

HOPE AFTER DISASTER

ANNUAL
REVIEW 2005

EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Humanitarian Aid

CONTENTS

- 1 Message from Commissioner Louis Michel
- 2 Key Events 2005

FEATURES

- 4 Life after the tsunami
- 6 South Asia earthquake

GLOBAL REACH

- 7 Humanitarian funding for regional crises
- 10 Humanitarian funding for crises in specific countries / territories
- 18 Thematic funding
- 19 Other funding

FACTS AND FIGURES

- 20 Facts & figures
- 21 Who's who
- 22 People
- 24 Crisis zones

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WFP: Rein Skullerud. **International Rescue Committee:** Peter Biro. **Spanish Red Cross:** Adèle Marie. **ECHO:** Olivier Brouant, Cyprien Fabre, Yassine Gaba, François Goemans, Nick Bridger, Antoine Lemasson, Pedro Luis Rojo, Peter Biro, Martinus Jansen, Enric Freixa, Karin Michotte, Greta Hopkins, François Duboc, Sébastien Carliez, Heinke Veitt, Cécile Pichon, P. Taylor, Susana Perez Diaz, Peter Holdsworth, Ivo Freijssen, Odile Minichetti, Vicente Raimundo, Jeroen Uytterschaut.

Publisher: António CAVACO, Director -General, DG ECHO
Text and coordination: ECHO 7 - Information and Communication



FOR A NEW HUMANITARIAN AGENDA: LEARNING LESSONS FROM

2005 was the year of natural disasters. With the tsunami, the earthquake in Pakistan, the hurricanes in the Caribbean, the threat of famine in Niger and numerous other crises, the international community and humanitarian organisations in particular, faced an unprecedented challenge. Once again they showed exemplary professionalism and commitment in helping the victims of these human tragedies. I salute them. It is our responsibility to learn lessons from these disasters so that we can improve and strengthen our ability to react to crises.

STRENGTHEN HUMANITARIAN CAPACITY

To meet the enormous challenges of development, the international community has agreed on the 'Millennium Development Goals'. Recent crises have shown that the international community must mobilise in the same way in the humanitarian domain and settle on broad objectives. In my view, these can be summarised as follows: to increase humanitarian funding; to ensure equity in our support for crisis victims; to improve our emergency response capacity; to develop strategies for risk reduction and disaster preparedness. The Commission intends to be the driving force behind this agenda to improve humanitarian aid - to do more, to do it better and to create an international consensus.

Increase funding

The number of natural disasters with devastating consequences is on the increase. Conflicts nowadays tend to last longer and are increasingly destructive. This means that humanitarian needs are growing. The level of international humanitarian aid must increase commensurately. In 2005 the European Commission channelled more than €650 million in humanitarian funding through ECHO, its Humanitarian Aid department, compared to €570 million in 2004. The Commission is and will continue to be one of the world's main donors.

Better aid distribution

The response to suffering must not depend on the amount of media coverage or foreign policy considerations. All that counts are the needs of those affected and their degree of vulnerability. We must respond to all tsunamis - including the silent ones. I am talking here about the millions of people who suffer the horrors of drought, flood or armed conflict that we hear and talk too little about. The Commission responds to the needs of victims throughout the year, whether they are in the

Democratic Republic of Congo, Nepal, Myanmar or Colombia. In 2005, more than 30% of ECHO's budget was devoted to 'forgotten crises'. It is also worth underlining Europe's ongoing commitment to the victims of long-term crises like those in the Northern Caucasus, Sudan or the Palestinian Territories. I will continue to ensure that aid from the Commission remains based on the principles of non-discrimination and fairness.

Strengthen response capacity

Large scale disasters and the growth in the number of emergencies have highlighted deficiencies in the speed and organisation of aid at the level of implementation. To boost the effectiveness of the emergency response it must, in future, be based on improved pre-positioning of emergency supplies (medical kits, shelter, food, basic essentials), better logistics including systems of delivery by air and better co-ordination of actors in the field. The Commission is making a major effort to improve and strengthen international co-ordination, notably through thematic funding.

Risk reduction and disaster preparedness

Faced with an increase in natural disasters, we must help communities to get organised and prepare themselves. This is what the Commission proposes with its disaster preparedness programme DIPECHO. This year, Pakistan and the regions affected by the tsunami have received more than €6 million for risk reduction programmes. The Caribbean region has also benefited with €3.5 million for islands regularly hit by hurricanes. Prevention and preparation work is everyone's business: local authorities in the crisis zones, humanitarian actors and those in charge of development. As the Commissioner also responsible for development, it is important to me that prevention and preparation for natural catastrophes are fully integrated into development strategies.

Together, we can meet the humanitarian challenges. We want to help; we aim to help; it is our duty to help when faced with the suffering of millions in the world affected by humanitarian disasters. It is also our responsibility to meet the expectations of the people of Europe who believe in solidarity and humanity - values that are expressed through European humanitarian aid. We will continue to demonstrate these values everywhere where people are suffering, regardless of their religion, race or beliefs.

LOUIS MICHEL

European Commissioner in charge
of Humanitarian Aid and Development

March 2006





JANUARY

The estimated overall death toll from the December 26 tsunami in the **Indian Ocean** rises to more than 200,000.

Following harvest failures in 2004, serious food shortages are reported in **Niger** and other **Sahel** countries.

Three days of torrential rains cause floods in **Guyana** affecting more than 200,000 people.

FEBRUARY

The United Nations announces that around 80,000 people have been displaced by fighting in the Ituri region of the **Democratic Republic of Congo** since the beginning of the year.

MARCH

Northern **Angola** suffers a serious outbreak of Marburg fever.

An 8.7 magnitude aftershock of the 26 December tsunami brings further death and destruction to the **Indonesian** island of Nias.

The **Cook Islands** are devastated by Cyclone Percy, the fifth cyclone to hit the Pacific nation in only a month.

APRIL

Widespread violence in the aftermath of disputed elections in **Togo** prompts large-scale population movements. Over a two month period, 40,000 people flee to neighbouring Benin and Ghana.

MAY

Karthala volcano in the **Comoros islands** erupts, displacing 10,000 people and contaminating drinking water of 40,000.

The **Zimbabwe** government begins a programme to demolish "illegal structures". Within two months, it is reported that around 700,000 people have lost their homes or livelihoods.

JUNE

A major cholera outbreak is reported in **Guinea Bissau**. The disease spreads across West Africa, killing more than 500 people.





JULY

Hurricane Dennis kills at least 45 people in the **Caribbean**.

The food crisis in the **Sahel** is reported to have reached famine proportions in many areas.

AUGUST

Hurricane Katrina brings devastation to **New Orleans** (USA), killing hundreds and displacing tens of thousands from their homes.

SEPTEMBER

The authorities in Pyongyang announce that European humanitarian aid agencies operating in **North Korea** must leave the country by the end of the year.

OCTOBER

An earthquake affecting **Pakistan**, Pakistani-controlled Kashmir and Indian-controlled Kashmir kills more than 75,000 people, injures 70,000 and leaves more than three million homeless.

Central America, the **Caribbean** and the **United States** are battered by a series of tropical storms and hurricanes. Guatemala is the worst hit with up to two thousand killed, mainly in landslides, following the passage of Tropical Storm Stan. In El Salvador, the situation is complicated by the eruption of the Ilimatepec volcano.

The **Malawi** government declares a state of disaster as the food crisis worsens.

NOVEMBER

Mount Karthala erupts again leaving an estimated 123,000 people in the Comoros without drinking water.

A yellow fever outbreak is declared in **Sudan**.

At the end of the worst Caribbean hurricane season since records began, Tropical Storm Gamma causes flooding and widespread damage in **Honduras**.

DECEMBER

Ten of thousands of people are forced to leave their homes after heavy rains provoke a series of floods in South and South-East Asia. Countries worst affected are **India** (Tamil Nadu province), **Thailand**, the **Philippines** and **Vietnam**.



LIFE AFTER THE TSUNAMI

“ I’m a displaced person myself so I know what people are going through explains Nurhayati ”



Picking up the pieces

For coastal communities on the Indian Ocean, 2005 was spent picking up the pieces after the December 2004 tsunami. At least 200,000 people were dead or missing, homes had been swept away and livelihoods destroyed.

The Commission’s immediate humanitarian response in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India and the Maldives helped rescue survivors and provided drinking water, food, medical supplies, and temporary shelters. But many victims needed humanitarian assistance throughout 2005 to get back on their feet. Through DG ECHO, the Commission provided a total of € 123 million to meet the wide-ranging needs of tsunami victims in the four countries mentioned and in Thailand. Here are just a few glimpses of how this support made a practical difference to people’s lives.

FINDING SHELTER NEAR BATTICALOA, SRI LANKA

In the shade of the corrugated metal roof of his temporary home, Kanthasami Santhirasekaram sits with his wife. The couple survived the tsunami, but a wave pulled their baby from their arms. Their house, fishing boat and all their possessions are gone, too.

“The first weeks after the disaster, we survived in a makeshift camp on the grounds of a nearby temple, living from donations,” recalls Kanthasami. In early February, the family moved here, to the more permanent European Commission-funded camp at Paddiyadichenai. It houses thousands of families from devastated fishing villages near Batticaloa on Sri Lanka’s eastern coast. “We were one of the first families to have been allocated a house in Paddiyadichenai. We had nowhere else to go.”

REGAINING INDEPENDENCE IN LHOKNGA, SUMATRA

1,600 kilometres away in Indonesia, the waves that battered Lhoknga were 20 metres high. Fewer than half the residents survived. The Lhoknga fishing cooperative lost half its fishermen and only two boats were left intact in the 50-strong fleet.

Mr Ramli recalls: “In my boatyard on the seafront close to the harbour, I had been building traditional wooden fishing boats for 34 years. The tsunami swept away the workshop with my equipment and materials, as well as a 15-metre boat we had just finished.” We learn that he also lost his son, parents, brothers and sisters.

To revitalise this fishing community, the Commission funded the purchase of 50 boats from local workmen which were then donated to the Lhoknga fishing cooperative. The transaction provided revenue for the boat builders to re-establish their workshops, while the boats and other infrastructure support, allowed the fishing community to regain its independence.

COMING TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY IN ACEH

Throughout the tsunami-affected region, the European Commission funded projects enabling people like health worker Nurhayati to provide an important service for communities affected by the tragedy. Nurhayati crouches patiently on the floor of Lapang Barracks in Aceh, the location of a camp for displaced people. She is collecting information on a range of issues from how much water a household uses in one day to the number of pregnant women living in camp. She notes common diseases, such as diarrhoea or dengue fever and passes the information to local health centres. She also distributes hygiene items such as detergents, and gives regular talks to promote good health and hygiene habits.





Her work and that of many others has helped ensure that there have been no major disease outbreaks in the wake of the tsunami.

"I'm a displaced person myself so I know what people are going through," explains Nurhayati. "Their problems are my problems and I want to help."

The Commission's partners are working to ensure that Nurhayati's work and other humanitarian programmes are smoothly integrated into local systems and longer term development programmes.

Meeting ongoing needs across the region

Commission humanitarian funding for tsunami victims

- 26 December 2004 - € 3 million
- 30-31 December 2004 - € 20 million
- 9 February 2005 - € 80 million
- 15 December 2005 - € 20 million

TOTAL - € 123 million



SOUTH ASIA EARTHQUAKE

“Helicopters take off and land all day, delivering relief supplies to areas cut off by road ”



Tragedy in the mountains

October 18, 2005: Ten days after the 8 October earthquake that levelled much of Kashmir and northern Pakistan, the massive extent and long-term consequences of the disaster are becoming ever clearer. The numbers of dead and injured keep rising, as each day, relief workers reach more and more affected villages.

Every kilometre on the winding road from Islamabad to Muzaffarabad brings increasing evidence of the tragedy: large boulders pushed to the side so that vehicles can pass; the first collapsed house; a small tent encampment on one of the rare pieces of flat ground; stretches of route with hastily dug detours because the original road has disappeared.

On arriving in Muzaffarabad, the terrifying power of the earthquake is starkly revealed: multi-storey buildings that have concertained to little more than the height of a single floor; individual homes where the walls have crumbled but the roof lies intact at near ground level; garden walls distorted into grotesque shapes.

LIFE IN THE RUINS

And amongst all this, the survivors. Some sit at the doors of their tents, still dulled by the horror, but the town is also bustling with activity – because life has to go on. There are traders selling food where their shops have survived, men carrying building materials to make shelters for their families before the winter arrives. The main roads are busy with the colourfully decorated lorries so characteristic of this part of the world. They come every day in their hundreds delivering relief supplies, and often returning with evacuees. Then there are all the military, UN and NGO vehicles.

RACING TO BRING RELIEF

At the helipad – a converted sports field – the Pakistani Army is running a smooth operation. Helicopters take off and land all day, delivering relief supplies to areas cut off by road and bringing the seriously injured to hospital. In the nearby UN camp, a telecommunications centre is up and running enabling relief agencies to maintain contact with their HQs and to report on relief needs. Every possible means – including mules – are being employed to reach the victims trapped in remote regions. The Commission's humanitarian aid experts have been working fourteen hour days, seven days a week – often in difficult and uncomfortable conditions – since they arrived. So have their UN, Red Cross/Red Crescent, and NGO colleagues in the partner agencies.

With their rapid response and determination to stay the course, these aid workers are the human embodiment of European – and global – solidarity with the victims of this terrible tragedy.

Responding quickly and effectively

Commission humanitarian funding
for the earthquake victims

10 October - € 3.6 million

14 October - € 10 million

18 November - € 10 million

16 December - € 25 million

TOTAL (as of 31 Dec. 2005) - € 48.6 million



HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR REGIONAL CRISES

AFGHANISTAN CRISIS

Vulnerable Afghans in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran

Funding - € 20 million

Since the fall of the Taliban at the end of 2001, more than 3.5 million refugees as well as some 120,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) have returned to their homes in Afghanistan. Millions, however, remained in Pakistan and Iran. After 23 years of conflict and five years of drought, Afghans continued to face enormous needs.

The Commission continued to assist the most vulnerable Afghan populations, especially returnees, IDPs, and refugees still living in Iran and Pakistan. Support was provided to facilitate the process of returning home, to improve basic living conditions (including shelter, water and sanitation projects) and for protection activities.

As access and insecurity remained major concerns in the delivery of aid, the Commission also maintained its support for humanitarian air transport and a security advisory service for NGOs.

CARIBBEAN REGION

Vulnerable people in six countries

Funding - € 500,000

Caribbean countries are highly prone to natural disasters. In 2004, hurricanes devastated Grenada and parts of Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas.

The Commission supported the strengthening of efficient and coordinated regional responses of the Red Cross Movement to reduce the impact of natural disasters on the most vulnerable populations. This funding included the establishment and improvement of contingency planning, the development of new standards and operational procedures as well as training in logistics, procurement and regional intervention teams.

PROJECT FOCUS |

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Tackling the consequences of sexual violence

Regions in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) still suffer from insecurity, with looting, killings and a growing trend of sexual violence against women. The Commission funded Swedish NGO *PMU Interlife* to provide specialised treatment to 3,120 female victims of sexual violence in Bukavu, South Kivu. This programme includes psycho-social assistance giving the women an opportunity to speak about their experience. On a more practical level PMU provides shelter to women, as well as educational activities that promote literacy or teach them a new skill, thereby improving their prospects of achieving economic self-sufficiency.



COLOMBIA CRISIS

Vulnerable Colombians in Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela

Funding - € 12 million

Since 1985, more than three million Colombians have been driven from their homes due to conflict between the government and various armed groups. Given the complex and constantly changing nature of the conflict, each fresh attempt by one group to gain control of territory leads to further displacements of people. Many of those who have fled live in temporary settlements with poor access to water, sanitation, health and education services.

The Commission provided support for around 130,000 people immediately following their displacement and financed improved living conditions for some 60,000. Funding was provided for temporary shelter, water/sanitation, basic health care, psychosocial support and protection. To prevent children and young people being recruited by armed groups, informal education programmes were financed, designed to reintegrate vulnerable children into the state education system.

The conflict has had a growing impact on Colombia's neighbours, with almost half a million Colombians now living legally or illegally in Ecuador and Venezuela. Around 70,000 refugees and asylum-seekers in these countries benefited from Commission-funded protection and registration services, emergency relief and socio-economic integration programmes.

Additionally, the Commission boosted the exchange of information between humanitarian organisations, thereby improving the coordination and quality of humanitarian assistance.

INDIAN OCEAN TSUNAMI

Coastal communities in five countries

Funding - € 123 million

The earthquake and tsunami of 26 December 2004, followed in Indonesia by a further earthquake on 29 March 2005, left a trail of devastation across coastal communities in the Indian Ocean. Around 200,000 people died and millions were left

without shelter, water, healthcare or basic infrastructure.

The international community faced the unprecedented scale of this catastrophe with an unparalleled humanitarian response.

In January, the Commission opened humanitarian aid offices in the two hardest-hit countries, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, to monitor Commission-funded projects and support the coordination of relief work.

It funded a wide range of humanitarian actions: food aid, shelter, healthcare, clean drinking water, sanitation facilities, logistics, coordination, and assistance to restart livelihoods. This contribution to the overall emergency response helped avoid a potential wave of epidemics in the stricken areas. While the main effort was concentrated on Indonesia and Sri Lanka, affected communities in India, where some 650,000 people were displaced, Thailand and the Maldives were also assisted.

An approach that involves linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) was embedded in the operations funded by the Commission from the outset. The objective is to facilitate a smooth transition to the post-emergency phase through proper coordination with longer term development actors and agencies. The transition has been achieved in many areas while, in others, a need for ongoing humanitarian assistance remains.

In its humanitarian work in the tsunami-affected countries, the Commission has paid particular attention to ensuring the even delivery of aid so that the needs of people in less-accessible areas are met. It has also sought to minimise any imbalances between tsunami victims and people living near them who have been affected by long-term conflict.

MIDDLE EAST

Palestinian populations in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria

Funding - € 36.576 million

In August, Israel completed its unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank, kindling hopes for a reinvigorated peace process. The humanitarian situation for Palestinians remained precarious, however, with no improvement in their overall economic and social situation and a continuing decline in their coping capacity. Some 40% of West Bank communities lacked access to water networks and almost half of all Palestinians did not have adequate access to basic foodstuffs.

The separation barrier in Palestinian lands continued to affect hundreds of thousands of people, cutting off communities from water supplies, livelihoods, farmlands, businesses and essential services, including health and education. Closures and movement restrictions also limited access to vital goods and services and hampered relief work.

In the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Commission provided some 100,000 and 200,000 people respectively, with food and water and sanitation assistance. Some 150,000 people benefited from temporary job opportunities, and health and psycho-social support was provided to a catchment area of 700,000 people. Protection and co-ordination activities were also funded, as well as the promotion of the rules and



principles of international humanitarian law. For Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, the Commission continued to be the main humanitarian donor. It funded shelter rehabilitation for refugees living in dilapidated, unhygienic or unsafe homes, thus improving the living conditions of about 5,000 people in both official camps and unofficial sites. In Lebanon, it funded the supply of medicines, water distribution and staff training in five hospitals serving the Palestinian community, as well as psychosocial and protection activities, and temporary jobs.

SOUTH ASIA EARTHQUAKE

Vulnerable people in Pakistan and Kashmir

Funding - € 48.6 million

On 8 October, a 7.6 magnitude earthquake struck Pakistan and Pakistani and Indian-controlled Kashmir. It killed an estimated 75,000 people, injured more than 70,000 and left around three million homeless. The mountainous terrain and ongoing seismic activity were major hurdles for the relief agencies, racing against time to meet vital needs before the onset of winter.

On the day of the disaster, the Commission allocated € 3.6 million for immediate emergency aid. Humanitarian experts were promptly dispatched to the stricken zone to carry out emergency assessments. Thus began a rolling programme of funding amounting, by the end of November, to € 48.6 million. The main focus was on supplying winter-proof shelters, blankets, medical treatment/supplies, and logistics. There was also funding for water/sanitation, food, essential non-food items, and psychosocial care, particularly for children.

After the initial rescue phase, support was channelled to ongoing humanitarian needs such as site planning and camp management, as well as disaster preparedness.

The funding package included € 5 million specifically for helicopter operations to gain access to the most isolated victims. This enabled people injured in the earthquake to be evacuated to hospital, and the delivery of essential supplies to mountain communities.

WEST AFRICA

Epidemic assessment and response

Funding - € 1.5 million

The Commission increased funding for epidemiological surveys and a fast, flexible response to communicable disease outbreaks in West Africa. In the 17 countries covered under

this funding, approximately 200 million people are at risk.

An unusually long rainy season prompted cholera outbreaks in many coastal countries. Commission support helped limit fatalities and the further spread of the disease. € 500,000 was allocated in Guinea Bissau, where the outbreak was most severe, with € 350,000 directed to other affected countries. Almost € 350,000 was provided for vaccination campaigns and other measures to combat the spread of yellow fever in the region.

WEST AFRICA

Victims of conflicts in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Liberia

Funding - € 25 million

Conflicts in coastal West Africa have caused enormous suffering over the last 15 years. While in Sierra Leone, the situation has improved, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Liberia all continued to require humanitarian assistance. To adapt its interventions flexibly to evolving needs, the Commission continued its policy of adopting a single main humanitarian funding package covering the three countries.

During more than a decade of conflict, an estimated 500,000 Liberians were internally displaced and some 340,000 sought refuge in neighbouring countries, notably Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire. After some initial independent returns in 2004, an organised assistance process helped far greater numbers to go back home in 2005. European humanitarian aid was provided to assist these returnees, as well as displaced people living in camps, with improved access to basic services; the restoration of agriculture and livelihoods; and protection for vulnerable groups.

Although Côte d'Ivoire's conflict has not been as intense as those in some neighbouring countries, the country's de facto division for the past three years between government and rebel forces has deprived many areas of health services and clean water. It has also led to more food insecurity and malnutrition. Relief was provided in the fields of primary and secondary healthcare, nutrition, water/sanitation, protection, shelter and non-food items. There was a particular emphasis on western Côte d'Ivoire, considered to be the most vulnerable region.

Commission humanitarian assistance in Guinea focused on remaining Liberian and Ivorian refugees in the *Guinée forestière* region. This basic support was particularly critical given Guinea's fragile internal situation. Protection activities were also funded for vulnerable groups throughout the country.



HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR CRISES IN SPECIFIC COUNTRIES/TERRITORIES

ALGERIA AND WESTERN SAHARA (SAHRAWI REFUGEES)

Funding - € 9.31 million

The Commission maintained its humanitarian assistance to the Sahrawi refugees who have lived for the past 30 years in camps in the Algerian desert near Tindouf. The refugees continue to depend largely on international aid. Funding covered food supplies and a food buffer stock, with a focus on providing a nutritionally-balanced and diversified diet. There was also support for improved health, sanitation and education facilities, as well as new water purification systems.

ANGOLA

Funding - € 2 million

With an improving humanitarian situation since the end of the war in April 2002, and the progressive implementation of longer-term development activities, the Commission was able to close its humanitarian aid office in Luanda in June, after 13 years. Recognising the fragile situation facing vulnerable groups, the Humanitarian Aid department continues to monitor the situation closely from its office in Harare, Zimbabwe.

€ 2 million was provided to combat an outbreak of the Marburg virus in northern Angola. On March 23, the Angolan government declared an epidemic and the Commission took two rapid financing decisions in succession. Because the disease had a fatality rate close to 100% and no known cure, the focus was on controlling the spread of the disease, including isolation measures and barrier nursing techniques, as well as epidemiological surveys. In October, the Marburg outbreak – the most serious ever recorded – was officially declared over.

BENIN

Funding - € 1.05 million

Disputed elections in Togo on 24 April led to the immediate flight of tens of thousands of Togolese to neighbouring Ghana and Benin. While many refugees in Benin were housed with local families and communities, thousands were forced to reside in camps at Comé and Lokossa. The Commission supported the refugees' basic needs by providing water and sanitation, temporary shelters, food, healthcare and essential goods, as well as psychosocial assistance for vulnerable and traumatised people.

PROJECT FOCUS |

GUYANA

After the deluge

Heavy rainfall in Guyana from late December 2004 to the end of January 2005 caused massive flooding giving rise to significant humanitarian needs, particular in the health and sanitation sectors. From the initial relief operations to the recovery phase, the Commission funded three consecutive projects of OXFAM GB. To prevent outbreaks of communicable diseases, OXFAM initially focused on drinking water distribution and the provision of equipment and technical advice to rehabilitate damaged bore holes and pipelines. Around 127,000 people benefited from these activities. The NGO also drained water from several villages. In the next phase OXFAM assisted 118,000 people working to provide a sustainable supply of drinking water. Subsequently, it initiated a livelihood programme to restore the food security of 60,000 people.



BURUNDI

Funding - € 17 million

The election of President Nkurunziza marked the conclusion of Burundi's political transition following a 10-year civil war. His peaceful inauguration in August inspired confidence and the number of Burundians repatriating increased to more than 13,000 that month.

Despite the progress, Burundi still faced many hurdles. The civil war killed an estimated 300,000 people and displaced up to a million. Of the nearly 400,000 Burundians once living in camps in Tanzania, 180,000 have gone home in the last three years, including 60,000 in 2005. However Burundians have been returning to one of the most densely populated countries in Africa, which, after years of war, faces enormous challenges in the areas of healthcare, education and basic infrastructure, as well as security threats in Bujumbura Rural province. Furthermore, UNHCR estimates that 30,000 Congolese refugees still live in Burundi, where camps have been relocated away from the DRC border because of attacks.

The Commission 2005 humanitarian "global plan" for Burundi focused on the needs of the most vulnerable, including displaced people, returnees, refugees and host communities directly affected by conflict. Support continued for multi-sectoral operations to provide healthcare, food security, nutrition, emergency relief items, and protection.

CAMBODIA

Funding - € 2 million

The Commission has been providing humanitarian aid in Cambodia since 1993. Ethnic minorities, rural populations, and children were particularly vulnerable in a country still suffering the social and economic effects of 30 years of war. As the situation improved, however, the Commission was able to focus increasingly on ensuring a smooth transition from relief to development projects.

In this last phase of humanitarian aid, communities in the most vulnerable regions were supported through improved access to water and sanitation, mine clearance and mine-awareness activities, and health and nutritional interventions.

CHAD

Funding - € 14 million

In the past three years, more than 215,000 people have flooded into eastern Chad from Sudan seeking refuge from the fighting in Darfur. In addition, 12,500 refugees fled to southern Chad during 2005, to escape growing instability in the Central African Republic (CAR). They joined 30,000 CAR refugees already living in camps.

While the people of Chad have shown great generosity in accommodating these hundreds of thousands of refugees, the country has very limited water and agricultural resources, particularly in the east.

The Commission provided € 12 million for multisectoral relief for both the Sudanese refugees and the most vulnerable among host populations in eastern Chad. This included healthcare, nutrition, drinking water, latrines, shelter and fuel. Protection, education and transport were also covered. A further € 2 million went towards building a new refugee camp in southern Chad for CAR refugees and to meet the basic needs of the residents.

COMOROS

Funding - € 1.1 million

One of the world's largest active volcanoes, the Karthala volcano, forms most of the landmass of Grande Comore. It erupts on average every 11 years but, in 2005, it twice spewed ash and smoke across the island, contaminating water supplies and forcing villagers to abandon their homes. Following the 16 April eruption, the Commission worked with UNICEF to truck drinking water to 39,000 people and to clean and cover more than 700 water reservoirs. This experience helped ensure an effective response to the second, stronger eruption that occurred on 24 November which affected the water supplies of 175,000 people.



COOK ISLANDS

Funding - € 200,000

Five cyclones hit the Cook Islands causing severe damage to the agriculture sector. The Commission responded to the resulting food insecurity by funding the supply of farming and fishing materials, and seed-distribution, benefiting almost 12,000 people.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC) AND REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Funding - € 40 million

Refugees and displaced people returned to their homes in the DRC in increasing numbers in 2005, encouraged by a relative improvement in the security situation, and in many cases, also motivated by a desire to participate in the upcoming elections. The transition to democracy began in July 2003 and has been making slow but steady progress since then. Voter registration was completed and elections were scheduled for the first half of 2006.

Nonetheless, insecurity persists in the east, particularly in the Ituri region, due to the continued presence of armed militias. The conflict displaced four million people, devastated the health system, and created widespread food insecurity and pockets of acute malnutrition. Mortality rates from infectious diseases continued to be very high and widespread sexual violence was reported.

The Commission has been the DRC's largest humanitarian donor for the past six years. In 2005, its € 38 million contribution was concentrated in the most eastern regions where the needs were greatest. Aid targeted under-fives through nutrition programmes, and women through support to gender-specific health care. The latter included a special programme to assist victims of sexual violence in conflict areas. General primary health services were restored to 6.75 million people. Around 1.7 million displaced and repatriated people, and host families, received essential support. The emphasis here was on rapid reintegration, thus contributing to the stabilisation of regions affected by conflict. The Commission also supported coordination among humanitarian actors. Part of this coordination exercise was to promote a smooth transition from relief to development amongst the donor community in keeping with the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship which were being piloted in DRC.

In light of the improving situation, many DRC refugees wished to return home from the Republic of Congo. The Commission therefore provided funding for voluntary repatriation which began in April.

EAST TIMOR

Funding - € 2.5 million

A late start to the rainy season prevented East Timor from recovering from the food insecurity that has plagued the country since 2002. The Commission funded supplementary feeding for around 10,000 acutely malnourished under-fives and 20,000 pregnant and nursing women. Aid programmes also focused on nutritional education, diversification of food sources, medical treatment, safe water supplies and sanitation, benefiting some 50,000 people.

ERITREA

Funding - € 4.62 million

Five consecutive years of drought conditions left Eritrea in an increasingly critical humanitarian situation. Individual water consumption dropped to a third of the recommended daily average. Cereal production plummeted and many livestock have perished, leading to widespread food insecurity. Almost 40% of children and women are malnourished.

The Commission increased its aid to respond to the growing crisis. Funding was provided to promote the nutrition and health of people and their livestock, as well as access to water. Protection issues were also addressed.

ETHIOPIA

Funding - € 4.5 million

Prolonged drought, internal conflict and extreme poverty have made Ethiopia extremely vulnerable to epidemics, malnutrition, and displacement. The Commission targeted pockets of acute need and vulnerability among the country's 78 million people. These included support for emergency health interventions, drought response, assistance to resettled and displaced persons, and protection activities.



GEORGIA

Funding - € 2 million

Despite a UN-brokered agreement in 1994 to end the fighting between Abkhazia and Georgia, hundreds of thousands of people who fled Abkhazia were still displaced within Georgia. For them, and for those who stayed in Abkhazia, conditions remained dire. To help meet the unmet and largely forgotten needs of these vulnerable groups, the Commission funded food, income generation, health and shelter rehabilitation projects.

GRENADA

Funding - € 1.2 million

In July, hurricane Emily hit Grenada, bringing further disruption to an island already battered by a major hurricane in 2004. The Commission focused its humanitarian aid on recovery support including the rehabilitation of more than 1,000 homes, and disaster preparedness activities.

GUATEMALA AND EL SALVADOR

Funding - € 5.7 million

In October, tropical storm Stan wrought havoc on parts of Guatemala and El Salvador. In Guatemala, more than 1,500 people died and around 140,000 had to be housed in emergency shelters. 30% of the country's territory was affected. In El Salvador, where humanitarian needs were also generated by the eruption of the Ilamatepec volcano, the death toll was 69, with more than 69,000 people displaced.

The Commission moved quickly to fund the provision of hygiene kits, food rations, water and primary health care to 6,000 families in both countries. In November, a further decision was taken focusing on 30,000 affected families most of whom were living in shelters in Guatemala (1,000 families in El Salvador were also assisted). Attention was paid especially to the needs of vulnerable groups such as children, women, the elderly, the disabled and indigenous minorities.

GUYANA

Funding - € 2.7 million

Unusually heavy rains in December 2004 and January 2005 led to heavy flooding and widespread destruction in the densely populated eastern coastal areas of Guyana. Thousands of people who were already poor and vulnerable fled their homes. The Commission provided relief items to 6,000 families and water and sanitation for a further 6,000. Hygiene kits were distributed to 1,200 families, and 20,000 families benefited from vector control and epidemiological surveillance.

During the floods, farmers lost up to 95% of their crops, and there were significant livestock losses. Given the erosion of their coping capacity, the Commission supported the re-establishment of the livelihoods of almost 2,000 farming families. It also funded disaster preparedness work.

HAITI

Funding - € 1.7 million

After the inauguration of a new interim government, the socio-political situation in Haiti remained fragile. The Commission's humanitarian aid targeted the health sector, much of which had ceased to function, with support for the ambulance service, the emergency surgical services benefiting 6,000 patients in Port-au-Prince and the essential drugs distribution system.

For more than a year, up to April 2005, southern Haiti was affected by drought and later on in July by Hurricane Denis. As rural households did not have the capacity to cope with two successive harvest failures, the Commission provided seeds and equipment, enabling 10,000 beneficiaries to resume cultivation for the 2005 summer cropping season.

INDONESIA

Funding - € 2 million

(not including tsunami-related support)

In the eastern provinces of Indonesia, limited rainfall for the fourth year in a row, undermined the already precarious food and nutritional security situation. As a response, the Commission provided safe water supplies and sanitation as well as supplementary feeding programmes and medical treatment for acutely malnourished children, benefiting some 100,000 people.

Furthermore, the Commission funded small-scale rehabilitation of water supply and sanitary infrastructures for 30,000 people in areas of Indonesia affected by successive earthquakes.

KENYA

Funding - € 2 million

The arid and semi-arid lands of northern Kenya faced clashes between rival clans in competition for the area's dwindling resources. The presence of some 27,000 Somali refugees also added to already strong population pressures. The Commission responded with nutrition, water/sanitation, and protection activities to meet acute needs.



LAOS

Funding - € 1.2 million

Laos, with its widely different ethnic groups, is one of the world's poorest countries. Government-induced relocations of population together with spontaneous movements had an impact on the humanitarian situation, particularly for indigenous minorities living in the mountains.

The Commission provided safe drinking water, sanitation facilities and tools to improve food security for more than 24,000 beneficiaries. It also funded programmes to clear unexploded ordnance and boost mine awareness.

LESOTHO AND SWAZILAND

Funding - € 1.75 million

A combination of drought, AIDS and weakened administrative capacity has led to a decline in development indicators and the chronic impoverishment of many communities in southern Africa. More and more people in the region have become vulnerable and food insecure.

The Commission focused on providing supplementary feeding and food security support for the most vulnerable households, particularly those affected by HIV/AIDS. Interventions also included HIV awareness activities, and Neighbourhood Care Points, which distribute food and provide support for children not in school.

LIBERIA

Funding - € 2.7 million

Refugees returned to their homes in Liberia in even greater numbers in 2005. After more than 14 years of intermittent conflict, however, the country lacked even the most basic infrastructure and services. In addition to the € 25 million regional decision for West Africa, the Commission provided additional funding of € 2.7 million specifically for Liberia to help people returning home. Support went to transport, distribution of essential relief items, restoration and improvement of basic services, food security, and protection activities.

MADAGASCAR

Funding - € 500,000

Repeated floods in the first half of the year, followed by insect infestation and drought in the second half, upset the delicate balance in southern Madagascar. A state of chronic food insecurity turned into famine. The Commission responded with an emergency humanitarian aid decision to improve the food security and nutritional status of 150,000 people living in the 12 most affected communes.

MALAWI

Funding - € 5 million

In 2005, Malawi suffered the lowest crop production levels in seven years, tipping a country already facing chronic food shortages into a humanitarian crisis. Food prices doubled, placing access to food beyond the reach of the most vulnerable households, particularly those already affected by HIV/AIDS. The government declared a state of disaster in October, well in advance of the time when food shortages often arise (January-April).

The Commission funded emergency food aid, nutrition, water/sanitation, and logistical support. The interventions targeted the most vulnerable groups, particularly children.

MALI

Funding - € 2 million

Following the locust infestation and drought of 2004, Mali was confronted with barren pasture lands and low water levels in 2005. The result was a food crisis for the agro-pastoralist community, as livestock died off and crops failed.

Commission support focused on nutrition for malnourished children under five and for pregnant and nursing mothers, as well as food security for an estimated 110,000 vulnerable families. Nutritional surveys to understand the population's changing needs were also supported.

MONGOLIA

Funding - € 900,000

Mongolia has suffered four consecutive years of "dzud," an accumulation of summer drought followed by heavy, early winter snowfalls. This cycle has had a disastrous impact on herders, whose livestock has been decimated. Increasing numbers of people have migrated to the capital, where unemployment and destitution are widespread. The Commission provided support for former herders in Ulaan Bataar and for vulnerable families still living in the countryside to help improve their coping capacities and be better prepared in case of a future disaster.

MYANMAR AND THAILAND

Funding - € 16.5 million

The humanitarian situation in Myanmar (Burma) continued to be a cause for concern. The Commission provided assistance to more than 533,000 vulnerable people, particularly in the dry zone, the border areas with China, Thailand and India, and in Rakhine State where malnutrition is widespread and health services are very limited. Key targets included addressing malaria, boosting primary healthcare and improving access to clean drinking water. Special attention was also given to protection activities.

To ensure the effective follow-up of operations, a humanitarian technical assistance office was opened in Yangon. This will help to monitor the projects funded by the Commission and to boost coordination among humanitarian agencies.

In Thailand, where more than 145,000 Burmese have sought refuge in border areas, limited resettlement opportunities in third countries were offered for the first time in 20 years. Most of the refugees, however, were expected to remain in the camps for the foreseeable future, still entirely dependent on international assistance. The Commission continued its support to the refugees providing € 8.6 million for basic food aid, health care and water/sanitation improvements.



NEPAL

Funding - € 6 million

Victims of both of Nepal's forgotten crises needed ongoing humanitarian support during 2005. More than 100,000 refugees from Bhutan continued to live in seven camps in south-eastern Nepal, depending entirely on international aid for survival. Caught in a legal vacuum, the refugees are not recognised as citizens of either country. The Commission provided € 2 million to ensure basic food distribution for all refugees, provide supplementary food for vulnerable groups, and support activities to promote self-sufficiency.

The Commission increased to € 4 million its aid in support of victims of the conflict between Maoist guerrillas and the government. Violence intensified in February following the assumption of power by King Gyanendra. Aid was concentrated on protection activities for intimidated rural communities, with a special emphasis on children. Financing was also provided to improve primary health care and food security.

NIGER

Funding - € 6.3 million

Drought and locusts cut agricultural production by 15% and prompted food price increases of 100% in the two years up to 2005. The result was greatly reduced access to food for the most vulnerable families in Niger. According to UNICEF, between July and December, nearly 240,000 under fives suffered from acute malnutrition.

Priority was therefore given to malnourished children, within the overall aim of maintaining and improving nutritional levels of particularly vulnerable pastoralist communities. The Commission increased its aid to therapeutic nutrition centres, distributed food rations to families of malnourished children and to pastoralists at risk, and funded nutritional surveys to ensure appropriate response to the evolving situation.

NORTHERN CAUCASUS

Funding - € 26.3 million

Six years into the second Chechen conflict, humanitarian needs remained acute in the Northern Caucasus. An estimated 25% of Chechnya's population was displaced and living conditions throughout the republic, particularly in Grozny, continued to be extremely difficult. Outside Chechnya, the more than 36,000 displaced people still in Ingushetia and Dagestan were living in similarly grim circumstances.

Insecurity was a major concern as military operations continued, especially in southern Chechnya.

In Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan, the Commission funded basic food for the most vulnerable groups, health projects, primary education, vocational training and psychological assistance for war-related trauma victims, especially children. It also supported mine-risk education and improved water and sanitation in Chechnya and Ingushetia, and shelter rehabilitation and income-generating activities in Chechnya. In all areas, people benefited from protection activities involving the provision of legal aid and information on their rights.

NORTH KOREA

Funding - € 13.715 million

With food and power shortages, poor water and sanitation provision and deficiencies in the provision of health care, many North Koreans continued to experience significant unmet humanitarian needs. Commission humanitarian aid focused initially on improving the health and nutrition of more than eight million people, by supplying drugs, rehabilitating health institutions and distributing basic medical kits and hygiene items. This aid particularly targeted children.

Responding to a dramatic fall in donations for food, the Commission took a further decision in May, providing food to combat acute child malnutrition, particularly through improved maternal feeding.

In the second half of 2005, the North Korean authorities announced that European NGOs working in the country would be required to terminate their operations by the end of the year. Discussions on this matter continued with the North Korean authorities.

PROJECT FOCUS |

TAJIKISTAN

Teaching young people how to save lives

In Central Asia's Ferghana Valley natural disasters are a common phenomenon. Through the Disaster Preparedness programme (DIPECHO) Mercy Corps received funding to establish disaster preparedness projects in 48 communities, serving nearly 115,000 residents. Mercy Corps set up Young Rescuers clubs in the Isfara region of Tajikistan. Experienced teachers trained children on how to react to natural disasters and how to administer first aid. After disaster simulations, some of the Young Rescuers were rapidly called upon to prove their skills in real life – extinguishing a fire in one village and assisting people after a landslide. Following their training the Young Rescuers also passed their knowledge and skills on to other villagers.



PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Funding - € 200,000

Volcanic eruptions on the islands of Manam and New Britain in Papua New Guinea led to the displacement of around 10,000 people with many others adversely affected. The Commission funded relief items, shelter and the rehabilitation of water and sanitation for some 14,000 people. The funding also helped improve the country's disaster preparedness.

PHILIPPINES

Funding - € 500,000

The June 2003 ceasefire between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) enabled tens of thousands of displaced people to return home. In 2005, access to basic services such as healthcare, water/sanitation, education and food security remained limited, with a danger of renewed civil unrest. The Commission therefore funded action to meet the basic humanitarian needs of internally displaced people, returnees and host populations.

SOMALIA

Funding - € 9 million

Since 1991, Somalia has suffered civil strife and widespread anarchy. In October 2004, peace accords led to the establishment of a transitional federal administration and, in 2005, the seat of government was moved from Kenya to Jowhar. The political situation remained fragile, however, aggravated by droughts and floods that have crippled many traditional coping mechanisms. In this forgotten crisis, most Somali households live in absolute poverty. Several hundred thousand have been forced to flee their homes.

The Commission funded basic interventions in health and nutrition, water/sanitation and food security and humanitarian air transport (ECHO Flight).

Access remained the key humanitarian issue in central and southern Somalia. The absence of law and order, characterised by banditry, raids and frequent kidnappings, as well as the constantly changing political situation, is a major constraint in implementing humanitarian projects. Only the Somaliland and Puntland regions in the north (which have unilaterally declared independence from Somalia) have experienced relative stability.

SRI LANKA AND INDIA

Funding - € 4 million (excluding tsunami funding)

Prior to 2002 Sri Lanka suffered many years of conflict pitting the government and the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) against each other. 65,000 people died as a result with hundreds of thousands more displaced in the north and east of the country. A ceasefire in February 2002 brought some respite, prompting 390,000 to return home. Many of these people needed basic assistance having arrived with no resources to re-establish

themselves. However, there was still no definitive peace agreement, negotiations having stalled in April 2003.

The December 2004 tsunami prompted a new wave of displacement. The total number of IDPs in Sri Lanka reached crisis proportions: almost 800,000 people.

125,000 Sri Lankan refugees continued to live abroad, including 59,000 in camps in India's Tamil Nadu province.

The Commission provided aid for the refugees in Tamil Nadu, as well as for 200,000 returnees and residents of north and east Sri Lanka. The emphasis was on meeting basic needs, including nutrition and healthcare, and on finding durable solutions for those who had returned home. In line with the humanitarian principle of non-discrimination and to avoid tension between different communities, the Commission sought to ensure that humanitarian needs in both conflict and tsunami affected communities were met.

SUDAN

Funding - € 45 million

In January, Sudan's 21-year civil war in the south of the country came to an end with the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement. Approximately 700,000 Sudanese refugees remain in neighbouring countries, including 215,000 in Eastern Chad, and about four million, internally displaced as a result of the long war, are scattered throughout the country. As a result of the comprehensive peace agreement, tens of thousands of refugees and internally displaced people began to return home to areas depleted of resources. Relief needs increased accordingly and the Commission reacted by allocating a further € 8 million by the end of the year.

In the Darfur region, the conflict between the government and the two main regional opposition groups escalated from September. Frequent violations of human rights continued with attacks against villages and sexual assaults against women around camps. Humanitarian access also remained limited, particularly in west Darfur, where security incidents, including abductions, convoy lootings and generalised harassment increased during the year.

While the main focus was on Darfur, where more than 2.5 million people were affected by the conflict (including about 1.8 million displaced people), significant needs were also reported elsewhere. Armed groups and ethnic clashes kept the situation volatile in areas of the east and south.

The Commission was by far the largest contributor of humanitarian funds to Sudan. In 2005, its aid focused on food security, nutrition, health, water/sanitation and emergency preparedness. Particular emphasis was placed on helping women through ante-natal support and measures to tackle sexual violence while children benefited from targeted healthcare and nutrition programmes. There was also funding for the coordination, transport and security of aid agencies, protection of civilians and promoting the rules and principles of international humanitarian law.



In addition, the Commission provided € 2 million to help combat yellow fever in Sudan, following the largest outbreak of the disease anywhere in the world in the last five years.

TAJIKISTAN

Funding - € 6 million

Following the 1992-1997 civil war and a devastating drought between 1999 and 2001, Tajikistan has made considerable progress. It is now in the process of transition to longer-term development. To smooth this shift from short-term relief to longer-term rehabilitation and development, the Commission continued to support the unmet humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable groups in Tajikistan. The focus of the aid was on health as well as access to food and drinking water. The 2005 funding was part of a three-year phase-out strategy scheduled to be completed in 2007.

TANZANIA

Funding - € 13.5 million

At the beginning of 2005, Tanzania still hosted Africa's largest refugee population (400,000 people) – around two-thirds Burundian and a third from the DRC. In August, positive political developments led to a surge in the voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees; despite a subsequent decline in numbers, the Commission remains ready to fund future repatriations. Similarly, an improving situation in the DRC encouraged nearly 5,000 people to return home. By December, refugee numbers in Tanzania had dropped to 350,000. The Commission continued to be the key donor to UNHCR, which is mandated by the Tanzanian government to run the refugee camps. Funding for UNHCR, UNICEF, and the Red Cross supported overall care and maintenance of the refugees and facilitated repatriation for those wishing to return home.

UGANDA

Funding - € 14 million

Northern Uganda faced its 20th year of crisis due to the continuing terror tactics of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and rising levels of banditry. The conflict affected a greater area than before and an estimated 1.4 million internally displaced people continued to live in camps. The Commission placed particular emphasis on helping the victims of this "forgotten crisis."

The cyclical nature of the conflict allowed humanitarian organisations increased access during much of the year, but in October and November, the LRA mounted attacks on expatriate aid workers and foreign visitors. The spread of LRA attacks into South Sudan spurred refugee movements from Sudan to Uganda, worsening overcrowding in many areas.

The Commission focused on relieving the suffering of vulnerable populations in the north and centre of the country with a particular focus on the care and maintenance of the internally displaced. Shelter and essential relief items were also provided for the group that has become known as the "night commuters": fearing insecurity and abduction, some 35,000 people, mainly children, in Acholiland abandon their homes every night for the relative safety of urban areas and camps.

YEMEN

Funding - € 3 million

Depleting water resources, chronic drought, the inability of Yemen's government to provide for basic needs in health and water and the lack of international donorship all come together to create lasting "forgotten needs" in Yemen. Humanitarian assistance continued to be required to meet those basic needs, particularly of people living in remote rural areas. The Commission financed drinking water for approximately 30,000 people, health support for about 70,000 and related activities aimed at achieving sustainable improvements in basic living conditions.

Improving children's health has remained an overarching aim of most humanitarian relief operations funded by the Commission. In the spring, polio broke out and spread rapidly across the entire country, spurred by low immunisation rates. Polio, which can paralyse within hours and has no known cure, poses a particular risk to children. The Commission supported immunisation efforts for children under five.

ZAMBIA

Funding - € 3.5 million

With the end of the civil war in Angola, the Commission supported the voluntary repatriation to Angola of up to 250,000 people who had taken refuge in Zambia. In addition to transport and logistics for the repatriating refugees, Commission aid also funded mine and HIV awareness. This year marked the last phase of funding as repatriations come to an end.

ZIMBABWE

Funding - € 15 million

The "triple threat" of food insecurity, poor governance and the HIV/AIDS pandemic have plunged Zimbabwe into a profound humanitarian crisis. From May to July, a government "clean-up" operation to stop unauthorised small trading and demolish allegedly illegal housing and businesses left 700,000 people in urban and suburban areas homeless or deprived of their livelihoods. The government's "fast-track" land reform programme has put an end to most commercial farming and, with the decline of the economy, many social services are no longer available. Erratic weather conditions have deepened the food crisis.

Commission aid was focused on improving the food security of the most vulnerable groups in rural areas, including IDPs, by providing seeds, fertilisers and other agricultural inputs. Funding was also provided to rehabilitate safe water sources and sanitation facilities and to supply food to highly vulnerable groups, including orphans and people living with HIV/AIDS. Victims of the "clean-up" operation received food, basic non-food items and support with HIV/AIDS prevention.

THEMATIC FUNDING

Thematic funding reflects the Commission's commitment to work closely with major institutional partners in the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Funds provided have enabled UN and Red Cross/Crescent organisations to strengthen their response capacity and improve the delivery of humanitarian aid. Agencies that have received thematic support include ICRC, IFRC, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOCHA, WFP and WHO. In 2005, thematic funding agreements were concluded with the following organisations.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC)

Funding - € 4 million

There is a growing trend for civilians to be directly targeted during conflicts, in contravention of international humanitarian law. The ICRC has an important role in ensuring that parties involved in armed conflict respect international norms. The Commission supported ICRC programmes specifically addressing the needs of civilians, displaced people, detainees and those separated from their relatives by conflict.

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES (IFRC)

Funding - € 3.5 million

Natural disasters kill tens of thousands of people a year and leave millions in need of assistance. With its network of 181 national societies, the IFRC is acknowledged as a world leader in speedy disaster response. The Commission provided funding for the IFRC's disaster management programme, boosting the organisation's capacity to prepare for and respond to both sudden and slow onset disasters.

UN OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (OCHA)

Funding - € 4 million

Good information management is crucial in a crisis. It allows humanitarian actors to respond quickly and coherently, delivering aid where and when it is most needed. OCHA's information systems, including IRIN, ReliefWeb and its Humanitarian Information Centres, are important information

sources for the humanitarian community. Commission thematic funding was provided to support OCHA's continuing work in developing and strengthening its information management systems. This includes the development of a global disaster alert and coordination system (GDACS).

THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)

Funding - € 5 million

The world has around 19 million uprooted people and, nowadays, they increasingly encounter problems while seeking international protection. They often face closed borders or forced deportation. They may suffer sexual assault or get caught up in violence with local communities. The Commission provided funding to enhance UNHCR's protection, registration and emergency response mechanism, thereby bolstering its capacity to provide international protection to refugees and other persons of concern, in accordance with its mandate.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO)

Funding - € 4 million

Health emergencies can throw up major challenges in respect of needs assessments, developing appropriate responses, convening partners, establishing joint action, identifying gaps and ensuring they are filled. The WHO has an important role to play in the health sector in humanitarian crises. The organisation is in the process of strengthening its emergency capacity and the Commission provided support through funding for the Health Action in Crisis (HAC) programme.



OTHER FUNDING

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS (DIPECHO)

Funding - € 17.5 million

The Commission's disaster preparedness programme (DIPECHO) helps the most vulnerable populations in the main disaster-prone regions of the world to prepare for natural catastrophes. In the event of earthquakes, cyclones, floods, storms or volcanic eruptions, the most effective life-saving efforts are usually carried out by the affected people themselves both during and after a disaster. Commission funds are therefore allocated for training of communities and local authority staff, capacity-building, awareness-raising, small-scale mitigation activities and early warning systems.

Since natural hazards cross borders, DIPECHO's projects are designed regionally. Ultimately, the goal is to integrate disaster reduction measures not just into humanitarian operations, but also into long term development projects and wider national policies. DIPECHO programmes under funding decisions taken in previous years were still being implemented in Central America and South East Asia during 2005. Four new decisions were taken during the year to strengthen local response capacities in:

- | The Andean Community (€ 4.5 million): Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela.
- | The Caribbean (€ 3.5 million): Belize, Cayman Islands, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Suriname and Eastern Caribbean islands.
- | Central Asia (€ 3.5 million): Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan.
- | South Asia (€ 6 million): Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan.

ECHO FLIGHT

Funding - € 6.5 million

Since 1994, the Commission has funded a humanitarian air transport service (ECHO Flight) for NGOs operating in the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region. It has transported personnel and supplies to dozens of remote locations that would otherwise be cut off from the outside world. In early 2005, the aviation company providing the service went into liquidation. The Commission moved quickly to ensure the speedy resumption of air operations. Services were provided by its humanitarian partners *ASF-B* (Aviation Sans Frontières) in Somalia serving 14 destinations and *ASF-F* and *WFP* in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, serving around 25 destinations.



FACTS & FIGURES

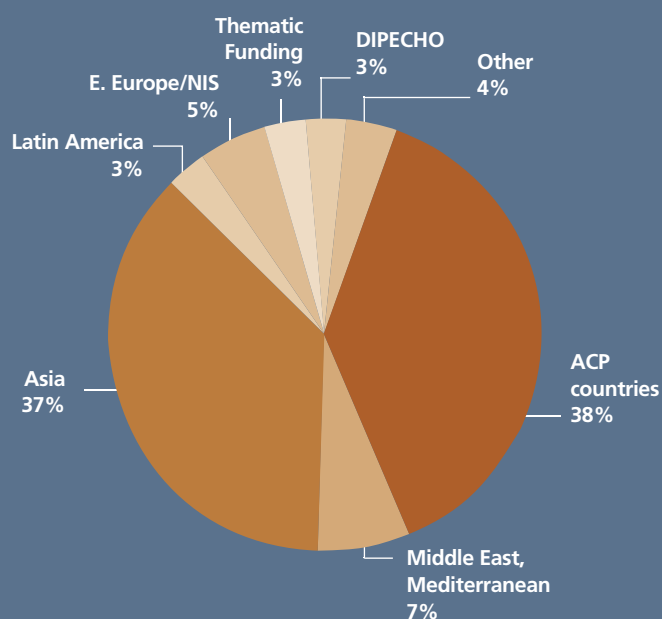
FINANCIAL DECISIONS FOR HUMANITARIAN AID BY REGION IN 2005

Country/sub-region	Decisions in €	Country/sub-region	Decisions in €
AFRICA, CARIBBEAN, PACIFIC	244,220,000	EASTERN EUROPE/NIS	35,200,000
Angola	2,000,000	Georgia	2,000,000
Benin	1,050,000	Mongolia	900,000
Burundi	17,000,000	Northern Caucasus (Chechnya crisis)	26,300,000
Caribbean	500,000	Tajikistan	6,000,000
Chad	14,000,000	LATIN AMERICA	17,700,000
Comoros	1,100,000	Colombia	12,000,000
Congo (Democratic Republic)	38,000,000	El Salvador, Guatemala	5,700,000
Congo (Republic)	2,000,000	MIDDLE EAST/ NORTH AFRICA	48,885,000
Cook Islands	200,000	Algeria (Western Sahara)	9,310,000
Dominican Republic	200,000	Middle East	36,575,000
Eritrea	4,620,000	Yemen	3,000,000
Ethiopia	4,500,000	DIPECHO	17,500,000
Grenada	1,200,000	Caribbean	3,500,000
Guyana	2,700,000	Central Asia	3,500,000
Haiti	1,700,000	South Asia	6,000,000
Kenya	2,000,000	Andean Communities	4,500,000
Lesotho	875,000	THEMATIC FUNDING	20,500,000
Madagascar	500,000	OCHA	4,000,000
Malawi	5,000,000	UNHCR	5,000,000
Mali	2,000,000	ICRC	4,000,000
Niger	6,300,000	WHO	4,000,000
Papua New Guinea	200,000	IFCR	3,500,000
Somalia	9,000,000	OTHER FUNDING	29,250,000
Sudan	45,000,000	DG ECHO field experts & offices	22,750,000
Swaziland	875,000	Evaluation/Communication/Audit	6,500,000
Tanzania	13,500,000	TOTAL DG ECHO funding	652,500,000
Uganda	14,000,000		
West Africa	29,200,000		
Zambia	3,500,000		
Zimbabwe	15,000,000		
ECHO flight (Somalia & DRC)	6,500,000		
ASIA	239,245,000		
Afghanistan	20,000,000		
Asia (regional Tsunami*)	122,830,000		
Cambodia	2,000,000		
East Timor	2,500,000		
Indonesia	2,000,000		
South Asia Earthquake**	48,000,000		
Laos	1,200,000		
Myanmar/Burma	8,000,000		
Nepal	6,000,000		
North Korea	13,715,000		
Philippines	500,000		
Sri Lanka	4,000,000		
Thailand	8,500,000		

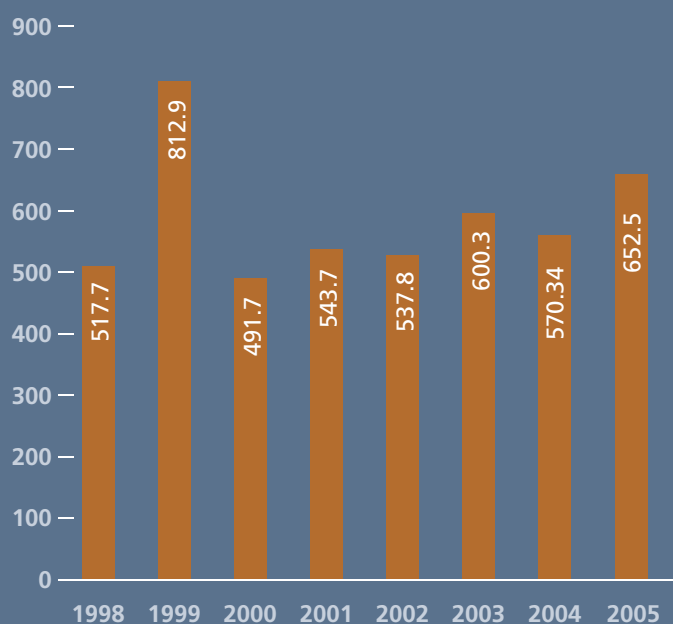
* Covering India, Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Total funding was € 123 million with € 170,000 provided from residual 2004 funds.

** Total funding for the earthquake was € 48.6 million with € 600,000 redeployed from a previous funding decision.

ECHO financing decisions 1998-2005
(figures in € millions)



ECHO financing decisions 1998-2005
(figures in € millions)



WHO'S WHO IN DG ECHO

		Tel	Fax
DIRECTOR-GENERAL	António CAVACO	295 94 28	295 45 78
DIRECTOR	Steffen STENBERG-JENSEN	299 27 40	295 45 78
Assistant	Henrike TRAUTMANN	295 74 23	295 45 78
Internal audit	Ole SCOTT-LARSEN	299 27 22	296 98 42
ECHO 1: Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries	Cees WITTEBROOD	295 73 12	299 28 77
ECHO 2: Central and Eastern Europe, NIS, Mediterranean countries, Middle East	Jean-Claude HEYRAUD	296 94 71	295 45 51
ECHO 3: Asia, Central and Latin America	Esko KENTRSCHYNSKYJ	295 34 20	295 45 71
ECHO 4: General policy affairs; relations with European institutions, partners and other donors; planning coordination and support; general support for major crises	Johannes LUCHNER	296 88 11	299 28 53
ECHO 5: ECHO offices, human resources and IRM	René GUTH	296 37 49	299 11 72
ECHO 6: Finances, Audit	Vijay BHARDWAJ	299 08 89	295 74 83
ECHO 7: Information and Communication	Simon HORNER	299 29 96	295 45 72

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AN EGG FOR A SPECIAL TREAT

“One day I took a train with my mother from our village to Yangon. I lost her on the train”



Orphans and street children in Myanmar's training schools

In Myanmar, the traditional social safety net of family support has been seriously weakened due to extreme poverty, high unemployment and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Given that the country also has one of the lowest levels of public spending on health and education in the world, the result is a humanitarian crisis that affects children particularly severely. Since 2003, the European Commission through DG ECHO has spent € 200,000 on rehabilitating the water and sanitation systems and providing educational materials in two special training schools for 600 orphans and street children in Yangon.

12-year old Nwe Nwe Win is a resident of the Ma Li Cha Training School for girls. She greets us with a gracious *wai* and radiant smile. She shyly strokes my arm as if seeking much-needed affection while showing us the dormitories: large bright rooms, empty except for a row of metal boxes along the wall for the girls' personal belongings. At night, a linoleum roll is spread out on the wooden floor on which the girls cuddle up in their blankets – up to 80 in one room. Even if they could afford beds, there wouldn't be enough space to fit them all in.

“I've been here for three years,” explains Nwe Nwe Win. “One day I took a train with my mother from our village to Yangon. I lost her on the train and a man, her friend, brought me here. My mother knows I am here. She comes to visit from time to time but never talks about taking me home again.”

Many of the children have similar sad stories to tell. They are living evidence of Myanmar's silent humanitarian crisis. Increasing numbers of children are left alone to work in the streets. UNICEF estimates that 45% of 5-13 year-olds do not attend school.

The government runs eight training schools for orphans and former street children. Because Myanmar has signed the Convention on Children's Rights, which does not allow children to be put in jail, the centres also accommodate young people convicted of crimes, ranging from petty theft to murder.

Ma Li Cha is home to 350 girls between the age of five and 18. They are cared for by 20 teachers and attendants. The high staff/pupil ratio means there is little time to address the individual needs of each girl. The school squeezes what it can out of the meagre budget provided by the government: 10 kyats (10 US cents) per child per day. They rely on donations for supplementary food, medical care, clothing, building maintenance and teaching materials.

For months the water system did not work leading to clogged toilets, which the girls still had to use because there was no alternative. As a result of the poor hygiene, half the children contracted skin diseases, diarrhoea was rampant and many showed signs of malnourishment.

DG ECHO funded the French non-governmental organisation *Enfants du Monde – Droits de l'Homme* to improve the living conditions at Ma Li Cha. The NGO built a rainwater collector and installed pumps to bring running water to the bathrooms and the kitchen. The toilets were completely rebuilt. A new bathroom, adjacent to the dormitories, will replace the old one in the middle of the yard which is dark at night and surrounded by mud in the rainy season. The younger girls now attend hygiene classes and all have received kits containing soap, a comb and a washing bowl. The next step is for the kitchen to be rebuilt to ensure food is cooked safely.

Enfants du Monde also tries to prepare the girls for life after Ma Li Cha, with training in traditional skills such as sewing and embroidery. More modern vocational skills are being considered.

There is a chorus of voices as the children respond to their teachers. The chanting stops. It is lunchtime and the girls in their green and white uniforms spill out from their classrooms. They assemble at one of the main buildings to collect a supplement to their daily ration of rice and vegetables. This week's treat - thanks to private donations - is an egg.



BACK TO SCHOOL, BACK TO THE FUTURE

“Catherine, 16 years old:
you’re a boy, you’re lucky”

Displaced youngsters in Colombia

Every month in Colombia thousands of people are driven from their homes by the fighting that has now been going on for 40 years to almost universal indifference. There are now around two million displaced persons in Colombia, and hundreds of thousands of Colombians have taken refuge in neighbouring countries.

As always, children are among the main victims of the violence and forced displacement. It is to meet their specific needs that the Commission is financing a project run by the German NGO *Diakonie* at Soacha in the suburbs of Bogota.

Many of these children and adolescents have been out of school for a long time and are so far behind that they are unable to re-enter the country’s education system.

The *Diakonie* project helps them get back to school and gives them back a future.

Marino, in charge of the project, says “we came across this educational method in Brazil. It enables pupils to catch up three years of conventional schooling in one year. With this method, our success rate is 80%...

The project also enables the youngsters to avoid being forcibly recruited by armed groups. This risk is so great that nearly half the 15 to 17-year-olds have been taken away by parents who had the means.” Marino says “just in the last few months, around 60 young people were killed on our streets. So this project aims to accompany young people on their way to school; we have them walking along two abreast through their areas so they are never on their own.”

The young people are delighted to be able to take part in such a scheme. “I got stopped because I was wearing a ring in my ear. I took it off, with them you have no choice. At least here, I feel safe” says John Fredy, a 17-year-old.

Catherine, 16, adds “and you’re a boy, you’re lucky. During the day I am too afraid to go out on my own. If this school didn’t exist I don’t know what would become of me”.

This project, 90% financed by the Commission, helps between 1,800 and 2,000 young people from the ages of 9 to 18 and their families. In all, there are 4,000 direct beneficiaries.

Since 1994 the European Commission has financed many humanitarian schemes in Colombia, providing more than EUR 100 million in aid.



CRISIS ZONES

PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

In 2005, Palestinian and Israeli leaders stated their intention to end the violence and to operate within the framework of the "Road Map" leading to the ultimate goal of an independent Palestinian state. Positive steps followed, including Israel's withdrawal of its settlements and military presence from the Gaza Strip. Movement restrictions around the West Bank were also eased. The situation remained fragile however and there were setbacks as well as encouraging developments.

The humanitarian situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip continued to cause concern. Living conditions deteriorated further and access to water, health and education remained limited. High unemployment was a particular worry, as it created a potentially fertile breeding ground for violence and extremism. Access for humanitarian operations was seriously hampered by Israel's policy of closure and movement restrictions. Security incidents, due to the activities of Palestinian armed groups, created further obstacles for agencies striving to deliver humanitarian aid.

2.5 million Palestine refugees live in Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. Although they are well integrated into Jordanian and Syrian societies, the situation is less favourable in Lebanon where more than 50% of the refugees live in very poor conditions.

NIGER

For some years, Niger has been plagued by chronic food insecurity. The situation reached a crisis point in 2005. Due to extreme poverty, the most vulnerable people were no longer able to purchase food, and the numbers dying from acute malnutrition rose sharply. Young children were worst affected. Action by humanitarian aid agencies to distribute food and establish nutritional support centres brought short-term relief. However, a long-term solution requires tackling the structural causes of the famine – such as extreme poverty, high population growth and limited health provision. The Commission allocated € 6.3 million of humanitarian aid to provide malnourished people with nutritional support. It continues to monitor the situation very closely with a view to providing further assistance, if needed.

NORTHERN CAUCASUS

Six years after the beginning of the second Chechen conflict, the situation in Chechnya remained unstable, with regular confrontations between the military and rebel fighters. Despite a slight improvement in the capital Grozny, which suffered enormous damage in previous fighting, living conditions there continued to be extremely difficult. Many people were living in damaged buildings and bombed-out ruins with no running water, no sewage system and irregular electricity supplies. Thousands of displaced people have returned to the city from Ingushetia.

The crisis in Chechnya increasingly spilled over to other Northern Caucasus republics, with security incidents in both Ingushetia and Dagestan. In Ingushetia, the number of displaced Chechens stabilised at 30,000. The Commission provided € 28.5 million of humanitarian assistance to improve the living conditions and boost the protection of people affected by the conflict in all three republics.



USEFUL WEB LINKS

NGO PARTNERS	http://europa.eu/comm/echo/pdf_files/fpa_partners.pdf
FUNDING DECISIONS	http://europa.eu/comm/echo/information/decisions/index_en.cfm
COUNTRY OPERATIONS	http://europa.eu/comm/echo/field/index_en.htm
DG ECHO AID STRATEGY	http://europa.eu/comm/echo/information/strategy/index_en.htm
PUBLICATIONS AND DOCUMENTS	http://europa.eu/echo/information/publications/index_en.htm
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EUROPEAN COMMISSION PROVIDING HUMANITARIAN AID WORLDWIDE

WHAT IS DG ECHO?

DG ECHO is the European Union's Humanitarian Aid department, a service of the European Commission under the direct responsibility of Commissioner Louis Michel.

Since 1992, The Commission has funded relief to millions of victims of natural and man-made disasters outside the European Union.

Aid is channelled impartially to the affected populations, regardless of their race, ethnic group, religion, gender, age, nationality or political affiliation.

Part of DG ECHO's mission is to raise public awareness of humanitarian issues.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS IN THE FIELD

DG ECHO works with about 190 operational partners, including specialised United Nation agencies, NGOs and other international institutions.

A KEY DONOR

The European Commission is one of the biggest sources of humanitarian aid in the world. In 2005, it provided €652 million for humanitarian programmes. This does not include the aid given separately by the EU's 25 Member States. Support went to projects in more than 60 countries. The funds are spent on goods and services such as food, clothing, shelter, medical provisions, water supplies, sanitation, emergency repairs and mine-clearing. The Commission also funds disaster preparedness and mitigation projects in regions prone to natural catastrophes.



DG HUMANITARIAN AID (DG ECHO)

European Commission

B - 1049 Brussels Belgium

Tel. +32 2 295 44 00 - Fax +32 2 295 45 72

e-mail echo-info@cec.eu.int

<http://europa.eu/comm/echo>

ISBN 92-79-01294-0



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