

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In 1996 the UNHCR reintegration programme in Mozambique will come to an end. The programme was initiated during a period of intense humanitarian action in support of social stability in Mozambique after 16 years of civil war, which had displaced a third of the country's population. It concludes at a time when peace has been consolidated and the most critical challenge is to catch up with sustainable development. Notwithstanding the progress made since peace arrived in 1992, a long history of conflict, coupled with extreme poverty, a small and vulnerable economy, a weak institutional structure and a high exposure to natural disasters make the recovery process in Mozambique unusually fragile and the challenges ahead of the government particularly heavy.
2. At the crossroads of a concluding humanitarian operation and a growing emphasis on longer-term development cooperation to sustain and strengthen the transition from war and dislocation to peace and stability, UNHCR organised a lessons learned seminar on 24 and 25 May 1996 in Geneva. The purpose of the meeting was to take stock of the situation and to provide policy and operational guidance to similar programmes in the future.
3. The seminar brought together some 25 UNHCR Headquarters staff with the High Commissioner's Representative in Mozambique, Mr. Alfredo del Rio Court, a Programme Officer from one of the three Sub-Offices in the country, Mr. Jozef Merckx of SO Chimoio covering the Manica and Sofala provinces, and a Field Officer from one of the 20 UNHCR field outposts, Ms. Genneth Wudneh from Morrumbala District. Mr. David Lambo, former UNHCR Coordinator of the Mozambique Repatriation Operation and currently head of UNHCR's Regional Liaison Office for the Horn of Africa, also attended the meeting.
4. The UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Erick de Mul, and the Representative of the World Bank in Mozambique, Mr. Roberto Chavez, generously made themselves available as resource persons. Both agencies have been important interlocutors and actors in the UNHCR-led reintegration programme. The DHA, through its Geneva Director, Mr. Martin Griffiths, also took part in the discussions as did the UNDP Director in Geneva, Mr. Alan Doss. The seminar was moderated by Mr. John Telford and opened by the Deputy High Commissioner.
5. In the spring of 1996 the reintegration programme was reviewed by a joint team, which included two UNHCR Headquarters staff members, representatives of the two main donors to the programme, the United States and the Netherlands, as well as a representative of the NGO community in the region (the PARINAC focal point for Southern Africa). The report produced by the mission team, entitled 'Rebuilding a war-torn society: a review of the UNHCR reintegration programme for Mozambican returnees', will shortly be made available to all interested parties.
6. With a total budget of USD 108 million, the UNHCR repatriation (20% of the expenditure) and reintegration programme (80%) in Mozambique is one of the largest ever undertaken by the organization. Now, as it comes to an end, the programme is generally acclaimed to be a success. Some 1.7 million refugees from six regional asylum countries repatriated to Mozambique in the course of four years, most of them from neighbouring Malawi. The majority of the refugees went back during a two-year period between the peace agreement of October 1992 and the presidential and parliamentary elections in late 1994.