South Sudanese refugees

Refugee Coordination Group Meeting - 25 March 2019
Operational Context

• **400,000 South Sudanese refugees** residing in Gambella (7 camps: 385,000 refugees), Assosa (2 camps: 15,000 refugees), and Benishangul Gumuz regions of Ethiopia.

• Refugee numbers are likely to **decrease by up 25%** upon completion of L3 registration (April 2019).

• Although South Sudanese refugees continue to be granted prima facie status, **new arrivals are no longer registered or authorized to join Gambella camps**, as per the instructions of the regional authority.

• To date, camp populations in the Gambella region outnumber those in the surrounding host communities by **60:40**.
• The security situation in the region remains unpredictable; with recent security incidents affecting refugees, host communities and humanitarian workers, which have included fatalities.

• Insecurity within the regions, caused by ethnic and political conflicts, has directly impacted refugees.

• Appointment of new government in 2018 has led to a new regional president, cabinet, woreda and kebele level authorities, which requires a renewed engagement by humanitarian and development actors.

• CRRF has been negatively received by the host community and local authorities in Gambella.
Protection and solutions

- The promotion of community security, the rule of law, social cohesion and peaceful coexistence is essential.

- Advocacy to ensure continued access to asylum and assistance in the Gambella region.

- Monitoring of spontaneous departures, possible preparation of facilitated voluntary repatriation. Ensuring the engagement of refugees to partake in the outcomes of the peace process in South Sudan.

- Improved refugee data management with the completion of the L3 registration and establishment of the One-Stop-Shop Registration Model.

- Increase engagement with local authorities on CRRF; capacity development of regional Woreda and Kebele authorities.

- Strengthening refugee protection through the expansion of improved community-based and multi-sectorial child protection and SGBV programmes.
Planning assumptions

• Reduced numbers of new arrivals, assuming the gradual stabilisation of the political and humanitarian situation in South Sudan.

• The security situation within the hosting areas remains stable, with no significant security incidents in and around the camps.

• Continued essential service delivery in the camps.

• Access to asylum and protection maintained.

• The new Refugee Proclamation and the CRRF/9 pledges advanced access to documentation, labour rights, and opportunities for agriculture production.
Operational Priorities

• **New arrivals:** The management of reception centres, timely registration and the transportation of refugees to locations (collectively identified as favourable protection environments) is a priority.

• **Protection:**
  • 35,000 unaccompanied and separated children: child protection remains a high priority in the delivery of essential services.
  • Enhanced community based protection with a focus on persons with specific needs and SGBV.
  • Maintain accurate refugee data.

• **Peaceful co-existence:** The promotion of community security, the rule of law, social cohesion and peaceful coexistence is essential.

• **Live-saving activities:** Ensure adequate services for refugees is provided in a timely manner (Health/Food/shelter/nutrition/WASH).

• **Household energy:** The provision of alternative fuels, fuel efficient stoves, street lights, solar home systems, and grid connected electricity.

• **CRRF:**
  • Gradual integration of refugees into national service provision (secondary education, WASH).
  • Engagement of development and private sector partners in the establishment of job creation programmes promoting economic self-reliance.
  • Effective coordination of humanitarian, development and governmental actors.
Challenges

**Operational environment:**

- Perceptions of regional government and host community:
  - Uncertainty concerning CRRF implementation, perceived as possible pathway to local integration and naturalization.
  - Difficulties in demonstrating CRRF outcomes without visible, tangible development engagements and investments.
  - Challenges with communication on CRRF without further reinforcing negative perceptions.
- Lack of engagement from private sector and development actors in hosting regions because of political insecurity.
- Unwillingness of regional authorities to further accommodate refugees in the Gambella region.
- Limited opportunities for economic inclusion; with continued advocacy required with private sector and development actors.
- Limited opportunities for gradual inclusion of refugees in national services because of a lack of capacity.

**Financial Challenges:**

- Response to new influx would require significant investments in camp infrastructure; out-of-camp response not yet considered in the Gambella region.
Opportunities, Regional initiatives

- **Peace process**: ensure that Nuer refugees benefit from opportunities created by the ongoing peace process.

- **Inclusion in national services (health, water, education)**:
  - IGAD focusing on inclusion of refugees in education and national health services, and livelihood opportunities.
  - GIZ supporting national TVET (Vocational skills training) to allow participation of refugees.
  - UNICEF investments in education and WASH.
  - WB IDA 18 and IDA 19; supporting inclusion of refugees in education with a focus on secondary education.

- **Economic inclusion**: Engagement with private sector, opportunities in the agricultural and livestock sectors.

- **Development plans**: Donor interest but mainly humanitarian actors, possibility to attract development actors over time. Potential inclusion of refugees in regional development plans.
Thank you