaining staff members for sufficient periods of time to provide continuity. For reasons ranging from the isolation and poor living conditions found in remote areas of Angola, to the relatively disadvantageous remuneration and high cost of the capital, staff members tended to move on from Angola relatively quickly, especially those appointed to one-year ‘fast track’ appointments. As a result, some positions remained unfilled for extended periods, or positions were filled with personnel with little or no previous UNHCR experience,

²⁵ World Vision, op cit.

including UNVs some of whom assumed management responsibilities, in contravention of UNHCR policy.

126. Second, UNHCR was not always able to find a sufficient number of suitably qualified staff members who were able to speak or learn Portuguese, a necessity to function effectively in Angola given the limited number of people who speak other languages. At the same time, UNHCR found it difficult to retain national staff members with language skills, due to competition from Angola's booming private sector.

127. Third, UNHCR found it easier to engage staff members with experience in the logistics of return, especially in the early phase of the operation, than to find personnel with skills and experience relevant to the tasks of reintegration planning and programming. This was particularly disadvantageous in view of the variable quality of the UNHCR implementing partners engaged in reintegration activities.

128. Many of the staff members interviewed by the evaluation team suggested that there should have been a dedicated reintegration capacity in the UNHCR structure from the very beginning of the repatriation movement, thereby facilitating early planning for the post-return phase of the programme. In fact, systematic planning did not commence until early 2005, 18 months after organized returns began, and was entrusted to a consultant, strongly supported by the Reintegration and Local Settlement Section (later the Peacebuilding, Livelihoods and Partnership Section) at UNHCR Headquarters.

129. A dedicated and suitably experienced reintegration officer was eventually appointed in May 2005, but a year later, after the departure of a colleague, was named as head of the Programme Unit. By that time, the staffing of the operation was being reduced very quickly: a 32 per cent decrease in 2006 and a further 38 per cent reduction in 2007.

130. A final difficulty confronting the Angola programme, especially in the reintegration phase, was to be found in the area of staff relations. When the Inspector General's Office visited the country in October 2006, it concluded that the UNHCR team was "plagued with communications problems". "Staff morale and team spirit were very low, and in a disturbing number of cases, the inspection mission noted that staff relations were conflictual and tense."²⁶

131. Such communications problems also manifested themselves in weak information management. In the absence of an effective system for the dissemination of policy and strategy documents from Luanda, field staff were left to 'go it alone' and to develop ad hoc responses to the challenges confronting them.

Development linkages and sustainability

132. A major difficulty encountered by UNHCR in Angola has been the low level of interest amongst other actors in the reintegration programme. Donors, development agencies and the government all regarded (and continue to regard) the remote areas of refugee return as a relatively low priority, preferring to invest in Luanda and the more densely populated highland areas. According to one staff member, "our

²⁶ 'Standard inspection', op cit.

potential partners were not exactly jumping to become involved. When it came to returnee areas, the general attitude was 'UNHCR has got that covered'."

133. As far as the donor states are concerned, their relations with Angola are tightly focused on economic and regional security issues. They are concerned by the low level of official spending on social services, but see no reason why they should fund such programmes, now that Angola is Africa's largest oil producer (around two million barrels per day) and is also in receipt of multi-billion dollar loans from China.

134. Attracting the interest of the UN Country Team in the reintegration process and programme has proven to be equally difficult. Some members of that team have other strategic priorities, while others have wound down their operations.

135. UNDP is helping Angola to decentralize its administration, the World Bank has invested over \$200 million in a demobilization programme for ex-combatants, and WFP had steadily reduced its food aid programme since the end of the war. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is terminating its presence in Angola at the request of the authorities, who, unlike many African states and because of the oil revenues and loans at their disposal, do not regard the UN as a particularly important development partner.

136. Unfortunately, moreover, two of the partnerships that UNHCR was able to establish with other UN agencies enjoyed very limited success. According to one report, "the performance of FAO in the agricultural project, particularly in terms of the delivery of seeds, has been extremely poor... Contrary to its presentation at the launch of the SRI in March 2006, there is no indication that FAO has made a substantive effort to bring its own funds on board in 2007 to facilitate sustainability."

137. The same report goes on to state that in relation to a local economic development initiative in Moxico Province "there are major gaps in the work conducted to date by ILO.... The draft project document prepared by ILO for 2007 does not reflect a clear multi-year vision for the initiative, nor concrete activities to be implemented in support of the overall strategy."²⁷

138. Such comments are perhaps indicative of a more general malaise that has characterized UNHCR's relationship with the UN Country Team in Angola, which, according to the Inspector-General's report, has entailed "impaired information sharing and communication, and in certain cases a fundamental lack of trust and cooperation."

139. The UNHCR office in Angola has made laudable efforts to encourage the government to view reintegration as a national priority. Some progress in this respect is evidenced by the government's inclusion of reintegration as a component of its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PSRP) for the period ending in 2008. This is an approach that UNHCR firmly endorses.

140. Reintegration, however, is cited only as a "cross-cutting theme" in the PRSP for the next period, and in practical terms, the authorities have provided limited practical support to the reintegration process. While it is to be expected that the government's heavy investment in the country's infrastructure will eventually create

²⁷ 'Angola mission report'.

new livelihoods opportunities for the returnees, the immediate needs of those people are also to be found in areas such education, health, water supply and sanitation. MINARS and other ministries working in the social sector do not appear to have the resources, capacity or political influence to provide such facilities.

141. In the context described above, serious questions have to be asked about the sustainability of those reintegration activities undertaken by UNHCR and its partners. As the organization has learned in many other countries, it is relatively easy to build or rehabilitate a school or health centre, but much more difficult to ensure that those facilities will be maintained and equipped with the personnel and materials that they need to provide a service to the population.

142. A sad example of this is to be found in the history of Angola's Women's Empowerment Centres, eight of which were established in returnee areas with the support of UNHCR. The aim of these centres is a very noble one: to improve the situation of women, to promote returnee rights and to mobilize the local community by means of activities such as Portuguese language, literacy, skills and IT training, awareness raising on sexual and gender based violence, as well as income-generating projects in areas such as sewing, shoemaking and bread-making.

143. When asked to cite the most important achievements of the UNHCR repatriation and reintegration programme in Angola, numerous staff members who had been deployed in the country made reference to the Women's Centres. Now that UNHCR's presence and funding has been withdrawn and the authorities have assumed responsibility for them, however, their sustainability is in doubt.²⁸

144. Visiting a number of the centres, the evaluation team found that their physical condition was deteriorating and that the range of services and activities they provided was steadily diminishing. Some of the products being made at the centres could not find a ready local market, as they were often undercut by cheaper imported goods. The team also observed that men, including local political notables, formed a substantial proportion of the people now making use of the centres. It is difficult to imagine that they will continue to function as intended without external funding.

Returnee and reintegration monitoring

145. Some of the UNHCR staff members interviewed by the evaluation team felt that protection issues had not been adequately prioritized in the Angola repatriation and reintegration programme, and that the principal criterion of the organization's operational effectiveness had been the number and speed at which refugees returned to the country.

146. An associated observation made by UNHCR personnel, and which is supported by the evaluation team, is that more attention should have been given to monitoring the return and reintegration process. According to a number of staff members, laudable efforts were made to address this issue in the earlier phases of the

²⁸ An ILO consultancy report prepared in December 2006 had warned that the Women's Centres "are heavily reliant on UNHCR's technical and financial assistance... There is a huge vacuum that the centres face as a result of UNHCR's phase out." 'Women's Empowerment Centres situational review: training needs analysis and capacity building in Moxico Province, Angola', December 2006.

programme. In Moxico Province, for example, the UNHCR team developed a comprehensive set of returnee monitoring framework which was a model of its type. But such efforts dwindled as the programme progressed and the repatriation movement drew to a close. This was a principal theme of the Inspector-General's 2007 report, which noted that "protection monitoring... is unevenly implemented by the different offices throughout the country... Regardless of the underlying causes, the result is a patchwork of returnee protection monitoring by UNHCR in Angola, sometimes substantive and sometimes not."²⁹

147. Now that UNHCR's field offices have been closed, there is quite simply no functioning returnee monitoring system in Angola. Given the continuing problem of returnee documentation, the fact that large numbers of Angolan refugees remain in countries of asylum, and that tripartite discussions are continuing regarding their voluntary repatriation, the evaluation team has serious concerns about the absence of any UNHCR monitoring capacity.

148. Without a presence or even periodic missions to returnee areas, the organization will also find it difficult to provide refugees with information on conditions in areas of prospective return. Prior to the evaluation team's arrival, the most recent field visit undertaken by Luanda-based staff was to formally close projects, rather than to monitor the protection and welfare of returnees.

149. As a result, UNHCR's knowledge of the 400,000 people it has helped to return and reintegrate over the past five years is very limited indeed. According to the NGO Dom Bosco, which maintains a very impressive education and training facility in Luena, "UNHCR acted as a watchdog, protecting the rights of returnees. Since it has left, some people felt less secure." This is particularly unfortunate in the period leading up to the country's general election, as some of the returnee areas visited by the evaluation team have witnessed a recent growth of political tension and some violent incidents.

150. Addressing this situation will not be easy. UNHCR's former implementing partners have a very limited presence in the field and do not generally have expertise in the area of protection and reintegration monitoring. Angolan lawyers are almost non-existent outside of Luanda, making it impossible to establish any kind of legal network that could monitor the situation and report to UNHCR.

151. The option of re-establishing a UNHCR presence in the field is financially impracticable, and would probably not be welcomed by the authorities. Perhaps the best that can be done is for staff in Luanda, including the new Representative and Senior Protection Officer, to arrange a series of monitoring missions to the field, making use of whatever logistical facilities can be provided by MINARS and those NGOs that remain on the ground.

Remaining refugees

152. While the lion's share of Angolan refugees repatriated in the period 2002 to 2007, a substantial number, too large to be deemed a 'residual caseload', remain in their asylum countries. They total some 190,000, the vast majority in DRC (125,000)

²⁹ 'Standard inspection', op cit.

and Zambia (42,000). Spontaneous returns to Angola continue, although it is difficult to estimate the scale of this movement.

153. The most recent tripartite discussions involving UNHCR, the government of Angola and the principal refugee-hosting countries were held in Lusaka in May 2008. These discussions confirmed Angola's continued commitment to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of those refugees who wish to return.

154. At the same time, asylum countries made clear their desire for repatriation to continue, so as to bring the Angolan refugee chapter to a close. Once the return takes place, local settlement may also be envisaged for a small number of refugees with family links to nationals of the asylum countries. At the Lusaka meeting, UNHCR also put forward a proposal for a regional durable solutions framework, which would include invoking the cessation clause for the remaining Angolan refugees.

155. The evaluation team has some concern with respect to the capacity of UNHCR's Luanda office, as presently staffed, to respond to any additional returns from neighbouring countries.³⁰ Moreover, while the team recognizes the growing importance of asylum and migration issues in Angola (a development linked to the large-scale arrival of people from other African countries, many of them hoping to share in Angola's new prosperity) this issue should not be given precedence over that of the return and reintegration of the remaining Angolan refugees.

³⁰ A senior MINARS official indicated to the evaluation team that the authorities had serious reservations about any further organized returns.

5. Conclusion: rethinking reintegration

“Repatriation is currently seen as the preferred durable solution to refugee crises by UNHCR, host and home countries. The assumption is that through return, refugees will reintegrate and emplace themselves into realities and structures that are familiar to them. This logic may be applicable to periods of short-term displacement. But in a case like Angola, where many refugees spent decades in neighbouring countries, and teenagers and young adults have never stepped foot in their country of origin, repatriation suggests a form of *re-settlement*, rather than a return to normalcy.”³¹

156. Angola provides a very rich case study of refugee return and reintegration, highlighting a range of issues and dilemmas that are of great significance to UNHCR in its efforts to develop appropriate policies and effective programmes in this area. This concluding section identifies and briefly examines just six of these issues and dilemmas.

The meaning of reintegration

157. As suggested in the quotation above, the notion of ‘refugee reintegration’ can be misleading in the context of a country as Angola, where so many people were displaced for such long periods of time. While UNHCR played a part in the return of some 400,000 refugees, some four *million* people are thought to have been displaced within Angola when the war came to an end. As UNHCR had a very limited involvement with this enormous IDP population, it is not very clear what has happened to them. According to some informants, many have ended up in the shanty towns of Luanda.

158. In some the districts visited by the evaluation team, it was estimated that 10 per cent of the population were residents at the time when the war came to an end. The other 90 per cent were refugees or IDPs who had moved to the district following the ceasefire. In this respect, the Angolans concerned were involved more in the creation of entirely new communities than in joining or rebuilding existing social structures, as the concept of reintegration would suggest.

Space and time

159. The Angolan case also begs some important questions with respect to the spatial and temporal dimensions of reintegration. A striking feature of the areas visited by the evaluation team is their high level of human mobility: predominantly a movement from rural to urban areas (nobody interviewed by the team has any idea how many former refugees are now living in the shanty towns of Luanda) but also the movement of people who are looking for their ‘place of origin’, waiting for that place to become accessible and habitable again, or searching for family members and friends from whom they have been separated for many years.

³¹ Alexandra Kaun, *op cit*.

160. In other words, 'reintegration' can entail a considerable amount of movement and is often a protracted process - certainly more protracted than the two or three years that typifies UNHCR's involvement in post-repatriation situations.

Reintegration indicators

161. UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies are under considerable pressure (primarily from donor states) to provide quantifiable indicators of their performance and impact. But what indicators should be used to assess the status and sustainability of a reintegration programme?

162. First, accurate statistics on even the most simple issues (the number of health centres per head of population, for example) can be difficult, time consuming and expensive to collect, especially when done on a regular basis.

163. Second, those indicators can be misleading. What use is a health centre if it is not regularly attended by a nurse or pharmacist and is unable to provide patients with medication? It is usually possible to collect data on school registration and attendance, but what do those figures show about the quality and relevance of the education that children are receiving?

164. Third, and as seen very clearly in Angola, in a post-conflict and post-repatriation context, the returnee reintegration process is as much about feelings of safety, security, attachment to and protection by the state as it is about access to services and resources that are more tangible and readily measured.

State responsibility

165. UNHCR has always made a clear distinction between the work that it undertakes on behalf of refugees and its activities on behalf of returnees. While refugees are outside their own country and in need of international protection, returnees have returned to their country of origin and re-availed themselves of the protection of the state. It thus follows that primary responsibility for their welfare should rest with the authorities, supported as necessary and appropriate by other members of the international community, including (for a limited period of time) UNHCR.

166. But what position should those other actors adopt when the state concerned chooses to prioritize other issues in its public spending and development plans? Do they substitute for government and absolve the state of its responsibility? Or do they refrain from further involvement, thereby risking the welfare of the returnees and the sustainability of the reintegration process?

Relief, development and poverty reduction

167. The discourse on reintegration over the past 15 years has been predicated on the assumption (or at least the hope) that a seamless transition can be made between a relatively short period of humanitarian relief and the longer-term process of development in returnee-populated areas. Indeed, countless studies, conferences and

high-level meetings have been devoted to the task of determining how the 'gap' between relief and development can best be bridged.

168. The case of Angola puts this longstanding issue into a rather stark perspective, begging the question as to why an area should quickly or necessarily 'take off' into development, simply because it has experienced the return of large numbers of refugees. Ideally, of course, that should be the case, because the welfare of returnees and the sustainability of the reintegration process will evidently be supported by development gains.

169. But UNHCR and other humanitarian actors should be realistic with respect to the extent that states, donor countries, development actors and the private sector will support the development process in areas that are perceived by those stakeholders to have little economic potential and which are politically marginalized.

170. In this respect, the notion of poverty reduction, coupled with the third and fourth components of UNHCR's former '4Rs' approach (i.e. rehabilitation and reconstruction) might prove to be a more useful entry point than 'development' for the organization's involvement in this domain.

171. Such an approach would also address the concern of some donor states, who mistakenly consider UNHCR's reintegration activities to be developmental in nature, despite the fact that they are undertaken in 'humanitarian mode' (i.e. speedily, without a great degree of pre-planning, implemented by NGOs and intended more for quick impact than for sustainability).

Residual caseloads

172. UNHCR has become accustomed to using the notion of 'residual caseloads' in relation to groups of refugees who choose to remain in their country of asylum, even when most of their compatriots have repatriated to their country of origin. As indicated earlier in this report, it is difficult to make legitimate use of this concept in a situation where almost 200,000 refugees remain in countries of asylum, a figure equal to 50 per cent of the 400,000 who have repatriated.

173. As the quotation presented at the beginning of this section suggests, voluntary repatriation may be the preferred solution of many actors in the international refugee protection regime. But it is not necessarily the most appropriate approach or the one favoured by refugees themselves, especially when they have been born, brought up in and have extensive ties to their adopted state and society. In such contexts, local settlement options should be vigorously pursued, pending the time when refugees can find a durable solution to their plight, whether by means of voluntary repatriation, local integration or third country resettlement.

Annex I: Terms of Reference

Evaluation of UNHCR's reintegration programme in Angola

Context

In early 2008, UNHCR launched consultations with its Executive Committee (ExCom) on a draft Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy regarding UNHCR's role in support of the return and reintegration of displaced populations. This updated reintegration policy includes a commitment to undertake "both real-time and retrospective evaluations of its major reintegration programmes".

In line with this commitment, UNHCR's Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES), in consultation with the Africa Bureau, will undertake an evaluation of UNHCR's reintegration programme in Angola.

The three-decade old Angolan conflict was one of the most protracted in recent history, taking the lives of approximately one million people, displacing 4.1 million internally and driving 600,000 refugees into the neighbouring countries of Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia, the Republic of Congo, South Africa, and Zambia. Since the signing of the Luena Accords on 4 April 2002, more than 450,000 refugees have returned to Angola, along with all IDPs. Tens of thousands of refugees had already returned spontaneously from the DRC and Zambia prior to the launch of UNHCR organized repatriation programme which began on 30 June 2003.

Assisted voluntary repatriation was completed in 2007. UNHCR's reintegration programme began in 2005 with the establishment of 11 offices in the principal return areas. Key areas of intervention have included water, sanitation, health, education, documentation, livelihoods, and protection, with a special focus on women and girls. The operation has encountered significant constraints, including weak donor interest in the reconstruction process, the extent of the geographical area involved, the presence of landmines and unexploded ordinance, logistics challenges and limited local capacity. The evaluation will aim to capture key lessons from UNHCR's engagement in reintegration activities in Angola to date and make suggestions, if needed, for adjustments to the draft reintegration policy.)

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with UNHCR's Evaluation Policy (2002), and the finalised report will be placed in the public domain.

Evaluation Objectives

1. To provide an independent assessment of the effectiveness and impact of UNHCR's operations in supporting the sustainable reintegration of returning refugees and (where relevant) IDPs in Angola (2002-2008).
2. On the basis of this assessment, to document key achievements and findings regarding the reintegration programme, analysing and taking into account any constraints and opportunities identified.

3. To analyse the extent to which UNHCR's reintegration policy framework (Framework for Durable Solutions and 4Rs) was relevant and applicable in the Angola context, and to recommend any adjustments which should be made to the draft revised policy framework in view of the Angola experience.

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria have been identified with reference to the OECD-DAC criteria for evaluating humanitarian action and elements of UNHCR's reintegration policy framework and other internal guidance. The questions set out below are indicative of the general areas to be covered, *but need not all necessarily be addressed in equal depth.*

Appropriateness

- Were the activities undertaken an appropriate response to the needs of returnees and receiving communities?
- To what extent was UNHCR able to effectively monitor the protection and general welfare of returnees?
- What was the level of beneficiary/community involvement in project design, implementation, and monitoring?
- Were gender, age and diversity appropriately mainstreamed into project design, implementation and monitoring?

Efficiency

- Were available resources targeted and used in an efficient manner?
- Were interventions appropriately prioritised?

Impact

- What direct and indirect evidence is available that the interventions made a positive contribution to the sustainable reintegration of returnees?
- What systems/indicators were used to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the programmes?
- Did the programme enhance the self-reliance of returnees? If so, can you give some notable examples?
- What was the impact on the key determinants of reintegration as identified in the 4Rs framework:
 - good local governance
 - protection of rights of communities inclusive of returnees
 - improved social services including infrastructure
 - co-existence and confidence building
 - economic revival and livelihood creation
 - improved access to services

(In the absence of baseline data, impact will be primarily assessed on the basis of the level of satisfaction by beneficiaries and their perception of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the programme.)

Coverage

- Was geographical coverage based on accurate identification of potential/actual areas of return?
- Was assistance provided in all main return areas? Where UNHCR was not present, were appropriate alternative arrangements made?
- Were operations re-oriented where necessary?
- Were beneficiaries correctly and fairly identified and targeted?
- What efforts were made to ensure that projects targeted vulnerable groups?

Connectedness

- Did the programme build on the skills and capacities of returnees developed during displacement?
- Did the programme complement and enhance local capacity?
- Have local authorities / communities been able to sustain the projects initiated?

Coherence

- To what extent have UNHCR's reintegration activities formed part of an 'integrated approach' as envisaged by the 4Rs framework?
- To what extent were the activities undertaken coordinated with other UN, NGO and government interventions?
- Were effective partnerships established?
- To what extent have reintegration activities been mainstreamed into national reconstruction and development strategies?

Specific issues for consideration

- What was the added value of UNHCR's engagement?
- Did the 4Rs and other policy guidance prove to be a useful and relevant framework for engagement?
- What specific lessons can be drawn a) regarding UNHCR's strategy and approach in Angola and b) for incorporation in UNHCR's revised reintegration policy?

Methodology

Document review

The evaluation team will begin with a review of available documentation. The support of the Africa Bureau and Country Office is requested in sharing relevant documents prior to the pre-mission briefings.

Pre-mission briefings

Pre-mission briefings and interviews will be held in Geneva during the week beginning 14 April 2008. UNHCR staff to be interviewed will include the Director and Deputy Director of the Africa Bureau, Head of Desk, reintegration, health and education technical experts within DOS, external relations and fundraising staff, and staff previously deployed to Angola during the period since the operation started. A telephone conference shall be held with UNHCR Luanda to finalise the mission arrangements, and telephone interviews/e-mail interviews will also take place with former staff.

Field mission

A field mission to Angola will take place from 11-31 May 2008. A draft itinerary is to be worked out in cooperation with UNHCR Luanda and will be annexed to the final version of these TORs. Briefings and de-briefings will be held in Luanda and Geneva, and visits will be conducted to key field locations in the south (Luena, Luau, Cazombo, Huambo) and the in the north (Maquela do Zombo). Data collection methods will include interviews with key informants (UNHCR staff, local, regional and national government officials, UN Country Team, other UN agencies, NGOs) and focus group interviews with returnees and their communities. Interviews will normally take place without the presence of UNHCR staff (other than members of the evaluation team). The evaluation team will use gender-sensitive and participatory approaches to seek the views of beneficiaries. UNHCR Luanda is requested to take responsibility for in-country travel and other logistics support, advising on itinerary and potential interviewees, and scheduling interviews and focus group discussions. UNHCR Luanda is also requested to arrange for the provision of non-UNHCR interpreters in field locations, with costs to be covered by PDES.

Preparation of draft report

A draft report will be prepared and circulated for consultation (Target date: 30 June 2008), and a de-briefing on the mission findings will take place at Headquarters. A minimum of two weeks will be allowed for consideration and comments by relevant UNHCR stakeholders (and external partners if appropriate). The evaluation team will be expected to consider and take due account of comments received, but is not obliged to incorporate these in the final report.

Finalisation of the report

The evaluation report should consist of:

- An executive summary and recommendations (country-specific and on draft policy) (not more than 6 pages).
- Main text (to include index, context, evaluation methodology, analysis of findings and conclusions (not more than 30 pages). References to be kept to a minimum, footnotes to be used only where absolutely necessary.
- Appendices, to include evaluation terms of reference, maps, bibliography.
- PDES basic style rules to be followed.

The target date for finalisation of the report will be end July 2008.

Data collected will be used for the purposes of the evaluation report only, and will not be incorporated in separate research or publications without prior authorisation.

Evaluation Team

The Evaluation Team will be led by Jeff Crisp, who will lead the drafting of the report, together with one external consultant, Ms. Raquel Maria Martins de Freitas, and Mr. José Riera of PDES.

PDES/jr
28 April 2008/FINAL

Annex II: List of interviews and itinerary

Angolan Reintegration Evaluation Mission (11-31 May 2008)

I. Interviews conducted prior to the mission:

Mr. António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Ms. Marjon Kamara, Director, Regional Bureau for Africa and former UNHCR Representative in Luanda in the 1990s

Ms. Victoria Akyeampong, former Head of Desk for Southern Africa (2003-2005)

Ms. Annette Nyekan, former Deputy Representative (Operations) (May 2004-January 2007)

Mr. Matthew Brook: External Relations Officer in Luanda from April 2003-2005, then became Desk Officer for Southern Africa based in Geneva until May 2007.

Mr. Mohammed Dualeh: Head of Desk for Southern Africa (presently)

Mr. José Samaniego: Programme Officer in Luanda (2003-2005)

Ms. Francesca Bonelli: Community Services Officer based in Luanda (September 2003 - June 2004), then focused on reintegration in Moxico and Menongwe Provinces (June 2004 - December 2006)

Ms. Veronique Genaille: Head of FO Luena and responsible for a number of field offices (July 2004-June 2006)

Mr. Enrique Valles: Reintegration Officer in Luanda (May 2005 to July 2006); Acting Head of the Programme Unit in Luanda (July 2006-November 2007)

Mr. José Egas: Reintegration Officer (UNV) (March 2006-August 2006) Programme Officer (August 2006-June 2007)

Mr. Manuel Carlos dos Santos: Community Services Officer in Luena, Moxico Province (November 2005-November 2007), then Head of Programme Unit (November-December 2007)

Ms. Isabel Marquez: Senior Legal Adviser, Africa Bureau (supported documentation drive in 2007)

Ms. Tammi Sharpe: Protection Office in Luena (April 2003 - April 2004), presently Senior Policy Officer on the Regional Bureau for Africa

Ms. Mary Lange, Deputy Director for Africa, Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM), US State Department (following Angola programme for past 7 years)

II. Itinerary and interviews during the mission

Luanda

| Date | Time | Activity | Name and position |
|------------|---------------|--|---|
| 13/05/08 | 09.00-10.00 | Introductory meeting with UNHCR colleagues | Ms. S. Kagni, Acting Representative Mr. C. Theodopolous, Sr. Protection Officer Mr. S. Afeisume, Administrative Officer |
| 13/05/2008 | 11.00 - 12.00 | Meeting with Ministry for Assistance and Social Reintegration (MINARS) | Ms. Nilsa Batalha, National Director of MINARS Mr. S. Leite, Deputy Director, MINARS |
| | 14.00 - 15.00 | Meeting with UNHCR staff on reintegration issues | Mr. Tito Diamoneka Senior Field Clerk |

M'Banza Congo

| Date | Time | Activity | Name and position |
|----------|----------------|--|---|
| 14/05/08 | | Stop at Kiende (30 km outside of M'Banza Congo) visit to the water point. | |
| 15/05/08 | 09:00 - 10:00 | Meeting with MINARS M'Banza Congo | Mr. Victor Kussunga, Chief, Department of Assistance |
| | 10:00 - 11:00 | Meeting with Ministry of Justice | Mr. Jose Sebastiao Vieira, Provincial Director Mr. Paulo Luvaika, Registrar |
| | 11:00 - 12:00 | Meeting with CARITAS | Father André Justino Futi |
| | 12:00 - 13:00 | Meeting with NGO MENTOR | Ms. Rachel Smith, Director Mr. Manuel Manukese, Finance Officer |
| | 14: 30 - 17:00 | Field Visit to M'Banza Congo's Women's Empowerment Center Visit a reception centre and health post constructed with | Meeting with focus groups of returnee women and returnee men. Interviews with Angolans who had never left the country. during the war. |

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| | | UNHCR funds | |
| 16/05/2008 | 08:00 - 10:00 | M'Banza Kongo - Cuimba (65 km) | Mr. Casimiro Jinga, Head of Secretariat of the Administration of Cuimba Municipality Mr. Miguel Felix, Representative of MINARS in Cuimba |
| | 10:00 - 10:30 | Visit to Cuimba's Women's Empowerment Center | Meeting with focus groups of returnee women and returnee men. |
| | 10:30 - 12:30 | Visit to the health post constructed with UNHCR funds (5 km away). | |

Moxico

| Date | Time | Activity | Name and position |
|--------------------|---------------|---|---|
| 20/05/08 - Saurimo | 09:00 - 10:00 | Meeting with MINARS Provincial Director in Saurimo | Ms. Natalia Ikulo Director, MINARS Provincial Delegation |
| 21/05/08 - Luena | 08:30 - 09:30 | Meeting with JRS | Mr. Joaquim Maiato, JRS-LARC Programme Officer Mr. João Mussango Security Officer |
| | 09:30 - 10:30 | Meeting with MINARS Provincial Director | Ms. Graciete de Abreu, Acting Director of Provincial Delegation and Head of Children's Department Mr. Andre Masese, Head of Finance Department Mr. Luca Franco, Head of Assistance Department |
| | 10:30 - 11:30 | Meeting with Moxico's Provincial Vice Governor for Social Affairs | Mr. Francisco Cambango, Vice Governor for Social Affairs |
| | 11:30 - 12:30 | Meeting with Dom Bosco | Father Giorgio Kachepilly Mr. Paulo Coconde (returnee from Zambia) |
| | 14:00 - 15:00 | Visit to Dom Bosco professional training centre | |

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| | 15:30 - 17:00 | Visit to I.E.I.A vocational training centre | Mr. Alberto Tomela, Acting Director Interview with returnees |
| | 17:00 - 18:00 | Meeting with OXFAM | Mr. Albano Nunes, Head of Logistics Mr. Cacoma Mutunda, Community Development Officer |
| 22/05/08 - Luena | 09:00 - 12:00 | Visit to Women's Empowerment Center in Kawango | Meeting with focus groups of returnee women and returnee men. |
| | 12:00 - 13:00 | Meeting with UNICEF | Mr. Freddie Kodio, Head of Office Mr. Carlos Lemos, Head of Administration |
| | 15:30 - 17:30 | Visit "Bairro 4 de Fevereiro" housing recent returnees | Interviews with individual returnees |

Huambo

| Date | Time | Activity | Name and position |
|-------------------|---------------|---|---|
| 26/05/08 (Monday) | 15:00 - 16:00 | Briefing with IOM | Mr. M. Capita, Logistics Officer |
| 27/05/08 | 09:00 - 10:00 | Meeting with MINARS | Ms. Maria Lucila, Provincial Director |
| | 11:00 -12:00 | Meeting Vice Governor for Social and Economic affairs | Mr. Henrique Barbosa, Vice Governor |
| 28/05/08 | 09:00 - 09:30 | UN Security Briefing | Mr. Alberto Hungulo, Local Security Adviser |
| | 10:00 - 11:00 | Visit to fisheries project on the road from Huambo to Bailundo | Interviews with returnee families who benefit from the project |
| | 11:30 - 12:00 | Meeting with local authorities in Bailundo | Mr. Calisto Cesário, Head of Planning Department, Bailundo Municipality |
| | 12:00 - 13:00 | Bailundo | Meeting with group of returnees. |
| | 15:00 - 17:00 | Visit to IOM projects in Bailundo: corn mill, reconstruction of an orphanage and school | Mr. Abel Quianjo, IOM Project Assistant |

Luanda

| Date | Time | Activity | Name and position |
|-------------|---------------|--|--|
| 30/05/08 | 9.00 -10.00 | Meeting with UN Resident Coordinator | Mr. Anatolio Ndong, Resident Coordinator |
| | 10:30 - 11:30 | Meeting with World Bank | Ms. Inguna Dobraja, Senior Operations Officer |
| | 14.00 - 16.00 | Debriefing with UNHCR staff, BO Luanda | Mr. Salif Kagni, Acting Representative Mr. C. Theodoropoulos, Senior Protection Officer Mr. S. Afeisume, Administrative Officer Ms. Kirsti Mwandangi, Community Services Assistant Mr. Isaac Chiteta, Senior Field Clerk |

Annex III: Map

