



International Conference on the Great Lakes Region

**REGIONAL
PROGRAMME OF ACTION ON HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL ISSUES**

**FRAMEWORK FOR DURABLE SOLUTIONS
TO THE HUMANITARIAN, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
IN
THE GREAT LAKES REGION**

August 2006

Summary

The Regional Programme of Action on Humanitarian and Social Issues entitled “*Framework for Durable solutions to the Humanitarian, Social and Environmental Issues in the Great Lakes Region*”, sets out to present an outline of the key projects as responses to the challenges encountered by the people of the region; and to translate into concrete activities the commitment of the Heads of States and governments of the region in the areas of human security and peoples’ rights as formulated in the Dar es Salaam Declaration.

The Regional Programme of Action is articulated around two sub-programmes which aim at ensuring, with regards to sub-programme 1, the establishment of a framework to respond to man-made and/or natural disasters, to protect and assist internally displaced persons as well as their environment and that of the host communities; and sub-programme 2, the resumption of basic social services, provision of healthcare and psycho-social support to groups with special needs.

This Regional Programme of Action, as a framework to address the challenges of the Region is a flexible tool, likely to evolve and adapt to the needs of the populations and to the dynamic of the region. It is with this in mind that the list of projects which constitute this Programme of Action, and the Protocols which support them are in no mean exhaustive thus additional projects and protocols will be formulated as the need may arise to address issues of human security and people’s rights in the Great Lakes Region.

The Regional Programme of Action will be implemented under the overall supervision and guidance of the Committee for Coordination of Humanitarian, Social and Environmental Issues set up under the aegis of the Conference Secretariat established as part of the Follow up mechanism of the International Conference and working in close collaboration with the members states of the region, regional, bilateral and multilateral partners.

The estimated cost of implementing the Regional Programme of Action on Humanitarian and Social issues is **467,965,190 US Dollars**. The estimated cost of implementing the **seven projects** identified as “*priority projects*” to be implemented within five years is **28,285,970 US Dollars**.

1. Contextual analysis

For several years, the Great Lakes region has been plagued by conflicts that have greatly affected the socio-economic situation of the region. These conflicts have strained the already inadequate and fragile infrastructure resulting in the breakdown of basic social services. This in turn has led to the exponential increase in morbidity and mortality rates in the region. Communicable diseases such as Tuberculosis, Malaria and HIV/AIDS have been on the rise in the region. In addition millions of people have been uprooted and have found refuge in neighbouring countries. Others have simply moved to safer locations within their own countries increasing the number of internally displaced persons already quite high in the region. Families have been separated, the number of orphans has increased and incidences of sexual violence against women and children have reached unprecedented levels.

In the long run, it is evident that any durable solutions to the humanitarian and social crises should be closely linked to the return of peace and stability in the region, economic prosperity and the restoration of justice, human rights and the fight against impunity. In the short and medium term however, the humanitarian and social problems must be vigorously tackled through protection and assistance programmes which would target primarily the vulnerable communities.

This framework for durable solutions which encompasses a number of projects, under two programmes of action, is therefore meant to address some of the acute humanitarian and social challenges facing the countries of the Great Lakes. It is by no means a comprehensive document. It simply lays the foundations upon which these crises may eventually find adequate answers.

2. Vision

In the Dar Es Salaam Declaration, the Heads of State and Government accorded a lot of attention to humanitarian and social issues in the region and stressed the fact that sustainable peace, security and economic development could not be achieved in the Great Lakes region without finding lasting solutions to the problems of forced population displacement, sexual violence, HIV/AIDS and other social crises which have plagued the region for a number of decades. Thus, the Heads of State and Government committed themselves to, among other issues, address the root causes of and finding lasting solutions to, the protracted humanitarian and social problems in the Great Lakes region.

3. Specific objectives and strategy of this framework

The specific objectives of this framework are essentially:

- To present and outline the key projects which would offer protection and assistance to communities affected by the crises in the Great Lakes;
- To translate into concrete actions the commitment of the Heads of State and Government as embodied in the Dar Es Salaam Declaration.

In the pursuit of the above objectives, the strategic directions of this framework will evolve around the following key axis:

- First and foremost, the ownership of the process with Member States providing both resources and expertise in the implementation of the activities;
- Promoting strong partnership between Member States and the international community as key partner;
- The involvement of the grass roots communities in the design and delivery of the humanitarian and social programmes;

- The sustained commitment of Member States and their partners on key international humanitarian law principles, better protection and assistance to communities affected by the conflicts
- An engendered and human rights approach to humanitarian and social issues in the Great Lakes region.

The direct beneficiaries of these programmes of action include all the vulnerable groups in the region in particular IDPs, refugees, host communities, women and children, the elderly, the disabled etc. The indirect beneficiaries are ultimately the People and the Governments of the region.

4. The Sub-programmes

The framework is composed of two sub-programmes comprised of projects identified by the members states of the IC/GLR. The full projects are attached as annex to this regional programme of action.

SUB-PROGRAMME 1:

4.1 FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE TO IDPS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT.

The overall objective of this programme is to devise an all encompassing framework through which issues linked to the protection and assistance of uprooted communities could be addressed. Protection and assistance also include such areas as compliance with international instruments, property rights of returning populations, the maintenance of the civilian nature of refugee camps and settlements, humanitarian access and the safety of humanitarian workers, environmental restoration and human settlements but also natural and man-made disaster prevention and preparedness and contingency planning.

This sub-programme comprises six projects summarized as follows:-

PROJECTS

4.1.1 Compliance with international and regional instruments on human rights, international humanitarian law, issuance of identity documents to internally displaced persons and refugees, and statelessness

The overall objective of this project is to ensure better protection and welfare of refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons through state compliance with international instruments on human rights as well as obligations concerning the issuance of identity documents to internally displaced persons and refugees.

4.1.2 Protection, assistance and search for durable solutions for displaced populations (refugees and IDPs) and communities that host them

The overall objective of this project is the establishment of a regional framework for the protection, assistance and search for durable solutions for refugees, IDPs and the burden placed on communities that host them. The project gives particular prominence to matters pertaining to assistance and protection of internally displaced persons in light of the fact that this category of forced migrants is not covered at the moment by any binding legal instrument.

The project is underpinned by a **Protocol on protection and assistance to internally displaced persons** which obliges the member States to adopt and implement the Guiding

Principles on Internal Displacement. This Protocol defines internally displaced persons and lays out the underlying principles, and scope, of the protection of such persons, including the vulnerable, and those displaced by large scale development projects. It then outlines the legal measures by which Member States may implement the Guiding principles by means of national legislation. Finally, a copy of the Guiding Principles is included as an annex adopted at the end of the text of the Protocol.

4.1.3 Legal framework on issues related to the recovery of land and properties by returning refugees and IDPs

The major problem addressed by the project is that the process of return and reintegration of refugees and IDPs is often hampered by conflicting claims to the properties and land previously owned or occupied by them prior their flight. Therefore, the overall objective of the project is to restore and rehabilitate property to returning refugees and IDPs as a means of preventing and resolving conflict in the countries of the Great Lakes region.

The project is underpinned by a **Protocol on the property rights of returning populations**. Which obliges Member States to provide protection of the property of internally displaced persons and refugees during and after displacement. This Protocol defines returning populations and the legal concept of property and provides the applicable principles of protection as well as the scope of protection of the property of returning populations. It requires the Member states to establish a property registration scheme for property held under both statutory and customary tenure. The Protocol also obliges Member States to establish a framework for the recovery of the property of returning populations, the role of traditional and local authorities, and procedures for the informal settlement of property disputes. It further obliges Member States to provide special protection for returning, women and children, and for communities with special attachment to land. Finally, this Protocol provides for remedies for the loss of the property of returning populations

4.1.4 Establishment of a regional framework on humanitarian access and the safety of humanitarian workers

The project explains that in recent years, violence and insecurity in the Great Lakes region often hinder humanitarian access, increasing affected people's suffering and vulnerability. In a number of cases, humanitarian workers have been attacked, abducted and held hostage. Such incidents have resulted in the suspension of humanitarian activities. The overall objective of this project is to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian workers and associated personnel in the conduct of their duties, and also to ensure free and unhindered humanitarian access to persons in need of assistance.

4.1.5 Environmental assessment, restoration and rehabilitation of human settlements particularly in and around refugee/IDP camps and settlements

The increasing occurrence of armed conflicts in the recent past has caused extensive loss of lives, damage to human settlements, and harm to the environment. In most cases, refugees and IDPs live in fragile ecosystems or densely populated settlements, including coastal and slum urban areas. The overall objective of the project is to undertake a comprehensive environmental assessment of the Great Lakes region, particularly the impact of refugees and internally displaced persons on ecosystems and human settlements integrity in the Great Lakes region. Further the project will provide early warning information to support mitigation planning aimed at identifying strategic approaches and actions for environmental and human settlements management in situations of displacement and encampment.

4.1.6 Establishment of a regional disaster management and contingency planning mechanism

In an overall context of conflict and insecurity in the GLR, the occurrence of disasters, natural or man-made, compounds an already precarious humanitarian situation with devastating consequences for the populations in the region. National early warning and disasters management response mechanisms do exist in the region. However, the missing link is a coordinating regional mechanism which would allow countries to share experiences, resources and expertise with a view to respond more adequately to some of these disasters. The overall objective of the project is therefore to establish a regional early warning and rapid response mechanism for natural and man-made disasters and build capacities for the management of risk at national and regional levels.

Sub-Programme 2:

4.2 RESUMPTION OF BASIC SOCIAL SERVICES, PROVISION OF HEALTHCARE AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT TO GROUPS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The overall objective of this sub-programme is to provide an overarching framework to address the above challenges and improve the lives and welfare of the populations in the region who, for various reasons, are among the poorest and most vulnerable in Africa. In particular, it would enable the restoration and proper functioning of basic services in post-conflict areas, would limit the spread of disease and increase skills and capacities among the populations. The sub-programme contains seven projects as follows:

Projects

4.2.1 Resource mobilisation for the restoration of basic services

This project's main objective is to set the stage for the mobilisation of resources, at the national, regional and international level for the rebuilding and rehabilitation of basic social infrastructure. The target population is essentially women, children and the vulnerable groups who have been severely affected by the repeated conflicts in the Great Lakes region.

4.2.2 Prevention, fight against sexual exploitation, abuse and gender-based violence and assistance to the victims

The project, which is supplementing a related protocol on the same subject, aims at preventing and eradicating all forms of sexual violence against women. While the protocol focuses on the legal issues related to the crimes of sexual violence. The activities in this project are particularly geared towards the assistance to the victims and towards sensitisation campaigns.

The project is supported by a **Protocol on the prevention and suppression of sexual violence against women and children** which obliges the Member States to punish the perpetrators of the crime of sexual violence in situations of peace and armed conflict. It defines the crimes of sexual violence, genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes and sets out the constituent elements of these crimes as a basis for determining the criminal responsibility of the perpetrators. This Protocol also encourages the Member States to determine a maximum sentence for the punishment of the perpetrators of the crime of sexual violence as a way of establishing minimum standards for dealing with such offenders within the region. Finally the Protocol contains obligations on regional responses to the incidence of sexual violence with respect to the surrender of the perpetrators between the jurisdictions of the Member States, the compensation of the victims and survivors by the perpetrators, the establishment of a national

fund for assisting the victims and the survivors, and the creation of a special facility in the regional fund for reconstruction and development as a means of providing the victims with legal assistance, medical treatment, social and psychological rehabilitation.

4.2.3 Fight against HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), tuberculosis and malaria in the Great Lakes region

The project overall objective is to contribute to the decrease of the incidence and prevalence of HIV/AIDS, STIs, malaria and tuberculosis and the negative effects of these diseases, especially on women and children.

4.2.4 Addressing the needs of especially vulnerable groups

Unstable environments in the Great Lakes region have rendered the majority of people vulnerable and unfortunately no particular agency or Programme is mandated to address the needs of these especially vulnerable groups. Basic documented information about them and their needs is also lacking. The project therefore aims at identifying the needs and ensure the protection and assistance to especially vulnerable groups in the region, especially women and children.

4.2.5 Improving access to quality education and achieving the goal of education for all

Armed conflict and extreme poverty have led to the disintegration of the education systems in the Great Lakes region. Children and young people have been pushed away from families and homes and into war zones, the streets and refugee and IDP camps where the main goal is survival. While the macro issues related to the education sector are addressed under the Economic Development and Regional Integration cluster, this project concentrates on the basic education needs in the region.

4.2.6 Strengthening of health programmes with a particular focus on “neglected/forgotten” diseases

As a result of the breakdown of health systems in the Great Lakes region, the majority of deaths occur from causes that are largely preventable. Also diseases which were thought to have been eradicated, such as polio, measles etc. in the region tend to make a come back. Similarly increased focus on emergent diseases such as Marburg disease, Ebola and HIV/AIDS tend to overshadow other diseases such river blindness, leprosy etc. The overall objective of the project is therefore to reduce the prevalence rates of these neglected/forgotten diseases.

4.2.7 Project on the promotion of the use of Kiswahili as a working language in the Great Lakes region

The project responds to the call made by the Heads of State to promote Kiswahili as one of the working languages in the Great Lakes.

5. Institutional arrangement

A Coordination Committee on Humanitarian, Social and Environmental Issues will be established within the framework of the Regional Follow-up Mechanism. The role of the Coordination Committee is to:

- Coordinate and implement activities in the Humanitarian and Social Issues programme of action;
- Harmonize the protection and assistance policies including support to host communities;
- Mobilize resources and advocacy on humanitarian and social issues;
- Lend support to the sensitization and advocate for compliance with international instruments including the domestication of regional protocols (IDPs, sexual violence and property rights of returning communities);
- Facilitate the coordination and dialogue on matters pertaining to humanitarian and social issues in the region;
- Provide Institutional support to national structures dealing with humanitarian and social issues.

Working under the guidance of the Coordination Committee, expert sub-committees will be set up as needed. The Coordination Committee will also draw expertise from other partners such as UN agencies and international organizations.

6. Budgetary requirements

The overall cost of implementing the projects under the framework is estimated at **467,945,190 USDollars** . A list of the projects and cost can be found in table 1 below. In addition, projects identified as priority projects to be implemented within a short time frame are highlighted in table 2.

Table 1. Overall budgetary requirements

TITLE OF THE PROJECT	TOTAL BUDGET IN USD
Sub-programme 1: Framework for disaster preparedness, protection and assistance to IDPs and their environment.	
4.1.1 Comply with international and regional instruments on human rights, international humanitarian law, Issuance of Identity documents to IDPs, refugees and Statelessness	11,612,150
4.1.2 Protection, assistance and search for durable solutions for Displaced Populations (refugees and IDPs) and communities that host them	5,087,115
4.1.3 Legal framework on issues related to the recovery of Land and Properties by returning refugees and IDPs	3,262,050
4.1.4 Environmental assessment and restoration and rehabilitation of human settlements particularly in and around refuge/IDP camp	1,368,510
4.1.5 Humanitarian access and the Safety of Humanitarian Workers and Associated Personnel	360,710
4.1.6 Establishment of regional disaster management and contingency planning framework	2,170,960
Sub-Programme 2: Resumption of basic social services, provision of healthcare and psycho-social support to groups with special needs	
4.2.1 Fight against HIV/AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), Tuberculosis and Malaria in the GLR	1,281,720
4.2.2 Prevention and fight against Sexual exploitation, abuse and gender-based violence and assistance to the victims	1,304,270
4.2.3 Promotion of the use of Kiswahili as a Working Language in the Great Lakes Region	4,390,155

4.2.4 Resource Mobilisation for the restoration of basic services	490,160
4.2.5 Improving access to quality education and achieving the goal of education for all	546,480
4.2.6 Strengthening of health programmes with a particular focus on “neglected/forgotten diseases”	435,713,850
4.2.7 Addressing the needs of especially vulnerable groups	357,060
OVER ALL TOTAL	467,945,190

Table 2 – Priority projects & Cost

Sub-programme 1: Framework for disaster preparedness, protection and assistance to IDPs and their environment.						
Title of Project	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
4.1.1 Comply with international and regional instruments on human rights, international humanitarian law, issuance of identity documents to internally displaced persons and refugees and statelessness	401,830	961,255	5,053,455	4,978,380	197,230	11,592,150
4.1.2 Protection assistance and search for durable solutions for displaced populations (refugees and IDPs) and communities that host them	2,031,865	1,449,525	657,800	524,425	423,500	5,087,115
4.1.3 Legal Framework on issues related to the recovery of Land and properties by returning persons	670,010	648,010	648,010	648,010	648,010	3,262,050
4.1.4 Environmental assessment and restoration and rehabilitation of human settlements, particularly in and around refugee/IDP camps	238,040	242,055	299,860	196,625	391,930	1,368,510

Sub-Programme 2: Resumption of basic social services, provision of healthcare and psycho-social support to groups with special needs

Title of Project	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
4.2.1 Fight against HIV-AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases (STIs), tuberculosis and malaria in the Great Lakes region	878,900	80,080	80,080	80,080	162,580	1,281,720
4.2.2 Prevention, fight against sexual exploitation, abuse and gender-based violence and assistance to the victims	349,030	349,030	202,070	202,070	202,070	1,304,270
4.2.3 Promotion of Kiswahili as a working language in the Great Lakes region	956,285	2,153,800	735,570	519,750	24,750	4,390,155
Total cost of priority projects	5,525,960	5,883,755	7,676,845	7,149,340	2,050,070	28,285,970

7. Risks and opportunities

The success of implementation of these sub-programmes in general is contingent upon a number of possible risks notably the relapse of conflicts in the region, poor/unreliable response from the Governments, interests conceived as incompatible and funding shortfalls.

On the other hand, the current positive climate in the region coupled with the resolve of the international community to provide support to the on-going political dialogue among member states of the IC/GLR augur well for the success of these activities.

Annex

Projects under sub-programme 1: Framework for disaster preparedness, protection and assistance to IDPs and their environment.

- 4.1.1 Compliance with international and regional instruments on human rights, international humanitarian law, issuance of identity documents to internally displaced persons and refugees, and statelessness
- 4.1.2 Protection, assistance and search for durable solutions for displaced populations (refugees and IDPs) and communities that host them
- 4.1.3 Legal framework on issues related to the recovery of land and properties by returning refugees and IDPs
- 4.1.4 Establishment of a regional framework on humanitarian access and the safety of humanitarian workers
- 4.1.5 Environmental assessment, restoration and rehabilitation of human settlements particularly in and around refugee/IDP camps and settlements
- 4.1.6 Establishment of a regional disaster management and contingency planning mechanism

Projects under sub-programme 2: resumption of basic social services, provision of healthcare and psycho-social support to groups with special needs

- 4.2.1 Resource mobilisation for the restoration of basic services
- 4.2.2 Prevention, fight against sexual exploitation, abuse and gender-based violence and Assistance to the victims
- 4.2.3 Fight against HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), tuberculosis and malaria in the Great Lakes region
- 4.2.4 Addressing the needs of especially vulnerable groups
- 4.2.5 Improving access to quality education and achieving the goal of education for all
- 4.2.6 Strengthening of health programmes with a particular focus on “neglected/forgotten” diseases

4.2.7 Project on the promotion of the use of Kiswahili as a working language in the Great Lakes region