

Sustaining hope in a changing world

**ECHO 2001**



**European Commission  
Humanitarian Aid Office**





## AFGHAN REFUGEES LIVING IN A MAKESHIFT CAMP IN PAKISTAN

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### TEXT AND COORDINATION

*ECHO Information and Communication*

### DESIGN AND LAYOUT

*Yaka Production*

# Responding effectively in a changing world



2001 will be remembered, above all, as the year of the devastating terrorist attacks in the United States. We were all shocked by the terrible images on our television screens as the hijacked aircraft struck the twin towers of the World Trade Center and by the tragic loss of life in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania. It was also sad that it should take such an appalling event to focus global attention on the dramatic humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. It is worth emphasising that ECHO was already heavily engaged there in efforts to alleviate the suffering of the population. As the crisis escalat-

ed, the Commission responded with a series of humanitarian aid decisions providing vital relief for victims of the crisis and significant logistical support for operational partners.

Other trouble-spots to hit the headlines during the year included the Palestinian Territories, where the prospects of an end to the violence receded and Chechnya, where a new upsurge in fighting added to the misery of an already vulnerable population. In both cases, the Commission, through ECHO, took immediate and practical steps, allocating additional resources for a range of humanitarian actions.

Afghanistan, the Middle East and the Northern Caucasus appeared frequently in the headlines during 2001 but there were many less publicised crises where the Commission was also heavily involved in humanitarian operations. In keeping with its mandate to help those who are most vulnerable, irrespective of their race, ethnic origin or religion, ECHO provided essential assistance in more than 60 countries altogether. Among the millions of beneficiaries were victims of conflict in Africa, the Balkans and South America, and of natural disasters in India, Central and South America and the eastern Pacific rim. During the year, my humanitarian brief led me to visit El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Congo, Pakistan and Afghanistan. In Kabul, just three weeks after the departure of the Taliban, I saw at first hand the heartbreaking human and material consequences of the long-running conflict. But I also had a snapshot of another Afghanistan, when I met the local staff who had kept ECHO-funded projects going in very difficult circumstances after expatriate aid workers had been forced to leave. Their commitment ensured that many desperate people received help at a

crucial time. Similar stories of dedication can be found in most other crisis zones, reinforcing my belief in the validity of European solidarity with the world's most vulnerable peoples. Funding is important but so too are the policies we implement to ensure that the aid is used to best effect. One of my main priorities has been to improve the linkages between relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) to ensure a smooth transition from emergency to longer-term programmes. This involves close coordination between different Commission services, but also a strengthening of links with other humanitarian and development agencies. During 2001, we made significant progress in defining more clearly the relationship between ECHO and its UN partners - something to which I attach a great deal of importance. In concrete terms, ECHO funding channelled through UN agencies was significantly higher in 2001 than in the previous year.

Through its relief efforts, ECHO carries out vital work in helping the world's most vulnerable populations, and I intend to build on this record of achievement. Humanitarian action, however, is not enough on its own to tackle the root causes of those seemingly intractable conflicts that still blight our planet.

Ultimately, solutions must be "home-grown" to the extent that rival groups need to be reconciled to peaceful co-existence and pluralistic development. The evidence suggests, however, that progress is more likely when the international community adopts a broadly united stance, facilitating dialogue between warring parties and making significant long-term resources available for the rebuilding of shattered communities. This is what has happened in places as diverse as Sierra Leone, East Timor and Kosovo. It is also true to some extent for Afghanistan where the prospects at last appear brighter now that there is a strong international commitment to a durable internal settlement backed by substantial support for reconstruction. The European Union is playing a major part in this effort.

On the other hand, there are few signs of an end to the suffering in the Palestinian Territories and Chechnya. There are also numerous crises that attract much less global attention such as those in Angola, Western Sahara and the Horn of Africa. Overall, the situation of millions of refugees and internally displaced people remains extremely precarious. With a concerted effort from the international community, their prospects could also be transformed, to the benefit of all humankind.

**Poul Nielson**

**European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid  
February 2002**



# Commitment in the face of a deteriorating international humanitarian situation

In 2001, most of the world's ongoing conflicts continued unabated and in some places, notably Chechnya, the Middle East and a number of countries in Africa, the fighting escalated. In Afghanistan, the crisis was exacerbated by the tragic events of September 11. The international community faces a major challenge, on the one hand in guaranteeing stability and global security, and on the other, in meeting the legitimate expectations of the most vulnerable populations.

## RESPONDING TO THE GROWING PROBLEM OF PROTECTING PEOPLE

In most cases, war has become an end in itself, pitching countries and regions into long-term anarchy and chaos. The main victims of these conflicts are the civilian populations and, in particular, women, children, the elderly and the disabled. It was estimated that 37 million people were either refugees or internally displaced within their own countries during 2001.

Faced with this grave situation, ECHO and its humanitarian partners have given top priority to protecting the victims of war. This is reflected in the large amounts of aid allocated to programmes in this sphere.



Costanza Adinolfi inspects a war-damaged building in Chechnya.

ECHO

## MAINTAINING A GLOBAL PRESENCE, WHEREVER THERE ARE NEEDS

The main operations supported by ECHO in 2001 were in the Balkans, which still has many refugees and displaced people, the Great Lakes region of Africa, the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan and the Middle East. There were also significant interventions elsewhere, including in areas of so-called "forgotten crises" where ECHO maintained or stepped up its involvement, such as Angola, the Western Sahara and the Northern Caucasus. In financial terms, humanitarian aid worth a total of €544 million was allocated during 2001, an increase of €50 million on the previous year.

## STRENGTHENING THE RESPONSE CAPACITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY

The Commission adopted two communications setting out key orientations in the fields of humanitarian and development policy in 2001. The first deals with the issue of linking relief, rehabilitation

and development (LRRD). It contains a series of commitments and measures designed to facilitate the establishment of "transition" strategies between emergency aid, rehabilitation and development. The second communication reflects thinking on the evolution of the Commission's relations with United Nations agencies. In 2001, this cooperation was given practical expression in a continuation of the strategic dialogue begun in 2000 and in the allocation by ECHO to UN agencies of 26.5% of its overall budget (20% in 2000).

As regards relations with our NGO partners, ECHO continued to develop the dialogue in the framework of the development of a quality partnership. Improved project management tools were introduced to ensure better evaluation of current operations and to provide NGOs with regular assessments of the results obtained. The adoption of a new Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) in 2002 will be an important step in this process.

## A STRENGTHENED CAPACITY TO RESPOND TO EMERGENCIES

Since June 2001, the Commission has been able to make use of simplified decision-making procedures enabling it to react almost immediately to new emergencies. The new "primary emergency" instrument involves the adoption of financing decisions within very strict deadlines of between 24 and 72 hours after the beginning of the crisis. The funds are channelled to partners who implement the operations and the aid is mobilised on the ground extremely rapidly. During the year, ECHO took primary emergency decisions to help meet the immediate needs of victims of an earthquake in Peru, air strikes in Afghanistan, a hurricane which struck Belize and floods in Algeria.

## THE REFORM PROCESS IS UNDER WAY

The establishment of these new decision-making procedures should be seen in the context of the wider process of institutional, administrative and financial reform being undertaken by the Commission. During 2001, the main developments in this context were the institution of a new system of internal management and financial control, the rationalisation and simplification of procedures, the development of management and operational follow-up tools designed to obtain a better measurement of quality and results of activities, and the commencement of work on revising the FPA.

***2001 was, once again, a year characterised by unforeseen emergencies requiring rapid and thorough responses. For ECHO, managing the unexpected means maintaining a constant capacity to respond to the immediate needs of those who are suffering. More than ever before, we must be in a position to supply concrete and adequate support to the victims of the world's crises.***

**Costanza Adinolfi**  
Director of ECHO - February 2002

## January

### NGOs SUSPEND OPERATIONS IN CHECHNYA

NGOs, including ECHO partners, announce on 10 January that they are suspending operations in Chechnya until further notice, in the wake of the abduction of an expatriate aid worker.

### EARTHQUAKE IN EL SALVADOR

More than 800 people die when an earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale strikes El Salvador on 13 January. Many others are injured or made homeless and altogether, a million people are affected by the disaster.

### DEATH OF LAURENT KABILA

Laurent Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), is assassinated on 16 January. His son, Joseph Kabila, who succeeds him, raises early hopes of progress towards ending the long-running crisis in DRC, promising fresh efforts to bring peace and to hold free and fair elections.

### EARTHQUAKE IN GUJARAT, INDIA

On 26 January, an earthquake of magnitude 7.9 devastates large areas of Gujarat in north-west India. More than 20,000 people are killed, 55,000 are injured and about half a million are made homeless.

## February

### 4,000 CHILD SOLDIERS DEMOBILISED IN SUDAN AND UGANDA

In what is seen as a significant breakthrough in the struggle to protect the rights of children in war-afflicted regions, some 4,000 former child soldiers are demobilised over a three week period in Sudan and Uganda.

### FLOODS IN MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique is struck by serious flooding for the second year in succession. More than 320,000 people are affected, with many forced to take refuge in temporary camps.

### RESUMPTION OF HUMANITARIAN AID TO CHECHNYA

Despite continuing obstructions put in the way of aid agencies attempting to deliver aid to victims of the Chechnya conflict, ECHO and its partners resume humanitarian operations in an effort to relieve the extreme suffering of the population.

### EL SALVADOR HIT BY NEW EARTHQUAKE

An earthquake measuring 6.6 on the Richter scale strikes El Salvador on 13 February, exactly a month after the previous earthquake. Several hundred deaths are reported as well as extensive new damage.

## March

### CONFLICT IN FYROM (MACEDONIA)

Fighting spreads in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as government forces attempt to dislodge ethnic Albanian rebels who have seized control in a number of areas.

### GEORGIA-ABKHAZIA AGREEMENT

Representatives of the Georgian government and the break-away region of Abkhazia sign an agreement pledging not to use force against each other and to work for the return of people displaced during the civil war in the early 1990s.

## April

### MENINGITIS IN BURKINA FASO AND CHAD

More than 4000 people are reported to have contracted meningitis in the latest outbreak to affect Burkina Faso, Chad and neighbouring countries. The death toll reaches 430.



JUAN PEREZ (ECHO)

Waiting for the skies to clear in Congo (DRC).

*Hopes of an end to the country's long-running crisis are raised when Joseph Kabila becomes President, following the assassination of his father.*

## May

### MITCHELL REPORT RAISES HOPES

The publication of a report by former US Senator, George Mitchell, raises hopes for an end to the violence in the Palestinian Territories. Broadly welcomed by both sides, the report makes a series of recommendations aimed at getting the peace process back on track.

### REFUGEES MOVED AWAY FROM FIGHTING IN GUINEA

After months of fighting and displacement, tens of thousands of refugees are transferred away from the embattled border zones of south-western Guinea to safe sites further inland.

## June

### MILOSEVIC EXTRADITED

Following his arrest by Yugoslav authorities in March, Slobodan Milosevic, the former President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, is extradited to the Hague to stand trial for war crimes.

### PERU EARTHQUAKE

A 6.7 magnitude earthquake, lasting more than 60 seconds, strikes southern Peru on 23 June. 150 people are reported killed, with several thousand more injured. Up to 60,000 homes are destroyed or damaged.

### FLOODS IN CHINA

Extreme weather conditions provoke floods in southern, central and eastern areas of China. More than 240 people die and at least 130,000 people have to be evacuated from their homes.

### FLOODS IN INDIA AND BHUTAN

More than 400 people die and at least 15 million are made homeless as a result of floods in north-eastern India and Bhutan. The Indian state of Orissa is particularly badly hit.

## August

### PEACE PACT IN FYROM

After six months of fierce clashes, the government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) signs a peace accord with ethnic Albanian rebels. The rebels agree to disarm in return for greater recognition of ethnic Albanian rights. NATO troops are employed to supervise the disarmament process.

### DROUGHT AND FLOODS IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Food shortages develop in Central America as drought and serious flooding result in widespread crop destruction.

### DROUGHT IN TAJIKISTAN

Following a second successive year of devastating drought, the Red Cross/Red Crescent report that up to a million people are facing starvation in Tajikistan.

## September

### TERRORIST ATTACKS IN THE USA

Two hijacked passenger aircraft on long-haul US domestic routes are flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York, causing both buildings to collapse. Almost three thousand people die in the attack, making this the most lethal terrorist action of modern times. Almost two hundred others are killed in a simultaneous strike on the Pentagon in Washington while everyone on board a fourth hijacked airliner perishes when it crashes in open countryside in Pennsylvania.

Attributed to members of the extremist al-Qaeda network, the attacks set in train a series of events elsewhere in the world with major humanitarian consequences. The USA, supported by a broad-based coalition of nations, declares war on terrorism and international attention rapidly turns to Afghanistan where al-Qaeda fighters are operating freely under the Taliban regime. Efforts to restore peace in the Palestinian Territories also suffer a serious setback, with renewed violent confrontations between Israeli forces and Palestinians.



Supplementary food rations for the children of Orissa. *The Indian state is struck by devastating floods in July.*

FRANÇOISE JACOB, ECHO



**CALL TO CHECHEN FIGHTERS TO DISARM**

Russian President, Vladimir Putin, calls on Chechen rebels to lay down their arms within 72 hours to avoid being dubbed "terrorists" in the aftermath of September 11. There is no mass surrender and renewed fighting is reported.

**October**

**UN HELICOPTER SHOT DOWN OVER ABKHAZIA**

Nine people, including five United Nations observers, are killed when their helicopter is shot down over the breakway region of Abkhazia, North-West Georgia.

**BELIZE STRUCK BY HURRICANE**

Up to 10,000 people lose their homes when Hurricane Iris strikes Belize.

**BOMBING OF AFGHANISTAN BEGINS**

Following the refusal of the Taliban authorities to hand over members of the al-Qaeda network, US and British aircraft begin bombing raids on Afghanistan. The military action prompts a new wave of internal displacement and a flow of refugees to neighbouring countries, notably Pakistan and Iran.

**FLOODS IN THE MEKONG DELTA**

Higher than usual monsoon rains cause the Mekong River, which runs through Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam, to burst its banks. At least 6.5 million people are affected, with Cambodia and Vietnam worst hit.

**FLOODS IN NORTH KOREA**

More than 80 people die and some 10,000 are made homeless following torrential rains and a tidal wave in the North Korean coastal province of Kangwon.

**November**

**NEW PARLIAMENT FOR KOSOVO**

Voters go to the polls in Kosovo to choose a new 120-member parliament. The assembly is immediately deadlocked over the election of a President.

**FLOODS IN ALGERIA**

Almost 750 people die and many others lose their homes in devastating floods which strike Algiers and a number of coastal regions of Algeria.

**KABUL FALLS TO NORTHERN ALLIANCE**

A month after the start of the US-led bombing campaign, the Afghan capital, Kabul, falls to the forces of the opposition Northern Alliance.

**TYPHOON HITS THE PHILIPPINES AND VIETNAM**

Several hundred people are killed in landslides and flash floods when typhoon "Lingling" strikes the southern Philippines. Vietnam is also badly affected by the storm.

**CARIBBEAN STRUCK BY HURRICANE MICHELLE**

With wind speeds of up to 220 kilometres an hour, Hurricane Michelle brings torrential rain and flooding to Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua and Cuba.

**CHECHNYA TALKS**

The Russian government and Chechen separatists hold brief talks in a first attempt at dialogue after two years of conflict.

**December**

**POLISARIO RELEASES MOROCCAN POWS**

The Polisario movement, fighting for the independence of Western Sahara, releases 115 Moroccan prisoners of war, including a number who have been held in captivity for more than 25 years.

**PLIGHT OF IDPs IN NORTHERN CAUCASUS**

With insecurity and instability persisting in Chechnya and a political settlement of the conflict still out of reach, Chechen IDPs in the Northern Caucasus (notably in Ingushetia) enter their third winter in displacement. Living in difficult conditions in tent camps, spontaneous settlements or with host families, they await the restoration of conditions that would allow them to return home.

**ATTACK ON INDIAN PARLIAMENT**

Twelve people are killed in an unprecedented suicide attack mounted by gunmen on the Indian Parliament. The incident seriously heightens tensions between India and Pakistan (both nuclear powers) following allegations that the perpetrators were Pakistani-based supporters of Kashmir independence.

**INTERIM GOVERNMENT IN AFGHANISTAN**

Kandahar, the last Taliban stronghold in southern Afghanistan, falls to opposition forces. Al Qaeda bases in the Bora Bora hills are also seized but the group's leader, Osama bin Laden, continues to evade capture.

In Bonn, representatives of Afghan groups meet to discuss the future government of their country. The talks lead to the formation of a new interim administration led by Hamid Karzai. Mr Karzai assumes office at a ceremony in Kabul on 22 December.

**SUCCESSFUL DISARMAMENT PROCESS IN SIERRA LEONE**

As the UN-supervised disarmament and demobilisation process draws to a close, UNAMSIL reports that 42,167 fighters have handed in their weapons since the beginning of the year. The figure is far higher than was initially anticipated.



POUL NIELSON

Fording a river on the route from Bagram air base to Kabul.

The Afghan capital falls to Northern Alliance forces in November.

# The ICRC's orthopaedic project in Afghanistan

alberto cairo\*

With the passage of time, the Afghanistan Orthopaedic Project run by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has changed quite a bit. We now have six centres, which provide social reintegration as well as physical rehabilitation. Though they were set up in 1988 solely to give new limbs to the war-wounded, the centres opened their doors in 1994 to anyone with a motor disability, whatever the cause. So far, they have produced 40,000 upper and lower limbs and 30,000 orthoses, including braces, corsets and orthopaedic shoes. And that's not counting the crutches and wheelchairs, or the 350,000 physiotherapy sessions.

But it's not enough. Disabled people need a lot more than a plastic leg, or to learn to walk. They have to get back into society, find a role, find dignity. In Afghanistan, where life is hard for everyone, they need help more than most. What kind of help? Schooling, and work, to give them a job. Or a loan to start up a small business. Difficult - but not impossible.

## AKBAR, MAFUS AND RASUL INC.

When I'm in the Khair Khana quarter, I often visit the shop belonging to three cousins called Akbar, Mafus and Rasul.

Their "shop" is actually just a barrow, stocked with cigarettes, matches, biscuits, sweets and nasuar, the cheap green muck so many people stick under their tongues to dull their senses a bit. Everything, including the barrow, was bought with a micro-loan. They make a strange group: Akbar, blind from birth, is the brains, Rasul and Mafus, amputees, are the arms. Arms that have to be watched, as they're not very wide-awake types. But they all need each other, and complement one another, and the system works. Today they complain that business is bad. Maybe it's true. But you can see that they're happy. And when I think of what it took to persuade them to accept the loan!

A little over a year ago they came to ask for a gift of money, for charity. "Why don't the three of you think up some small business for yourselves instead, that you could set up with a loan of 100 dollars maximum, at zero interest, repayable in 18 monthly instalments? You could choose whatever kind of work you liked." For Rasul and Mafus this is a foreign language. Akbar, the blind lad, cottons on immediately: "I've nothing to give as a guarantee." "Not necessary - your word will do." "But what if I lose everything?" "Why should you?"

We'll advise you and help you not to make mistakes. Hundreds of people like you have already managed it."

A week later he submits his project with a list of the merchandise that needs to be bought. He has chosen a corner at a crossroads. It is a good spot with lots of people passing by - he can tell by the noise. But he's afraid, and decides to start



*A good spot to set up shop?*

ECHO

Street traders on one of Kabul's main thoroughfares.



## STARTING FROM SCRATCH

off with just 40 dollars. We go to his home to talk to him. We want his whole family to know about the loan. It's best to involve everyone. His mother is a laundress, and a beggar when she has to be, 40 years old perhaps, and looking 60. There are three or four younger siblings. The father is long dead. Their home is one room, appalling. Still, take heart: 40 dollars, roughly two to be refunded every month, the rest is all for you and Rasul and Mafus. Who still don't really understand much.

The first few days are hard. Akbar can't stay on his own at his "pitch". Rasul has to keep an eye out to make sure that passers-by don't steal and that Mafus doesn't eat the merchandise. Akbar pricks up his ears to hear if someone is coming. He tells Mafus to keep on talking to make sure his mouth isn't full. They do sell, but they make a lot of losses. Making an exception to the rule that says no second loans until the first one has been fully repaid, we add another 30 dollars. A miracle: sales take off. Mafus and Rasul learn a little, and the repayments are made promptly. We continue to supervise them with weekly visits. Quarrelsome but united,

they're like three guards, a little lost-looking, standing over their treasure: the pride of being in business. And today, businessmen all, they tell me about their plan to buy four sheep with their next loan. Steady on there - first finish paying back this one. But who am I to rein in their galloping dreams?

**LEARNING**

For every child in every country, education is the future. Whenever parents bring us their disabled offspring, we ask "Is your child going to school? Have you thought about what he or she will do when you're old?" They generally reply that school is too far away and that books and jotters are dear. Which is true. And if they have to choose, it's the healthy children they send to school. "But look, it's the disabled one who's going to need it most." Some jobs will be unavailable to them. Heavy labour will be out. And Afghanistan is a place where work is hard and exhausting. Besides their muscles, disabled children need above all to develop their brains. All the medical staff in the orthopaedic centre are actively involved in the programme. As they themselves are amputees, or paraplegics, or have suffered from polio, they know from their own experience how useful it is. And it's during treatment that we get a chance to get to know the patients and their families. We discuss, suggest, advise. Many parents agree enthusiastically. "If you sign him on in the public school we'll give him books and jotters for the whole year. Every four months he'll do a small exam to see whether he's learning. But we'll check with the teacher that he goes to school every day." And that his schoolmates don't leave him out of things. So far, almost 400 little boys have received help. Not many little girls, partly because it was forbidden under the Taliban. But by dint of a thousand subterfuges, and being very discreet, we manage to help them too. Now some even speak English and know how to use a computer.

**RAUF THE PUPIL**

For many disabled children, though, school is inaccessible. Like Rauf, aged 10, who is paraplegic. The streets are one long hole, steps are steep, doors are narrow. Not a single toilet. He has good arms, but is useless from the waist down. An accident four months ago. They did a pointless operation. We had tried to advise against it. And it cost them so much. With the leg braces, he can stand up, but only if he leans against something. He always looks worried. Today he's with his father, who it was hard to tell that there was no cure. Rather like killing him. In a few days Rauf will be discharged. He will be confined to the house, or at best the balcony, if he has one, with nothing to look forward to. That's what the education programme is for. And this is where Kabir comes in - a



ECHO

Before Rauf's accident, he was used to attending classes with up to 70 children in them. Sadly, for many disabled children in Afghanistan, schools are inaccessible.

## STARTING FROM SCRATCH

physiotherapist, who is principal of the programme. "Would you like to study?" "Yes", looking wide-eyed at his father who says, with pride and regret, "He used to be first in the class." "Can you read and write?" "I used to be in the fourth grade." And he adds sadly: "All the classrooms are on the first floor". "A teacher will come to you, to your home." "Just for me?" He can hardly believe it, used as he is to classes with up to 70 pupils. "Today we'll do the exam to see what class we should put you in." Comical and endearing: Kabir, who is stout, sways on his crutches. Rauf, tiny, is swallowed up by the wheelchair. They talk. Rauf laughs. The exam shows he'd be best off starting again in the third grade. He'll begin on Saturday - that will give Kabir time to talk to the teacher. Who will be Munir, another person with a disability who is unemployed. Two birds with one stone: Rauf, paraplegic, will learn and prepare himself for a slightly better future. Munir, amputee-cum-teacher, will have a wage. When Rauf leaves the centre with his father, he has treasure with him: his school bag, complete with books, jotters, ball-point pens and coloured pencils. He clasps it tightly. At home he'll show it proudly to everyone, waiting impatiently for Saturday when he can say "Salaam mahalem" - "Good morning, teacher". And start putting the pieces back together to build his precarious future.

**KABIR THE ACADEMIC**

For Kabir, the principal, it was also hard to start living again after losing a leg. Being disabled is the motivation that makes him the driving force behind the education programme. He used to be a university lecturer and a member of the Afghan Academy of Sciences. He lived and studied abroad for a number of years. Then he came home. In 1994 his house was hit by a missile. Luckily, he was alone - his wife and two children were in the village. No one knows how he managed to get down six flights of stairs on his own. His leg was in pieces. At the hospital he refused amputation and begged them to let him die - or to help him die. Instead, the surgeon authorised the amputation, forging his signature, and against his will he survived. In Kabul it was civil war, with shells raining down all over the place. And not a journalist in sight - everyone had forgotten about Afghanistan. Red Cross ambulances rushed everywhere to replenish medical stocks in the hospitals. Which were bursting at the seams - two patients to a bed. Kabir left the hospital a broken man. He turned up at the orthopaedic hospital without conviction, simply because he had been told to come, that we would give him a leg. It was hard for us too. We had left the machinery for making the prostheses at the other side of the city, which was cut in two by the front line, which we had to cross every day. On one side the Tajiks were arresting the Hazara, and on the

other side, vice versa. We had friends and clients in both factions, so we were allowed to cross over. Kabir came with us, indifferent to everything. There was no doubt he was still hoping to die. "I don't want to see my family, and I don't want them to see me like this." He says little. He's polite, but he never smiles. He learns to walk with the prostheses. We need a new physiotherapist, whom we'd train. I offer him the job. He's not interested. I push. I tell him we need him, that it's he who would be helping me. He agrees so as not to offend me. Shock therapy - we leave him no time for thinking, we keep him occupied. The whole time. One day he asks me about my country. He quotes Gramsci, he criticizes Stalin and Togliatti, about whom he clearly knows more than I do. See - we're getting there, we're getting there... We continue to keep him under pressure. He learns fast. He knows how to get patients to listen to him, how to be convincing and authoritative. And finally, one day, he talks about his home for the first time. He talks about repairing it. And calling his wife and children back. I can see that we're nearly there. One more little push - he used to be a teacher, a teacher he must become again. We have around 40 instructors. They're willing, but a bit at sea. And I can't help them - it's not my culture, it's not my school. I need to be guided myself. I need a principal. He accepts. Now we really are there. Kabir has come to life again - committed, earnest, passionate. He loves teaching - you can see it, it's his life. He also quite likes showing off what he knows, which is a fair amount. As a physiotherapist, he works every day with the surgeon who forged his signature. I think he's grateful to him now.

*\* Alberto Cairo has spent the last ten years in Afghanistan as head of the ICRC's orthopaedic project*

**THE ECHO-RED CROSS PARTNERSHIP**

**ECHO has a long-standing and fruitful partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). In 2000 and 2001 it provided a total of almost €60 million in funding for ICRC programmes in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Congo (DRC), Colombia and numerous other crisis zones. ECHO is also an important partner of other organisations in the Red Cross "family" (the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and national Red Cross organisations)**

**POLICY ASPECTS**

Important progress was made during 2001 in clarifying ECHO's role as an aid donor, defining key concepts and methodologies, achieving a more effective partnership with the United Nations and implementing administrative reforms.

ECHO's role vis-à-vis other Community external relations instruments was further clarified in respect of the so-called "transition gap" between relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD). As outlined in the Commission Communication on LRRD published in April, ECHO will focus more on its core mandate – which is to provide immediate life saving relief in emergencies - while other Commission services should increase their efforts to bridge the gap from the other side. To enhance transparency and predictability in this area, ECHO prepared a working paper in December 2001 clarifying its general criteria for phase-outs or hand-overs. The paper established a two-step process: (1) defining the point that should trigger the transition from humanitarian assistance to rehabilitation and development and (2) looking at the main contextual factors that have an impact on the modus operandi for phase-outs.

ECHO also developed a methodology to obtain a better definition of forgotten crises. These include unstable post-crisis situations where other donors may be reluctant to become involved in short-term rehabilitation measures. The identification is based on a qualitative desk assessment, complemented by an analysis of media reporting and of the extent to which needs have been covered by other donors. The crises identified as most "forgotten" in 2001 were Angola, Western Sahara and the Northern Caucasus (Chechnya). In line with its strategic approach, ECHO provided considerable funding for the victims of these crises. With the aim of focusing its activities more effectively on areas

of greatest humanitarian need, ECHO established a methodology for assessing needs, involving an analysis of the relevant indicators (vulnerability, number of refugees/IDPs, mortality rates etc.) This planning tool provides cross-country comparisons to complement the in-depth analyses of ECHO country desk officers and experts, partners in the field and other donors. It contains statistical data on the critical indicators of humanitarian need for some 130 countries. Using this methodology, ECHO is able to demonstrate that the bulk of its operations do, in fact, target areas of greatest need.

The conceptual framework for a more effective partnership with the United Nations was set out in a Commission Communication issued in May. ECHO's aim, in funding UN operations, is to focus on activities where the latter has either a proven track record or a comparative advantage in providing a specific humanitarian service. In 2001, the proportion of overall ECHO funding channelled through UN agencies rose to 26.5% (20% in 2000). ECHO participated in the 2002 CAP (Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeals) field workshops run by the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) during the summer. It also held a series of meetings with UN counterparts, both in the field and at headquarters level, through the Strategic Programming Dialogue meetings in December.

As part of the wider reform effort, ECHO continued to implement the recommendations of the evaluation carried out in 1999. The main focus was on:

- restructuring ECHO's internal organisation and working methods, in particular, decision-making procedures;
- improving the performance of ECHO's operations, and;
- developing instruments to measure output and results.

ECHO also initiated a review of its internal procedures with the aim of speeding up decision-making while maintaining an adequate level of control. In this context, measures adopted by the Commission in November 2000 on the simplification of procedures made it possible for ECHO to introduce a fast-track decision-making procedure to respond to sudden onset crises (see page 12).

Reliable information is clearly important to provide early warning of impending crises, where possible, and to ensure a rapid and adequate response. ECHO has therefore developed a web-based crisis information system which provides daily updates on both natural and man-made disasters. Together with the Commission's Joint Research Centre, ECHO also launched the Digital Map Archive (DMA) project which will provide cartographic material and support tools based on geographical information systems (GIS). Both of these instruments have been designed to facilitate ECHO's day-to-day activities as well as its planning processes.

Additionally, ECHO began to develop new local information resources through the so-called HOLIS project ("Humanitarian Office Local Information System"). This will integrate existing information systems, such as ECHO's contract database (HOPE), with sophisticated management systems currently being developed.



ECHO

Commissioner Nielson visiting a small metalworking business during a tour of ECHO-supported projects in Kosovo. The ECHO office in Pristina was closed at the end of 2001 as humanitarian assistance was succeeded by rehabilitation and development programmes.



## PARTNERSHIP

ECHO undertook a wide consultation exercise involving signatory organisations of the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA), in order to achieve an in-depth revision of the Agreement. The revision has been centred fundamentally on the idea of management of "quality in humanitarian aid". The aim was to shift the emphasis from the control of resources towards planning of objectives and results. This revision is the second stage in a process designed to adjust the FPA to the objectives established by the Commission in its 1999 Communication entitled "Evaluation and future of Community humanitarian activities". During 2001, ECHO signed 27 new partnership agreements, bringing the total number of partners to 208. In addition, 300 partnership candidate files were closed and 91 new applications were admitted for examination.

## FINANCES AND AUDIT

ECHO's response to humanitarian crises in 2001 was channelled through 107 funding decisions totalling €543.7 million. Due to a larger than expected number of emergencies during the year, including the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the USA on September 11, ECHO had to call on the emergency aid reserve for an additional €50 million in commitment appropriations. 898 operational contracts were signed (including 143 contracts to implement 2000 decisions). The rate of budget implementation in terms of commitment appropriations was 100%.

In 2001, ECHO's external audit function carried out 21 audits and controls at the headquarters of partner organisations receiving ECHO funding and of applicants for partnership. The external audit team also put more emphasis on carrying out audits in the field (8 in 2001) and the aim is to boost this figure to around 30 annually.

During the year, ECHO launched an open tender procedure to select a firm of auditors, with a view to increasing the frequency of audit controls.

The overall audit findings for 2001 reveal a similar pattern to previous years. Although, at their headquarters, ECHO's partners generally adhere to certain minimum standards of financial control and accounting, there is still room for improvement in a number of areas. In particular, many partners could enhance the quality of financial information available for internal decision-making. In general, the level of financial control and accounting between headquarters and field offices could also be improved.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

ECHO's information and communication activities during 2001 reflected the new strategy adopted the previous year with its emphasis on defining target audiences more clearly, developing the use of new web-based techniques, adopting more structured objectives and establishing closer links between ECHO headquarters and field offices. The outcome of this approach, in concrete terms, included the production of more focused publications responding to a demand for specific information, and the elaboration of local communication plans providing a framework for coherent and effective information action at field level. ECHO also restructured its website to boost the transparency of its actions and provide additional information tools for its operational partners.

Two important documents provided the basis for forward thinking in the information/communication sphere. The first was the outcome of an independent evaluation commissioned by ECHO into a number of activities financed under its Grant Facility, including awareness-raising projects. The evaluator concluded that the grants were 'highly effective' but nonetheless made recommendations to deal with certain shortcomings identified in the system. These included improved strategic planning, more focused priorities and closer coordination with operational and field staff. The second document reported the results of an EU-wide opinion poll carried out early in 2001 by Eurobarometer, which contained a series of questions provided by ECHO. The aim was to gauge the level of public knowledge of ECHO and of humanitarian issues more generally, and to obtain a better understanding of European attitudes in this area. The poll revealed considerable support for the principle of European humanitarian assistance but relatively low recognition levels for the European Commission as a key humanitarian actor. It also highlighted a desire among respondents for more information about how the system works and about the concrete results of ECHO's interventions.

The detailed conclusions of both the evaluation and the Eurobarometer poll are being integrated into ECHO's continuing efforts to maximise the impact of its information and communication activities.

During 2001, ECHO funded a range of information and communication actions. Publications included the Annual Review, the quarterly newsletter "ECHO News", an updated version of the



UNHCR/C. SATTBERGER

**Displaced children in a camp in Angola.**

*A better definition of forgotten crises enables ECHO to focus more effectively on areas of greatest need.*

brochure "ECHO at a glance" and leaflets on Sierra Leone, Guinea, Central America, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan (two versions) and Children at War. The issue of Child Soldiers was also highlighted in October at a conference in Brussels organised with VOICE (Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies) with the collaboration of the Save the Children Fund (UK).

### EVALUATION

ECHO's evaluation programme for 2001 again involved a mixture of "ex post" and "ex ante" assessments. At the country programme level, there were evaluations for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Timor and the Western Sahara (refugees in Algeria).

There was also a global assessment of subsidies provided by ECHO under its Grant Facility (covering information, training and studies). An initial revision of the Grant Facility procedures has already been made in line with the recommendations contained in the report.

An evaluation of contracts with UNHCR in selected countries was almost complete by the end of the year. This exercise, carried out with the full cooperation of the UN agency, is designed to enhance the ECHO/HCR partnership.

Summaries of evaluation reports will now progressively be made available on the ECHO website.

In an attempt to widen the pool of proven evaluators of humanitarian aid, ECHO published on the Web and in the Official Journal a call for expressions of interest from qualified firms and individuals. Following vetting by a committee, the names of successful applicants are added to the list of approved evaluators. The list is used when drawing up a restricted call for tender for each evaluation.

### PREVENTION, PREPAREDNESS AND RELIEF MOBILISATION

The DIPECHO programme was set up to provide funding for disaster preparedness activities in a regional context. The implementation of two DIPECHO Action Plans approved in 2000 (for South-East Asia and Central America) continued during 2001.

In July, the DIPECHO programme was extended to South Asia for the first time with a plan totalling €3.2 million. Notwithstanding the Gujarat earthquake, the focus of the plan is on flooding, as this is the main natural hazard affecting the region. The aim is to enhance the response capacity of communities by ensuring they are better prepared and by promoting a culture of prevention. One of the best ways of doing this is through training - beginning at the village level, working through local prevention committees and ensuring the involvement of women and young people in particular. Early warning systems and small demonstration projects such as reforestation, backed up by training, can also achieve a lot by raising awareness at the level of both communities and the authorities.

In December, the Commission approved its second DIPECHO Plan for the Andean Community (€1.8 million) which takes account of the recommendations made in the evaluation of the first plan. In the absence of regional cooperation among Andean countries, ECHO is concentrating on local projects. These include support for local civil defence committees and health centres, capacity-building for civil society organisations, awareness-raising and small-scale mitigation works.

A third Action Plan for €3 million was launched for the Caribbean region (including Cuba where €900,000 has been earmarked). The main focus of this phase is flooding, with an emphasis on micro-projects delivering concrete results. Particular attention is also being paid to the regional dimension. In this context, ECHO is supporting strengthened coordination and collaboration among the countries of the region through an information network and database dedicated to natural disasters. For Cuba, earthquake preparedness is included.

### TRAINING AND STUDIES

Thirty-seven applications were received in 2001 for funding under ECHO's grant facility for training, studies and networks in the humanitarian field. The budget for this action was €1.8 million. In the training field, projects selected for support included courses on security and safety management, and on professional capacity building. Studies on methods to measure humanitarian needs and on improving the speed and efficiency of the humanitarian response in crisis situations were among the research projects supported. Funds were also made available again for the network on humanitarian assistance (NOHA), which offers a one-year multi-disciplinary post-graduate diploma through eight participating universities. Students follow a curriculum which offers a comprehensive overview of the humanitarian aid environment. Their studies are complemented by an internship either in a humanitarian organisation or in ECHO. In 2001, ECHO contributed €270,000 to the coordination costs of the network.



CARE

ECHO adopted a disaster-preparedness and prevention plan for South Asia. Flooding, as shown here in Bangladesh, is the main natural hazard affecting the region.

# A new instrument for speedy intervention in “sudden onset” crises



OXFAM

The primary emergency procedure was used for the first time in June, to supply immediate aid to victims of the Peru earthquake. Pictured here are temporary shelters provided for people whose homes were destroyed.

The time saved – between three and five days – may appear modest, but it can be the difference between life and death for the survivors of a sudden catastrophe who are likely to be at their most vulnerable in very early stages of the crisis. Between June and December, the new procedure was used on four occasions to provide immediate assistance in Peru (earthquake), Belize (tropical storm), Algeria (floods) and Afghanistan (escalation of the war).

**On 13 June 2001, a new system was established enabling the Humanitarian Aid Office to respond even more speedily to humanitarian crises. This complements the existing decision-making instruments available to ECHO. Though always quick to react, through emergency decisions, the Commission did not have an immediate response capability when faced with sudden events such as earthquakes, floods or new outbreaks of fighting.**

Decisions can now be taken to provide initial financing of up to €3 million per crisis for a maximum of three months. The formalities, which have been reduced to a minimum, must be completed within 72 hours of the event which has prompted the decision to use the new system. The aid is delivered by partner organisations with expertise in the fast despatch of emergency relief supplies.

## KEY ELEMENTS OF A PRIMARY EMERGENCY DECISION

- simplified procedure allowing funds (up to €3 million) to be released within 48 hours for humanitarian relief operations
- action checklist for all ECHO duty officers, including emergency contact numbers of partners and other key agencies, to ensure coverage 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- decision-making power delegated to ECHO Director
- fast-track budgetary procedure implemented by ECHO and the Commission's financial services
- accelerated dispatch of urgent relief supplies (such as shelter, blankets, clean water, essential medicines)
- concrete help for victims when they are at their most vulnerable



# GLOBAL REACH

## AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND IRAN

Funding -  
€54.68 million

During 2001, humanitarian aid provided by ECHO benefited some seven million people affected by the crisis in Afghanistan. €23.4 million was allocated prior to September 11 to assist displaced people (medico-nutritional projects, shelter construction, and water/sanitation in camps) and resident populations in rural areas (food-related actions) in response to the ongoing drought.

After 11 September, a further €31.28 million was provided, using a progressive strategy, in five financing decisions. Funds were channelled through a range of NGOs and international agencies for continued food deliveries to drought-affected people, basic assistance for IDPs, medical care for war casualties and victims of mine accidents, inputs for people returning to their home areas (farming tools, seeds and shelter materials), mine and unexploded bomb clearance operations, and training in the disposal of new types of ordnance used by the coalition forces. ECHO also helped to fund logistics including World Food Programme (WFP) lorries and telecommunications, and air transport for NGO staff and humanitarian cargoes. In addition, resources were allocated for the reopening of an ECHO office in Kabul. Finally, the influx of humanitarian organisations required, more than ever, good coordination between the various actors as well as an effective humanitarian information management system, and ECHO provided support to help meet these objectives.

Despite the absence of the expatriate aid workers from NGOs and international agencies between September and November, most ongoing projects in Afghanistan continued thanks to the dedication and competence of local staff. During this period, expatriate staff redeployed in neighbouring countries, establishing new bases to ensure the continuity of a humanitarian aid pipe-line.

## ALGERIA

Funding -  
€0.759 million

ECHO is phasing out its operations in this country but in November, it took a primary emergency decision for €758,800 to assist the victims of serious flooding which claimed hundreds of lives and caused widespread damage.

## ANGOLA

Funding -  
€9 million

Following some initial positive results in 2000, there was a general expectation at the start of 2001 that conditions would improve in Angola with many vulnerable populations achieving food security. This optimism proved unfounded, however, as the civil war continued and overall humanitarian conditions deteriorated. 60% of areas hosting IDPs still had no access to humanitarian assistance and the UN estimated that at least 500,000 Angolans were in desperate need of food. Dangerous conditions made it difficult for humanitarian organisations to operate in many areas, preventing them from gaining access to people who most needed help.

Despite these difficulties, ECHO continued its relief programme in 2001, concentrating on short-term

## BELARUS, MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE

Funding -  
€1.9 million

emergency interventions in favour of the most vulnerable groups. Operations worth €9 million were supported covering health, nutrition, emergency relief, protection and air transport (to ensure the supply of goods to humanitarian projects).

ECHO completed its phasing-out in these three eastern European countries with aid amounting to €1.9 million. It targeted the most vulnerable groups in society, notably the elderly and disabled, large families and children in institutions. Since the three countries face structural problems rather than a general humanitarian crisis, ECHO has made efforts to ensure a smooth handover to other, more development-oriented Commission instruments (for example, the Food Aid/Food Security programme and TACIS), which are better suited to providing sustainable solutions for these countries.

## BELIZE

Funding -  
€0.5 million

Up to 10,000 people were made homeless in Belize in October when Hurricane Iris struck. ECHO took a primary emergency decision for €0.5 million to provide the victims with drinking water, food, shelter and fuel.

## BOLIVIA AND PARAGUAY

Funding -  
€1.95 million

Exceptionally heavy rains in Bolivia between December 2000 and March 2001 led to widespread flooding. An estimated 53,000 people were badly affected, including some in areas which had previously endured a serious drought. In Paraguay, the main problem was a prolonged drought which reduced the availability of drinking water and hit livestock production in many areas.

ECHO funded emergency relief for up to 18,500 rural families who were particularly badly affected by one or other of these weather phenomena. Assistance provided included food, water, seeds, medical care, and training in disaster preparedness.

## BURKINA FASO AND CHAD

Funding -  
€2.55 million

There was a serious outbreak of meningitis in Burkina Faso and Chad with more than 4,000 cases recorded by April, including 430 deaths. ECHO responded by allocating €1.6 million in emergency aid for extensive vaccination campaigns covering more than 1.3 million people.

In June, ECHO provided emergency food aid worth €950,000 to vulnerable groups and communities affected by drought in Chad.

**BURUNDI**

Funding -  
€20 million

Since 1993, Burundi has been gripped by civil war which has left the population very vulnerable. The conflict, mainly political in nature with a strong ethnic component, opposes the Tutsi and the Hutu, some of which have formed armed groups. In August 2000, a peace agreement was signed by the main political forces in Burundi with the exception of the two armed rebel groups. A transitional government was set up on 1 November 2001. However, fighting continued in the absence of a cease-fire, and the outlook for negotiations by the end of the year remained bleak. Burundi was also directly affected by the crisis in neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The crisis has provoked major internal population displacements and half a million Burundians have fled to Tanzania. In Burundi, one million people are still considered very vulnerable and depend on humanitarian aid. An unprecedented malaria epidemic wrought havoc at the end of 2000 and the beginning of 2001 and this was followed by a major malnutrition crisis. ECHO and its partners addressed pressing humanitarian needs in the health, nutrition and food security sectors but major needs persisted as the security situation failed to improve.

**CAMBODIA**

Funding -  
€4.9 million

Although Cambodia is still one of the poorest countries in South-East Asia, progress in a number of provinces allowed for a shift from emergency aid to longer term development. ECHO therefore concentrated on interventions in remote areas, often newly opened to relief workers. Funding of €4.052 million was directed mainly at improving water and sanitation for 48,000 families and boosting access to basic health care for 45,000 families. The programmes included assistance to reintegrate refugees into Cambodian society and small-scale mine clearance.

ECHO also supported 25,000 families affected by drought with emergency support amounting to €0.848 million.

**CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC**

Funding -  
€1 million

An attempted coup in May, in the Central African Republic, led to serious violence in the capital, Bangui. An estimated 300 people were killed and 80,000 displaced. ECHO provided funding for food distribution, medical supplies and essential items, targeting the most needy, and for the rehabilitation of health centres damaged in the disturbances.



Peter Taylor, ECHO

**PROJECT FOCUS - TAJIKISTAN**

THERAPEUTIC FEEDING FOR CHILDREN

Tajikistan suffered a second consecutive year of drought – the worst to hit the country for 75 years. One tragic result was an increase in the already high levels of both chronic and acute child malnutrition. Part of ECHO's response to this humanitarian crisis was financial support for NGOs involved in therapeutic and supplementary feeding programmes.

One such partner is *Action Against Hunger* (AAH) who received a €350,000 grant for a 7-month operation in the south of the country. A comprehensive screening process identified around 7,000 moderately and severely malnourished under-fives who were then put on special feeding programmes. Around 85% were successfully treated. In order to reduce the future incidence of malnutrition, AAH provided health training to medical staff and mothers, and distributed high quality wheat seeds and fertilisers to 3,000 vulnerable households.

Child malnutrition levels remain alarmingly high in Tajikistan, so ECHO is continuing to fund this and similar operations in 2002.



ARCTIC OCEAN

**CHINA**  
Funding -  
€2.15 million

ECHO took two humanitarian decisions for China in response to natural disasters during 2001. Following typhoons and floods, which hit Guangxi province in July, targeted help was provided to particularly vulnerable groups such as victims of leprosy and isolated village communities. Later in the year, Inner Mongolia was struck by huge snowfalls having previously experienced serious drought. In this case, ECHO funding helped to cover the basic nutritional needs of nomadic herdsmen who were most seriously affected by these weather events.

**CUBA**  
Funding -  
€8 million

In Cuba, ECHO focused on the distribution of food, hygiene products, medicines and other basic essentials, and on short-term rehabilitation of social centres for vulnerable groups such as the elderly and disabled. It is now considered that development aid is more appropriate than short-term relief and ECHO has begun the process of phasing out. Its office in Cuba has been scheduled for closure during 2002.

**DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND PREVENTION (DIPECHO)**

Funding -  
€8 million

The DIPECHO programme was launched by ECHO in 1997 to help prepare populations in areas at risk from natural catastrophe and to support practical measures to reduce the risk. Funds are allocated for training, capacity-building, awareness-raising and early-warning projects as well the organisation of relief services. During 2001, the Commission took three decisions under this programme, for a total of €8 million (for details, see page 11).

**COLOMBIA**  
Funding -  
€10 million

ECHO's largest operation in Latin America is in Colombia, where internal conflict continued to give rise to significant humanitarian needs. In 2001, the situation worsened, despite the efforts of the government to arrange peace talks with the main guerrilla groups. According to independent estimates, the number of new IDPs exceeded the figure of 300,000 recorded in 2000.

ECHO's strategy is to provide emergency aid during and immediately following displacement, to offer post-emergency assistance including shelter, healthcare, sanitation and psycho-social support in the main reception areas, and to give specific support to the return and resettlement processes, where security conditions allow and institutional support is guaranteed. It is estimated that between 150,000 and 200,000 IDPs were assisted in the framework of the 2001 Global Plan.

Humanitarian aid was channelled through international organisations such as the UNHCR and European NGOs.

**ECHO FLIGHT**  
Funding -  
€8.4 million

ECHO Flight, based in Nairobi, Kenya, continued to provide air transport for humanitarian personnel working in crisis zones in the Horn of Africa. It was also used for the transport of essential humanitarian supplies. In December, a new weekly air service was launched between Nairobi and Goma in eastern Congo (DRC).

**EL SALVADOR**  
Funding -  
€10 million

In January and February, two successive high magnitude earthquakes brought death and destruction to El Salvador. 270,000 homes were either damaged or destroyed with an estimated quarter of the country's population directly affected. ECHO took two decisions to provide humanitarian aid. The first, for €2 million, was taken speedily in the immediate aftermath of the January earthquake. This involved the provision of essential food and relief items, and assistance in the health and water/sanitation sectors. The second decision (€8m) involved further funding for water/sanitation, as well as focusing on emergency rehabilitation actions.

**CONGO (DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC)**  
Funding -  
€35 million

Although there was some political progress following the assassination of Laurent-Désiré Kabila in January, the territory of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) remained divided among groups backed by neighbouring countries pursuing rival strategic and economic agendas. In addition, the eastern part of the country continued to be violently destabilised by a plethora of armed militias. A series of surveys confirmed catastrophic mortality rates, mostly caused by the breakdown of food production and lack of access to basic healthcare. After decades of mismanagement under Mobutu, now exacerbated by two successive civil wars, the general population is scarcely in better shape than DRC's estimated three million IDPs. ECHO's €35 million global plan consequently focused on providing primary healthcare in one third of the country and an integrated nutrition and food security programme targeting the most needy. An independent evaluation in September concluded that these objectives were largely being met, but that insecurity and access in general remained major problems for the humanitarian community.

**ERITREA**  
Funding -  
€7 million

ECHO continued to support humanitarian operations in favour of vulnerable people affected by the recent border war with Ethiopia. While large numbers of war-displaced people remained in camps, funds were allocated to sustain them with clean water, shelter, health support and non-food items. After the Temporary Security Zone was established along the border with Ethiopia, in May 2001, most of the estimated 300,000 internally displaced Eritreans returned to their villages. ECHO facilitated this process by funding the rehabilitation of water installations and health posts, and the supply of non-food items. It also supported mine demarcation and awareness programmes to help those returning to cope with the risks posed by mines laid in their home areas during the conflict. In addition, ECHO initiated a nutritional surveillance system for much of the country including some of the drought-affected areas. UNHCR was assisted in the repatriation of Eritrean refugees from Sudan, which began in May 2001.



**ETHIOPIA**

**Funding -  
€9.2 million**

Following the devastating drought which hit large parts of south east Ethiopia, ECHO maintained its presence in the country. The 2001 Global Plan, with a financial envelope of €6.7 million, focused on a number of areas of humanitarian concern, the most important being drought recovery in pastoralist regions. Through combined livestock programmes and the rehabilitation of water points, ECHO helped pastoralists to rebuild their livelihoods after years of water shortage, and to improve their preparedness for future shocks. Some of the activities promoted through these programmes have been selected for further longer-term funding by the Commission's Development Directorate-General and EuropeAid Cooperation Office.

Under the Global Plan, ECHO also supported the work of UNHCR in returning refugees from Ethiopia to Somalia, and funded basic rehabilitation in favour of war-displaced people in Tigray.

ECHO provided additional emergency assistance of €2.5 million in response to a major meningitis outbreak.

**GUATEMALA,  
HONDURAS  
AND  
NICARAGUA**

**Funding -  
€3.35 million**

Three years of cumulative rain failures, combined with a loss of seasonal jobs due to a collapse in world coffee prices, led to unprecedented food shortages in parts of Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Some rural families were forced to eat their contingency seed stocks. ECHO supported food and nutrition programmes in the worst affected regions, with a view to establishing alternative and sustainable food supply systems.

In November, Hurricane Michelle provoked flooding in north-eastern coastal regions of Honduras and Nicaragua. ECHO took an emergency decision, targeting support at the most inaccessible areas hit by the storm. The main components of this assistance were food aid, support for displaced families and a system of epidemiological surveillance and vector control.

**INDIA**

**Funding -  
€14.602 million**

ECHO responded to two major natural disasters which struck India during 2001. The main intervention was for victims of the Gujarat earthquake in January. This aid was geared towards providing emergency relief (food and non-food items) and temporary shelters such as tents. Some 40,000 families benefited from this intervention. Funds were also provided for a mobile field hospital in Bhuj which treated 20,400 patients and carried out 481 operations. In July, ECHO took a further decision to provide emergency food and non-food aid for people affected by the floods in Orissa. Kits comprising rice, oil, salt, biscuits, water tablets, plastic sheeting and tarpaulins were distributed to approximately 100,000 families in the most seriously hit districts.



CISP

**PROJECT FOCUS - COLOMBIA**

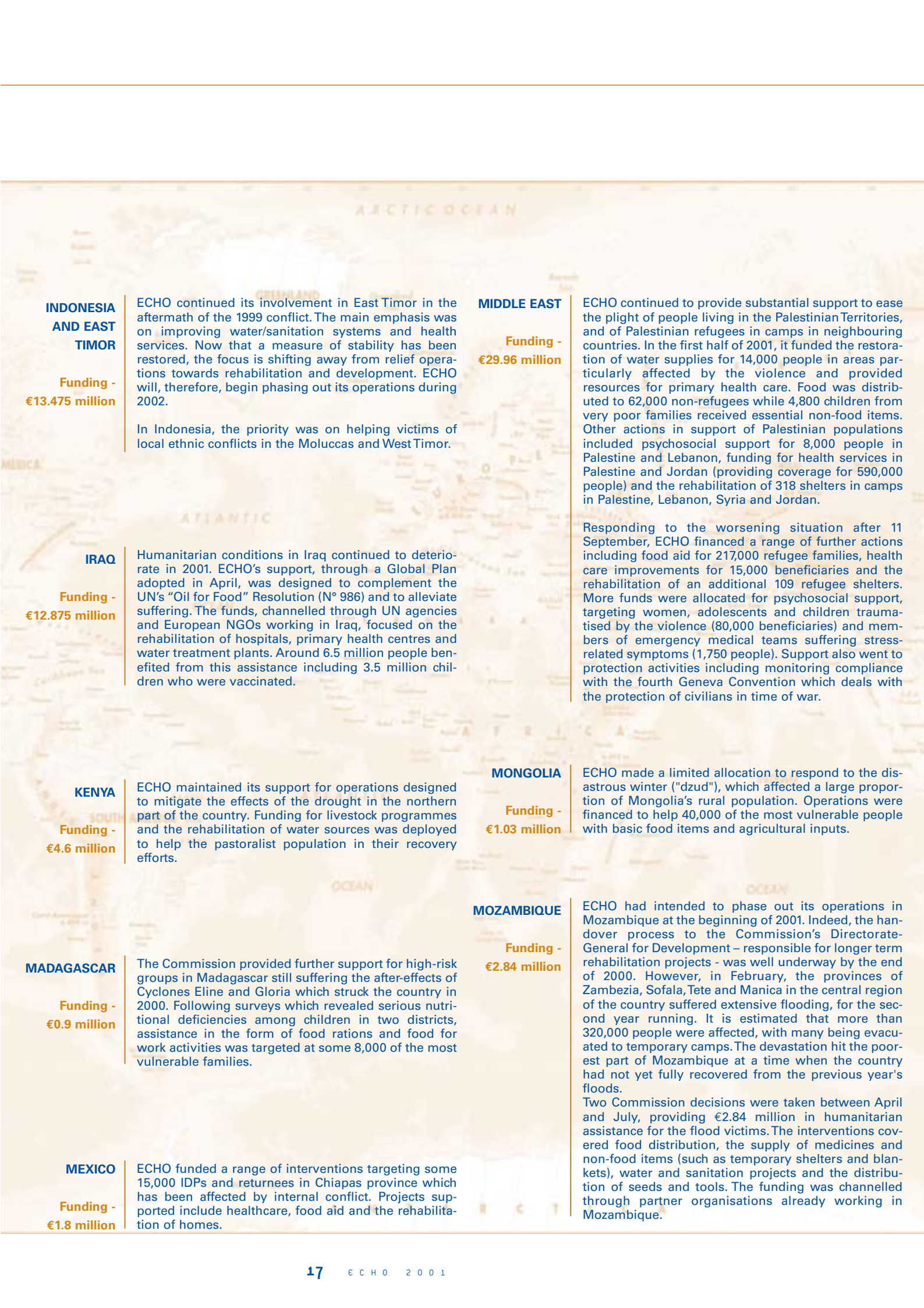
**NEW HOMES FOR DISPLACED FAMILIES**

At the end of 1996, serious violence in the Uraba area of Colombia drove a number of indigenous families to seek refuge in the city of Medellin. Hundreds of thousands of Colombians have been uprooted as a result of the long-running internal conflict but indigenous people can suffer disproportionately, cut off from their traditional rural way of life and forced to live in urban areas in often squalid conditions.

During 2001, the families were re-housed thanks to an ECHO-funded project implemented by the Italian NGO CISP (Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli) with active assistance from the Antioquia regional government and the Indigenous Council.

The regional government acquired farmland in the Puerto Berrio municipality, where the families, working together, were able to build their new homes with materials supplied by the project. Other aspects included psychosocial support and productive income-generating activities. Initially, food aid was provided but this was soon replaced by "food for work". Close attention was paid to ensuring the continuity of the project in the longer term, involving close coordination with the municipal authorities and other local actors. The €30,000 operation was part of a wider ECHO-funded programme in the area, implemented at a total cost of €650,000.

The families may still be displaced from their home areas, but the project has helped them to adapt to their new situation, to move towards greater self-sufficiency and to look to a more promising future.



**INDONESIA  
AND EAST  
TIMOR**

**Funding -  
€13.475 million**

ECHO continued its involvement in East Timor in the aftermath of the 1999 conflict. The main emphasis was on improving water/sanitation systems and health services. Now that a measure of stability has been restored, the focus is shifting away from relief operations towards rehabilitation and development. ECHO will, therefore, begin phasing out its operations during 2002.

In Indonesia, the priority was on helping victims of local ethnic conflicts in the Moluccas and West Timor.

**IRAQ**

**Funding -  
€12.875 million**

Humanitarian conditions in Iraq continued to deteriorate in 2001. ECHO's support, through a Global Plan adopted in April, was designed to complement the UN's "Oil for Food" Resolution (N° 986) and to alleviate suffering. The funds, channelled through UN agencies and European NGOs working in Iraq, focused on the rehabilitation of hospitals, primary health centres and water treatment plants. Around 6.5 million people benefited from this assistance including 3.5 million children who were vaccinated.

**KENYA**

**Funding -  
€4.6 million**

ECHO maintained its support for operations designed to mitigate the effects of the drought in the northern part of the country. Funding for livestock programmes and the rehabilitation of water sources was deployed to help the pastoralist population in their recovery efforts.

**MADAGASCAR**

**Funding -  
€0.9 million**

The Commission provided further support for high-risk groups in Madagascar still suffering the after-effects of Cyclones Eline and Gloria which struck the country in 2000. Following surveys which revealed serious nutritional deficiencies among children in two districts, assistance in the form of food rations and food for work activities was targeted at some 8,000 of the most vulnerable families.

**MEXICO**

**Funding -  
€1.8 million**

ECHO funded a range of interventions targeting some 15,000 IDPs and returnees in Chiapas province which has been affected by internal conflict. Projects supported include healthcare, food aid and the rehabilitation of homes.

**MIDDLE EAST**

**Funding -  
€29.96 million**

ECHO continued to provide substantial support to ease the plight of people living in the Palestinian Territories, and of Palestinian refugees in camps in neighbouring countries. In the first half of 2001, it funded the restoration of water supplies for 14,000 people in areas particularly affected by the violence and provided resources for primary health care. Food was distributed to 62,000 non-refugees while 4,800 children from very poor families received essential non-food items. Other actions in support of Palestinian populations included psychosocial support for 8,000 people in Palestine and Lebanon, funding for health services in Palestine and Jordan (providing coverage for 590,000 people) and the rehabilitation of 318 shelters in camps in Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan.

Responding to the worsening situation after 11 September, ECHO financed a range of further actions including food aid for 217,000 refugee families, health care improvements for 15,000 beneficiaries and the rehabilitation of an additional 109 refugee shelters. More funds were allocated for psychosocial support, targeting women, adolescents and children traumatised by the violence (80,000 beneficiaries) and members of emergency medical teams suffering stress-related symptoms (1,750 people). Support also went to protection activities including monitoring compliance with the fourth Geneva Convention which deals with the protection of civilians in time of war.

**MONGOLIA**

**Funding -  
€1.03 million**

ECHO made a limited allocation to respond to the disastrous winter ("dzud"), which affected a large proportion of Mongolia's rural population. Operations were financed to help 40,000 of the most vulnerable people with basic food items and agricultural inputs.

**MOZAMBIQUE**

**Funding -  
€2.84 million**

ECHO had intended to phase out its operations in Mozambique at the beginning of 2001. Indeed, the hand-over process to the Commission's Directorate-General for Development – responsible for longer term rehabilitation projects – was well underway by the end of 2000. However, in February, the provinces of Zambezia, Sofala, Tete and Manica in the central region of the country suffered extensive flooding, for the second year running. It is estimated that more than 320,000 people were affected, with many being evacuated to temporary camps. The devastation hit the poorest part of Mozambique at a time when the country had not yet fully recovered from the previous year's floods.

Two Commission decisions were taken between April and July, providing €2.84 million in humanitarian assistance for the flood victims. The interventions covered food distribution, the supply of medicines and non-food items (such as temporary shelters and blankets), water and sanitation projects and the distribution of seeds and tools. The funding was channelled through partner organisations already working in Mozambique.



GLOBAL REACH

**MYANMAR (BURMA) AND THAILAND**

**Funding - €6.49 million**

ECHO stepped up its activities in Myanmar, supporting sanitation and medical interventions for IDPs and a protection programme for displaced people and prisoners for a total of €1.99 million.

In Thailand, ECHO allocated €4.5 million, with the focus on improving living conditions in the camps occupied by Burmese refugees, supporting new arrivals and assisting the so-called "clandestine" refugees living in difficult conditions close to the camps.

**NEPAL**

**Funding - €2 million**

€2 million was allocated to the World Food Programme to provide food over an eight-month period for 150,000 Bhutanese refugees of Nepalese origin living in Nepal. The refugees, who faced serious food shortages, were expelled from Bhutan ten years ago and have lived in camps ever since, pending a final resolution of the dispute between the two countries over their status. The funds covered the distribution of almost 6,000 tonnes of food (rice, legumes, sugar, oil and salt).

**NORTH KOREA**

**Funding - €3.365 million**

The structural humanitarian crisis in North Korea was exacerbated by floods in October. ECHO continued to provide humanitarian assistance through European NGOs present in the country and the Red Cross family. €1.89 million was allocated for the distribution of basic drugs for more than 1,700 primary health centres and €1.275 million was spent on the purchase of winter clothes for some 74,000 children living in institutions. A further €0.2 million went to provide relief items for flood victims. Particular attention was given to improving respect for humanitarian principles in North Korea (direct access to beneficiaries, unhindered monitoring, focus on the most vulnerable groups).

**PERU**

**Funding - €3.15 million**

An earthquake measuring 6.7 on the Richter scale struck southern Peru on 23 June. 150 people were reported killed with a further 2,800 wounded. More than 22,000 houses were destroyed and a further 37,500 houses suffered damage.

ECHO reacted swiftly with a primary emergency decision (the first of its kind) within two days of the earthquake. €1.15 million was provided to help meet the immediate needs of the victims. A further €2 million was allocated shortly afterwards to reduce the vulnerability of the poorest families living in rural areas affected by the earthquake. Victims were helped to rebuild their houses with earthquake-resistant designs and to rehabilitate key water and irrigation systems, so as to enable farmers to restart food production.



New pipes to ensure a supply of clean drinking water.

CARE (UK)

**PROJECT FOCUS - IRAQ**

BETTER INFRASTRUCTURES FOR BETTER HEALTH

Eight years of war followed by ten years of international isolation have had a serious impact on the living conditions and health of most of the Iraqi population. Basic infrastructure and essential services are in an advanced state of collapse. While the UN's "Oil for Food Programme" has now been running for four and a half years, its impact on the lives of many ordinary people has been limited. With ECHO funding, CARE UK has been helping to complement the Oil for Food Programme in the towns of Nomaniya (Wasit Governorate) and Hadeetha (Al Anbar Governorate). The eight-month project was designed to reduce hygiene-related and water-borne diseases in these districts. A simple statistic serves to illustrate the scale of the problem. In Iraq as a

whole, every child under the age of five suffers from diarrhoea an average of 14 times per year. The project had two objectives - to boost the quantity and quality of potable water supplied to the towns' residents and to improve the services offered by the Nomaniya and Hadeetha Hospitals and by two primary health-care centres. An integrated approach was used involving the rehabilitation of the hospital and clinic buildings and of four water-pumping stations. The health facilities have been re-equipped with a particular emphasis on ensuring proper hygiene. The result is that 200,000 vulnerable people now have access both to clean drinking water and to greatly improved health facilities.



**PHILIPPINES**

**Funding -  
€1.46 million**

ECHO responded to the continuing internal conflict in Mindanao, with funding to ensure basic living conditions for displaced people and returnees. It also supplied emergency relief for victims of Tropical Storm "Lingling" on Negros Island.

**RUSSIAN  
FEDERATION  
(NORTHERN  
CAUCASUS)**

**Funding -  
€40.35 million**

The latest armed conflict in Chechnya, which erupted in late 1999, remained unresolved in 2001. It has led to the displacement of large numbers of people in the Northern Caucasus, creating significant humanitarian needs. However, efforts to help cover those needs have often been thwarted by extremely difficult working conditions, notably in Chechnya itself. The international aid community would have expected a more cooperative attitude on the part of the Russian authorities - facilitating rather than obstructing aid distribution to the Chechen population. International humanitarian organisations intending to work in Chechnya have had to cope with a lengthy and erratic "access and work permit system" as well as the absence of sufficient security guarantees, despite Russian promises to cooperate with EC-funded aid operations. ECHO funding helped inter alia to provide food aid to IDPs and vulnerable people in Chechnya and neighbouring republics (in particular Ingushetia), to improve water/sanitation facilities and shelter conditions for the victims of the conflict and to provide primary health care services. In addition, IDPs, returnees and residents throughout the Northern Caucasus benefited from ECHO-funded protection activities, notably legal counselling.

**SIERRA  
LEONE,  
GUINEA,  
LIBERIA**

**Funding -  
€20.6 million**

The situation inside Sierra Leone improved throughout 2001, as the peace process gained momentum. By the end of the disarmament and demobilisation exercise, an estimated 45,000 ex-combatants had gone through the process. United Nations (UNAMSIL) peace-keeping troops gradually deployed in RUF-controlled areas which had been inaccessible for almost a decade. ECHO supported emergency interventions in these areas, its programmes making no distinction between IDPs, returnees and resident populations. Overall, the humanitarian situation also improved significantly. A nationwide resettlement programme was initiated and several thousand IDPs and returnees have already benefited from this. Priority sectors remained health, water/sanitation, distribution of emergency non-food items and psychosocial assistance to children. The conduct and outcome of the presidential election scheduled for May 2002 will be crucial for the future of the country.

In Guinea, in the period prior to March 2001, the refugee-affected areas in the south-west of the country were the scene of heavy fighting between the Guinean army and various armed factions based in Sierra Leone and Liberia. This led to the displacement and subsequent relocation of up to 70,000 Sierra Leonean refugees to new camps further inland, while a further 75,000 people returned to Sierra Leone, some crossing through dangerous RUF-controlled territory. ECHO provided assistance for refugees, IDPs and local vulnerable populations in Guinea, focusing on health, water/sanitation, shelter and food security. Another main area of activity was special support to children affected by war.

**SOMALIA**

**Funding -  
€1.7 million  
(excluding  
ECHO Flight)**

Somalia, and in particular its central and southern regions, continued to be plagued by civil strife and extreme insecurity, making it very difficult for international agencies to implement humanitarian aid programmes. ECHO provided assistance to the value of €1.7 million for health and nutrition projects and the rehabilitation of water points. In addition, ECHO Flight (see page 15) offered a regular transport facility for numerous humanitarian and development projects in the country. The estimated cost of running this service to Somalia is €6.5 million.

**SOUTHERN  
CAUCASUS  
(ARMENIA AND  
GEORGIA)**

**Funding -  
€3.15 million**

Armenia and Georgia were both badly affected by drought in 2000 and weather conditions during winter 2000-2001 were not much more favourable. ECHO responded with an emergency allocation of €1.95 million in early 2001, to fund emergency food supplies and spring seeds for subsistence farmers in some of the most affected regions. Unfortunately, a second consecutive drought affected some regions during summer and autumn 2001. ECHO responded with additional assistance of €1.2 million in December to fund the most urgent needs (mainly seeds and fodder) of subsistence farmers in Armenia for the winter and spring 2002.

**SRI LANKA**

**Funding -  
€0.7 million**

ECHO supported an ICRC project to maintain a sea transport link with the Jaffna peninsula. The ship was used to deliver vital medical and other supplies to the area, where 900,000 people have effectively been cut off from the rest of the country, as a result of the continuing civil war.

**SUDAN**

**Funding -  
€17 million**

Sudan is still in the throes of a long-running civil war which, since 1983, has pitted the Government of Sudan against armed factions that control many areas in the South. The main consequences of the protracted conflict are death, displacement and vulnerability of the population, and continuous disruption or absence of basic services such as health, education and infrastructure. The situation has been aggravated by recurring droughts and floods that impair food security, and the continued incidence of a number of diseases. Unfortunately peace talks have not achieved tangible results so far.

ECHO adopted a Global Plan for Sudan that released €15 million for projects in a wide range of areas, including health, nutrition, food security, water/sanitation, emergency relief and preparedness, as well as providing support for transport, coordination and security of humanitarian staff. A further €2 million was allocated to help tackle the consequences of a serious drought that struck large areas of the North and pockets in the South. The main constraints for implementing projects in Sudan were serious insecurity and access restrictions due to military activities, as well as seasonal climatic influences and poor infrastructure.

**TAJKISTAN**

**Funding -  
€12 million**

A second successive year of severe drought further stretched the coping mechanisms of much of the 6.5 million population, 85% of whom live below the poverty line in a country struggling to recover from the 1992-1997 civil war. Another fall in domestic harvests pushed food supply down and prices up, forcing vulnerable people to sell scarce assets to feed themselves. Worsening socio-economic conditions led to an increase in infectious diseases.

ECHO allocated €12 million to provide emergency relief and foster medium-term rehabilitation. The €10 million Global Plan, adopted in June, focused on providing food aid, improving drinking water supply and strengthening the fragile health sector. A further €2 million was allocated in August to increase the food security of 32,000 vulnerable rural families.

**WESTERN SAHARA**

**Funding -  
€15.57 million**

Serious food shortages developed in the camps in Algeria occupied by refugees from Western Sahara. Average consumption among the 160,000 people involved again dropped dangerously below the 2,100 calorie minimum daily intake recommended by the World Health Organisation. ECHO responded with an emergency decision for €3.77 million to provide essential food supplies and create a buffer stock corresponding to three months of basic food products. The buffer stock, which was used seven times in 2001, appears to have been effective in helping to stabilise the flow of food. The emergency decision was followed up by a global plan (€11.8 million) focusing on the provision of complementary food, which also included significant funding for non-food items (mainly tents and health care operations).

**WESTERN BALKANS**

**Funding -  
€83.05 million**

The recovery of the Western Balkans from the 1999 Kosovo crisis continued in 2001 although the conflict in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) overshadowed positive developments elsewhere in the region. ECHO's overall funding has decreased, reflecting the improved humanitarian situation and the increasing involvement of other Commission instruments.

The main challenges for ECHO were to respond to the new humanitarian needs resulting from the FYROM crisis and to continue assisting highly vulnerable populations in other parts of the region, while supporting the transition to reconstruction and longer term development and reducing dependency on humanitarian aid.

In Kosovo, one of ECHO's largest ever humanitarian operations was brought to a conclusion with a successful transition from emergency relief, through rehabilitation, to more structured development. During 2001, ECHO's work in the province involved finalising its existing interventions, continuing support for UNHCR's protection efforts in favour of minorities and providing basic assistance for the refugees from FYROM (72,000 at the peak of the crisis) and their host families.

Serbia remained ECHO's largest operation in the region. Although political changes, in particular the establishment of a reform-minded government, have attracted long-term structural assistance from donors, including the Commission, there are still significant humanitarian issues to be resolved. This is mainly due to the large caseload of refugees and IDPs - almost 600,000 people altogether. Prospects for the return of IDPs to their home areas (Kosovo in particular) remain bleak. However, durable solutions are in sight for the refugees from neighbouring countries (Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia) who are still in Serbia. These mainly involve integration but there is also some scope for repatriation. In addition to addressing basic needs, ECHO's 2001 programme facilitated repatriation and supported the provision of private accommodation for refugees as a more dignified alternative to life in collective centres.

**TANZANIA**

**Funding -  
€32.15 million**

Over the last 30 years, Tanzania has played host to huge numbers of people fleeing conflict in neighbouring countries. There are currently about 350,000 Burundian, 120,000 Congolese and 25,000 Rwandan refugees living in camps in the Western provinces. The numbers are likely to remain high in the near future, given the continuing instability in the region. External assistance is crucial to help Tanzania support its huge refugee burden.

ECHO contributed more than €32 million to the refugee programme in 2001 through the UN and the Red Cross, thus funding one third of the total humanitarian aid provided to refugees in this country. The programme covers a wide range of actions including shelter, food aid, health, sanitation, logistics, protection, education, community services, non-food items and environmental protection.

**VANUATU**

**Funding -  
€0.16 million**

Burning ash from the eruption of the Lopevi volcano in Vanuatu caused serious damage on the neighbouring island of Paama, destroying almost all the vegetation and polluting water sources. ECHO funded medical assistance, water projects and small-scale infrastructure rehabilitation for the island's 2,000 inhabitants.

**VIETNAM**

**Funding -  
€0.533 million**

Emergency aid was supplied in response to the floods which affected Vietnam in the autumn. The focus of ECHO's contribution was to improve food security and thus reduce dependence on mass distribution of food and relief items. The operations targeted 4,700 families and 97 childcare centres.



In Montenegro and Albania, the humanitarian needs resulting from the Kosovo crisis have been almost fully covered. In Montenegro, ECHO focused on catering for winter needs and on reducing the dependency of beneficiary groups on humanitarian aid by funding self-reliance activities. In Albania, one of the poorest countries in Europe, the focus was on consolidating previous health and water/sanitation interventions so as to facilitate the transition to a development process.

In FYROM, there was open conflict between ethnic Albanian armed groups and the Macedonian security forces. The fighting escalated during the first half of the year, leading to a number of waves of population displacement both within the country and across the borders (especially into Kosovo). The international community in general, and the EU in particular, took a proactive stance in terms of political mediation, reconstruction assistance and humanitarian aid. In strict accordance with its mandate, ECHO provided food for IDPs and vulnerable returnees as well as non-food assistance to host families and IDPs. It also funded the emergency rehabilitation of schools and health centres damaged in the fighting, to help facilitate the return of IDPs. Since the conflict began, there has been close coordination among the relevant Commission services leading to a clear division of tasks between the various EU instruments. ECHO has focused on immediate humanitarian needs while the newly established Rapid Reaction Mechanism addresses medium term aspects such as house reconstruction.

Finally, although ECHO is no longer present in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a €0.75 million emergency decision was taken in response to the floods that affected the north-east of the country in June 2001.

#### YEMEN

Funding -  
€1.885 million

A quarter of the population of Yemen lives below the poverty line and many people still fall victim to diseases. ECHO funded track rehabilitation and the provision of drinking water, notably on the island of Soqotra which was flooded. Almost a thousand highly vulnerable people were also provided with new shelters. ECHO's other main objectives were to improve access to water, sanitation and primary health care.

#### ZIMBABWE

Funding -  
€0.5 million

The after-effects of Cyclone Eline, which struck Zimbabwe in 2000, continued to be felt in the Chimanimani district where 15,000 people remained dependent on food assistance. ECHO funded the supply of basic food rations and seeds for planting.



Antonio de Velasco, ECHO

## PROJECT FOCUS - SUDAN

A PROMPT RESPONSE TO THE NEEDS OF DISPLACED PEOPLE

### IDPs awaiting the distribution of essential non-food items in Bentiu

Unity State is one of the most volatile areas in the Sudan. An oil-rich region, it is regularly the scene of fierce battles between government and opposition forces. Whenever fighting breaks out, people are displaced and usually in large numbers.

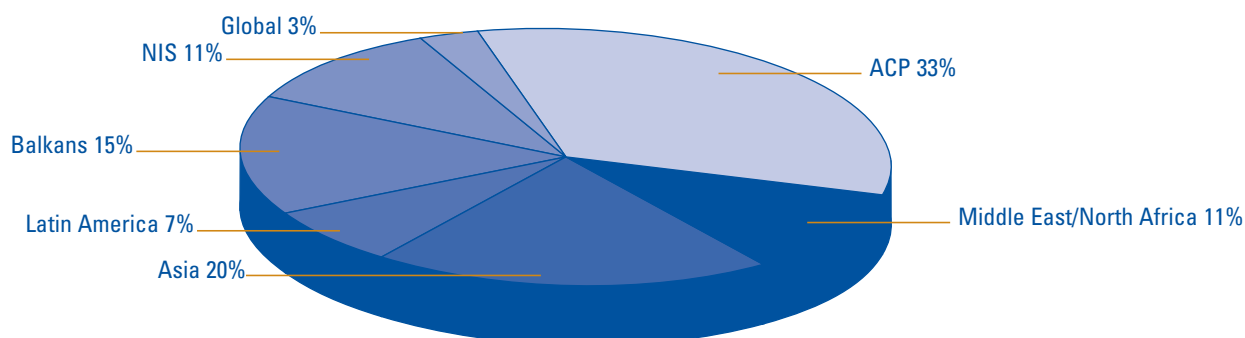
ECHO has supported an emergency preparedness project run by the NGO German Agro Action (GAA) designed to ensure a speedy humanitarian response when population displacements occur. In 2001, this happened twice. On both occasions, large numbers of IDPs fleeing fighting arrived in the towns of Bentiu and Rubkona. They were in desperate need of assistance. GAA was able to offer immediate help through the project, supplying kitchen utensils, blankets, clothes and mosquito nets to an estimated 2,300 households.

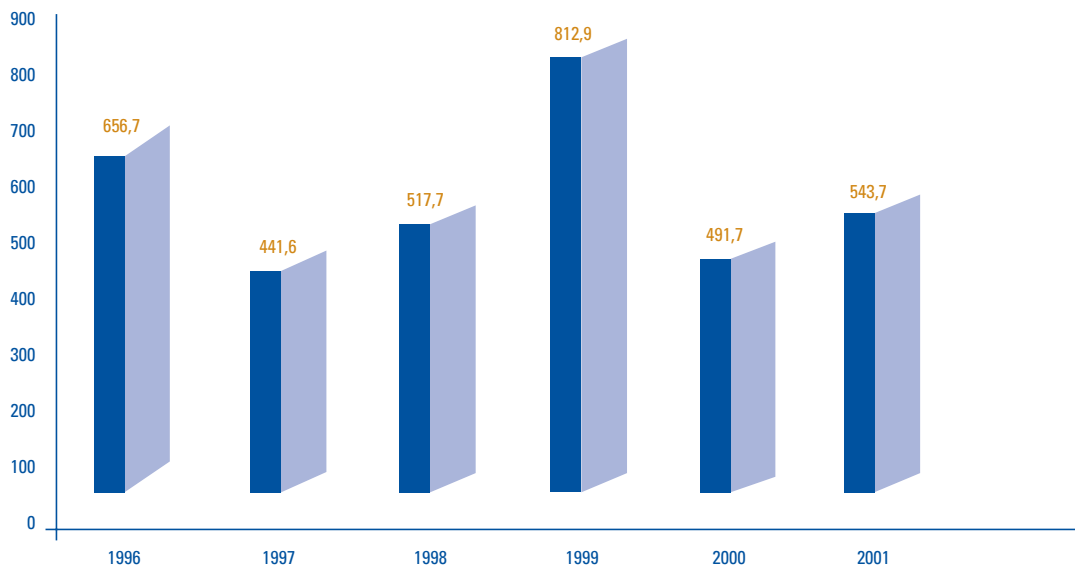
GAA worked closely with two other NGOs, CARE and ACF (also ECHO-funded), who provided health services and therapeutic feeding. This coordinated approach helped save the lives of many displaced people living in desperate circumstances.



# Financial decisions for humanitarian aid by region in 2001

Country/sub-region	Decisions in €m	Country/sub-region	Decisions in €m
<b>AFRICA, CARIBBEAN, PACIFIC</b>	<b>173.320</b>	<b>ASIA</b>	<b>104.354</b>
Angola	9.000	Afghanistan/Pakistan/Iran	54.680
Burkina Faso, Chad	2.550	Cambodia	4.900
Burundi	20.000	China	2.150
Caribbean/Pacific	0.880	East Timor	11.274
Central African Republic	1.000	India	14.602
Congo (Democratic Republic)	35.000	Indonesia	2.200
ECHO Flight	8.400	Myanmar/Burma	1.990
Eritrea	7.000	Nepal	2.000
Ethiopia	9.200	North Korea	3.365
Kenya	4.600	Philippines	1.460
Madagascar	0.900	Sri Lanka	0.700
Mozambique	2.840	Thailand	4.500
Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia	20.600	Vietnam	0.533
Somalia	1.700		
Sudan	17.000	<b>LATIN AMERICA</b>	<b>38.250</b>
Tanzania	32.150	Bolivia, Paraguay	1.950
Zimbabwe	0.500	Colombia	10.000
		Cuba	8.000
<b>EASTERN EUROPE/NIS</b>	<b>141.480</b>	El Salvador	10.000
Armenia, Georgia	3.150	Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua	3.350
Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine	1.900	Mexico	1.800
Mongolia	1.030	Peru	3.150
Russian Federation (Chechnya crisis)	40.350		
Tajikistan	12.000	<b>DIPECHO</b>	<b>8.000</b>
Western Balkans		Andean Community	1.800
(Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania, FYROM, Bosnia-Herzegovina)	83.050	Caribbean	3.000
		South Asia	3.200
<b>MIDDLE EAST/NORTH AFRICA</b>	<b>61.049</b>	<b>OTHER EXPENSES</b>	<b>17.250</b>
Algeria	0.759	Grants for studies etc.	1.600
Iraq	12.875	Expenses for field experts	11.450
Middle East	29.960	Training	0.250
Western Saharan refugees	15.570	Audit	2.600
Yemen	1.885	Information	0.350
		Evaluation	1.000
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>543.703</b>





## Organisations with an ECHO Framework Partnership Agreement

**AUSTRIA:** AUSTRIAN HELP PROGRAM, CARE ÖSTERREICH, CARITAS AUSTRIA, MALTESER HOSPITAL DIENST, HILFSWERK AUSTRIA-AUSTRIAN ASSOCIATION FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION, ÖSTERREICHISCHES ROTES KREUZ

**BELGIUM:** CARITAS SECOURS INTERNATIONAL, CAUSES COMMUNES, CROIX ROUGE DE BELGIQUE, FONDS MEDICAL TROPICAL (FOMETRO), HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL, IEDER VOOR ALLEEN, MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES, ARTSEN ZONDER GRENZEN, MEMISA BELGIUM, OXFAM-SOLIDARITE, SOLIDARITE LIBERALE INTERNATIONALE, VETERINAIRES SANS FRONTIERES-BELGIQUE

**DENMARK:** ASF DANSK FOLKEHJAELP, CARITAS DENMARK, DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL, DANSK FLYGTNINGEHAELP, DANSK RODE KORS, FOLKEKIRKENS NODHJAELP-DANCHURCHAID, MISSION OST, RED BARNET-DENMARK

**FINLAND:** FINNCHURCHAID, SOUMEN PUNAINEN RISTI (FINNISH RED CROSS)

**FRANCE:** ACTION CONTRE LA FAIM, ACTION D'URGENCE INTERNATIONALE, AIDE MEDICALE INTERNATIONALE, ASSOCIATION POUR L'ACTION HUMANITAIRE, ATLAS LOGISTIQUE, CARE-FRANCE, COMITE D'AIDE MEDICALE ET DE PARRAINAGE SANS FRONTIERES, CROIX ROUGE FRANCAISE, ENFANTS DU MONDE/DROITS DE L'HOMME, ENFANTS REFUGIES DU MONDE, EUROPACT, FRANCE LIBERTES FONDATION DANIELLE MITTERRAND, HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL/ACTION NORD SUD FRANCE, INITIATIVE DEVELOPPEMENT, INTERAIDE, INTERVENIR, MEDECINS DU MONDE, MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES, OEUVRES HOSPITALIERES FRANCAISES DE L'ORDRE DE MALTE, PHARMACIENS SANS FRONTIERES COMITE INTERNATIONAL (PSFCI), PREMIERE URGENCE, SECOURS CATHOLIQUE-CARITAS-FRANCE, SECOURS POPULAIRE FRANCAIS, SOLIDARITE

PROTESTANTE, FRANCE ARMENIE, SOLIDARITES, TRIANGLE, AVIATION SANS FRONTIERES

**GERMANY:** ACTION MEDEOR, ADRA, ARBEITER-SAMARITER-BUND, CARE DEUTSCHLAND, DÄZ, DEUTSCHE WELTHUNGERHILFE, DEUTSCHER CARITASVERBAND, DEUTSCHES ROTES KREUZ, DIAKONISCHES WERK, HELP, HILFE FÜR KINDER IN DER NOT, HUMANITARIAN CARGO CARRIERS, JOHANNITER-UNFALLHILFE, LAZARUS HILFSWERK, MALTESER HILFSDIENST, MEDICO INTERNATIONAL, WORLD VISION DEUTSCHLAND

**GREECE:** EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE, GREEK COMMITTEE FOR INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRATIC SOLIDARITY, HELLENIC INSTITUTE OF SOLIDARITY AND COOPERATION, HELLENIC RED CROSS, INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL AFFAIRS, KESSA DIMITRA-GR, MEDECINS DU MONDE

**INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS:** FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES SOCIETES DE LA CROIX ROUGE ET DU CROISSANT ROUGE (FICR), COMITE INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX ROUGE (CICR), INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM), ORDRE SOUVERAIN ET MILITAIRE DE ST. JEAN DE JERUSALEM, DE RHODES ET DE MALTE

**IRELAND:** CONCERN WORLDWIDE, GOAL, IRISH RED CROSS SOCIETY, TROCAIRE

**ITALY:** AMICI DEI BAMBINI, ARCI CULTURA E SVILUPPO (ARCS), ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIANA PER LA SOLIDARIETA TRA I POPOLI (AISPO), ASSOCIAZIONE PER LA PARTECIPAZIONE ALLO SVILUPPO (APS), ASSOCIAZIONE VOLONTARI PER IL SERVIZIO INTERNAZIONALE (AVSI), CARITAS ITALIA, CENTRO REGIONALE D'INTERVENTO PER LA COOPERAZIONE, CESVI COOPERAZIONE E SVILUPPO, COMITATO COLLABORAZIONE MEDICA (CCM), COMITATO DI COORDINAMENTO DELLE ORGANIZZAZIONI PER IL SERVIZIO VOLONTARIO

### Organisations with an ECHO Framework Partnership Agreement

(COSV), COMITATO EUROPEO PER LA FORMAZIONE E L'AGRICOLTURA (CEFA), COMITATO INTERNAZIONALE PER LO SVILUPPO DEI POPOLI (CISP), COOPERAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE (COOPI), COOPERAZIONE ITALIANA NORD SUD (CINS), COOPERAZIONE PER LO SVILUPPO DEI PAESI EMERGENTI (COSPE), CROCE ROSSA ITALIANA, CUAMM, EMERGENCY, GRUPPO DE VOLONTARIATO CIVILE (GVC), ISTITUTO DE COOPERAZIONE UNIVERSITARIA (ICU), ISTITUTO SINDACALE PER LA COOPERAZIONE ALLO SVILUPPO (ISCOS), INTERSOS (ASSOCIAZIONE UMANITARIA PER L'EMERGENZIA), LVIA-ASSOCIAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE VOLONTARI LAICI, MOVIMENTO SVILUPPO E PACE, MOVIMONDO, NUOVA FRONTIERA-ALISEI, TERRA NUOVA, TERRE DES HOMMES ITALIA-ONLUS, VISPE-VOLONTARI ITALIANI SOLIDARIETA PAESI EMERGENTI

**LUXEMBOURG:** CARITAS, CROIX ROUGE LUXEMBOURG, MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES-L

**NETHERLANDS:** CORDAID, DUTCH RELIEF & REHABILITATION AGENCY, HEALTH NET INTERNATIONAL, HET NEDERLANDSE RODE KRUIS, MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES/ARTSEN ZONDER GRENZEN, NOVIB (NETHERLANDS ORGANIZATION FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION), SAVE THE CHILDREN-NL, INTERCHURCH ORGANIZATION FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (ICCO), ZOA REFUGEE CARE (NL)

**NORWAY:** NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID, NORWEGIAN PEOPLE'S AID, NORWEGIAN RED CROSS, NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

**PORTUGAL:** ASSISTENCIA MEDICA INTERNACIONAL (AMI), ASSOCIACAO DE BENEFICENCIA LUSO-ALEMA, ASSOCIACAO PARA A COOPERACAO INTERCAMBIO E CULTURA (CIC), CRUZ VERMELHA PORTUGUESA, OIKOS-COOPERACAO E DESENVOLVIMENTO

**SPAIN:** ASOCIACION PARA LA COOPERACION CON EL SUR LAS SEGOVIAS (ACSUR), ACCION CONTRA EL HAMBRE, ASOCIACION NAVARRA NUEVO FUTURO, CARITAS ESPAÑOLA, COMITE INTERNACIONAL DE RESCATE, CRUZ ROJA ESPAÑOLA, FARMACEUTICOS SIN FRONTERAS, INTERMON, MEDICOS DEL MUNDO-E, MEDICOS SIN FRONTERAS-E, MEDICUS MUNDI ESPAÑA, MOVIMIENTO POR LA PAZ, EL DESARME Y LA LIBERTAD (MPDL), NOUS CAMINS, PAZ Y TERCER MUNDO, SOLIDARIDAD INTERNATIONAL

**SWEDEN:** CHURCH OF SWEDEN AID, DIAKONIA-SWEDEN, ERIKSHALPEN, INTERNATIONAL AID SWEDEN, PMU-IIN-TERLIFE, MEDECINS DU MONDE, SVENKA RODA KORSET, SWEDISH COMMITTEE FOR AFGHANISTAN, LAKARE I VARLDEN (MDM), QANDIL, CARITAS SVERIGE

**SWITZERLAND:** CARITAS-SUISSE, CROIX ROUGE SUISSE, MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES-CH, HEKS (SWISS INTERCHURCHAID), INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC MIGRATION COMMISSION (ICMC), TERRE DES HOMMES

**UNITED KINGDOM:** ACTIONAID, BRITISH RED CROSS, CARE INTERNATIONAL UK, CATHOLIC AGENCY FOR OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT (CAFOD), CHILDREN'S AID DIRECT, CHRISTIAN AID, CONCERN UNIVERSAL, HELPAGE INTERNATIONAL, MEDAIR UK, MEDICAL AID FOR PALESTINIANS, MEDICAL EMERGENCY RELIEF INTERNATIONAL (MERLIN), MERCY CORPS SCOTLAND, OXFAM UK, PLAN INTERNATIONAL UK, SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND UK, TEARFUND, WORLD VISION UK

**UNITED STATES:** CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES, INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE, INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS, INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES, WORLD CONCERN DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION

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# The explosive legacy of war

**Ahmad Wesar lives in the village of Aqay Ali Khauja just a few kilometres north of the Afghan capital, Kabul. He was among a group of children and teenagers who came out to meet us when we arrived to inspect the unexploded bombs left behind after recent coalition air-raids. Fourteen-year old Ahmad is**

**learning English at school in Kabul and was keen to get some practice so he was quick to introduce himself. He proved an eloquent witness.**



**An unexploded cluster bomb.**

*It looks harmless but its contents are potentially lethal.*

Aqay Ali Khauja is close to the old front line which was pounded by American bombs prior to the abandonment of Kabul by the Taliban on November 12. Ahmad told us that on the day the war came to his village, there were no fighting forces in the vicinity. In fact, by then, the Taliban were hastily withdrawing and none passed their way as they retreated south. "Most of the villagers were inside when the explosions happened" he said, "and nobody was injured or killed." What did he feel when

the raid was going on, we asked? It seemed a rather point-less question and I was sure I already knew the answer. The bombs, after all, had fallen less than a hundred metres from the small huddle of houses that make up Aqay Ali Khauja. But Ahmad surprised us. "I wasn't too frightened", he insisted. It might have been bravado though he spoke quietly and convincingly. It could have been the innocence of youth – a simple lack of comprehension of what missiles raining from the sky could do to human flesh. Or it may have been the fatalism of a young man who has become inured to war. Whatever the explanation, he seemed keen to play down the narrow

escape that his community had so recently experienced. Huge numbers of anti-personnel mines remain hidden under the soil of Afghanistan, around old and recent battlefields and at sites of strategic importance. For many years, the UN and specialist NGOs have been working to clear these lethal objects which kill and maim thousands.

## NEW MENACE

Since October, the de-mining agencies have had to turn their attention to a new and equally serious menace. Most people know that aircraft invariably drop some bombs that do not explode, but not many appreciate the huge scale of the problem. It was explained to us by an expert from the Halo Trust, an NGO which, with financial support from ECHO, is working to dispose of unexploded ordnance in Afghanistan (and other world trouble-spots). Trust workers were due to move in to clear the site near Ahmad's village the following day.

In military circles, we were told, the concept of an "acceptable" failure rate applies to ammunition. In other words, if a given percentage of the devices fired or dropped in a battle actually explodes, then the commanders are happy. Typically, the figure may be 98% for new ammunition. If the bombs or shells have a recommended "shelf life" of say five years, when that time has elapsed, a sample of the remaining stock is test-fired. This time a new, and lower "success rate" may be applied – perhaps as low as 90%. In other words, if a thousand bombs are dropped in a military engagement, between 20 and 100 of them are likely to "fail". This doesn't mean, of course, that they will not explode later. By then, the soldiers have gone and the typical victim will be a farmer harvesting his crop, or a child playing in the rubble of a ruined building.

Various types of bomb have been dropped in the most recent campaign in Afghanistan but one of the most dangerous is the so-called "cluster bomb." The aircraft releases a large device whose outer shell explodes during the descent releasing 202 separate smaller bombs. These are intended to "degrade" enemy forces on the battlefield. Some are designed to pierce armour while others detonate close to the ground projecting shrapnel up to 150 metres from the initial point of impact.



**Ahmed Wesar (right) with other children from his village, in one of the fields where the bombs rained down.**

When the Halo Trust took us to visit Aqay Ali Khauja, and another location a few kilometres away where bombing had recently occurred, we saw several dozen of these unexploded cluster bombs, in their distinctive yellow plastic casings. Inevitably, they attract children. One boy had already had a lucky escape when he threw one down a steep banking, where it went off without causing injury. Others are less fortunate. Mine awareness teaching is therefore an important part of the effort to prevent tragic accidents.

One of the cardinal rules, of course, is that you should not touch these devices. In Aqay Ali Khauja, however, the villagers appear not to have understood the dangers and they stacked the bombs at the corner of one of their fields so that they could cultivate their crops. They were fortunate to escape unharmed. For the de-miners, this makes the job much more dangerous since the explosive force, in the event of an accident, is so much greater. In Kosovo, a pile of bombs which had been gathered in one spot by local people detonated killing five disposal experts.

In most cases, it was explained to us, a controlled explosion is used to detonate the cluster bombs, since they are extremely difficult to defuse.

It is a sad reflection of the situation in Afghanistan that the Halo Trust - one of half a dozen such agencies operating in the country - is also one of its largest employers. The Trust has some 1,200 staff including 450 working out of Kabul. The operation is almost entirely run by local people, with expatriates providing technical assistance and training.

ECHO, recognising the new threat posed by the legacy of the allied bombing campaign, provided significant extra resources for de-mining/bomb disposal operations in a new tranche of humanitarian aid for Afghanistan decided at the end of November 2001.

An important component of this was for the training needed to deal with new types of ordnance not previously encountered.

The courage of the men who deal with the bombs and mines deserves recognition. Accident rates are mercifully low but it is impossible to ensure that such hazardous work is entirely risk-free – a fact brought painfully home on the day after I left Kabul. An Afghan worker was killed and three of his colleagues were injured when a bomb they were trying to dispose of detonated.

Everyone is hoping that lasting peace will soon come to Afghanistan but even if it does, it will take many more years to rid the country of this explosive legacy of war.

# Longing for home

montserrat pantaleoni-giralt  
echo desk officer for angola

**Felicia Guandi is one of four million Angolans who have been uprooted by war. We met her when we visited the Malange Transit Centre in central Angola, an old building with virtually no facilities where newly-displaced people are registered before being transferred to IDP camps.**

She is a young mother - though she doesn't know her exact age - struggling to look after her sons, ten-year João and Chaiva, who is two.

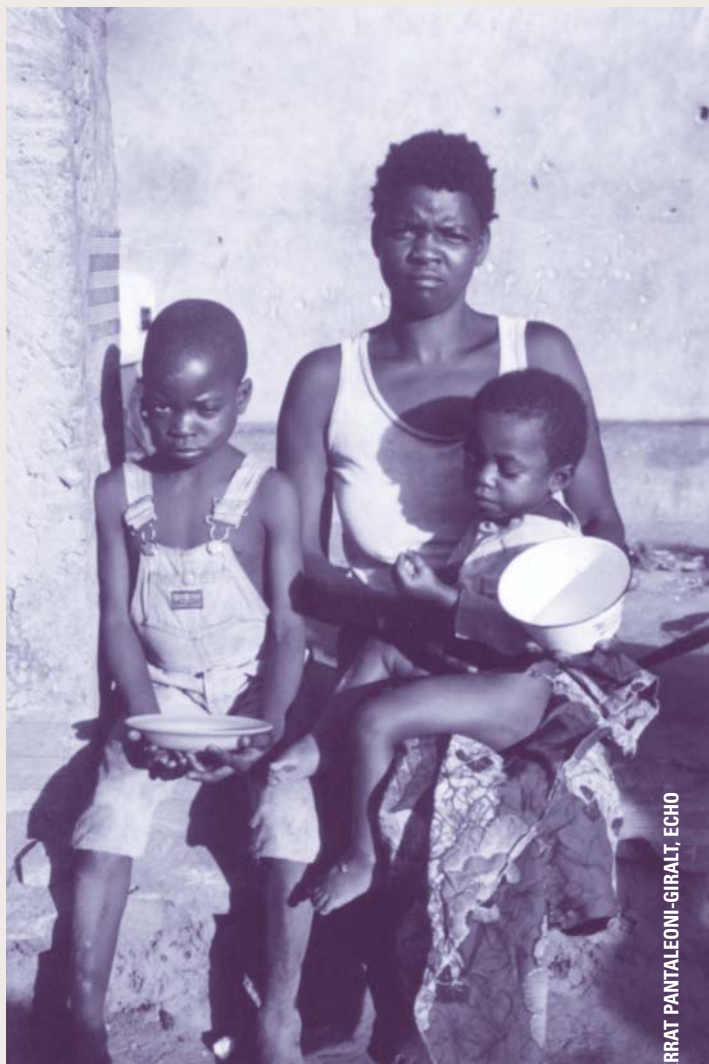
"I have been living in this centre with my two children for more than three months", she explained to us. "I received some food aid when I first arrived but that was all. Since then, I have been working carrying water to get some money to feed my kids."

For Felicia and the boys, Malange should have provided only temporary shelter, but she doesn't want to move on to the more 'permanent' setting of an IDP camp. "I just want to go back home", she insists, "to rejoin my husband, mother and the rest of my family." Home is Mussende, in the province of Kwanza Sul. The problem is that it is too dangerous for her to attempt the journey.

No-one knows for sure what is happening in Mussende as the area is still inaccessible. Humanitarian agencies have not been able to deliver aid there although reports suggested that malnutrition rates in the town had reached 40% by the end of 2001.

After being forced out of Mussende, Felicia was kidnapped by UNITA fighters. She was made to work for them until she succeeded in escaping, a year after her capture. The family had to walk for more than a week to reach the safe haven of Malange.

Felicia only speaks Umbundo and her sad story is relayed to us by an interpreter. Until recently, she had never come across a white face. She has had no formal education and neither has her son João. The prospects for little Chaiva, still too young to go to school, are not promising. It is a tragic reflection of a society which has suffered war now for two generations.



MONTSERRAT PANTALEONI-GIRALT, ECHO

**Felicia Guandi and her two children.**



# Working on the edge

John Hayward  
ECHO field expert covering the northern caucasus



*How does one balance the obligation to intervene with the duty to protect aid workers and beneficiaries?*

**Chechen women queue for seeds distributed by the Danish Refugee Council in an ECHO-funded project.**

**“The best bit of the job is meeting people, travelling all over Chechnya and seeing the aid gets to the beneficiaries who really need it” says Timur, a teacher, history graduate and Rolling Stones fan from Grozny.**

Timur has worked for the Danish Refugee Council and MERLIN during the two last conflicts in Chechnya. His work, organising and facilitating aid convoys, means that on most days he travels from neighbouring Ingushetia into the Chechen Republic, where the current round of vicious conflict, pitting Russian troops against Chechen rebels, has been going on since the autumn of 1999.

Daily fighting, the high threat of kidnapping, assassination and banditry have made providing assistance in Chechnya one of the most difficult and dangerous aid operations in the world. The list of international and local aid workers killed or wounded while trying to help others keeps getting longer. In the afternoon of 26 November Timur joined it.

“I was driving towards the village of Chechen Aul, when there were two explosions”, says Timur. “I heard shooting, tried to stop the car with the brake pedal but found that I couldn’t.”

Timur had been shot through both legs. He lost two litres of blood before his colleagues were able to give him first aid and transport him to a nearby hospital – where an old friend who was a surgeon stabilised the injury.

Unfortunately, Timur is neither the first nor probably the last aid worker to be injured or killed in the line of duty. “I had seen many difficult situations during the war and many people killed or injured – but I never thought it would happen to me.”

Chechnya epitomises the dilemmas seen in bringing assistance to the victims of armed conflicts in so many of the world’s trouble spots. How does one balance the obligation to intervene and assist – the humanitarian imperative -, with the duty to ensure the safety and security of both the aid deliverers and the beneficiaries?

It is a difficult balance to strike. Every year, aid workers are killed and injured while trying to get the help through to those who need it most. Should aid be delivered at any cost, includ-

ing the loss of life? Operational agencies and donors have to face up to this dilemma with increasing regularity.

The safety and security of aid workers is a high priority for ECHO in all the operations which it finances. ECHO has lived up to its responsibility as one of the world’s largest humanitarian donors by introducing specific clauses into its contracts to ensure that implementing partners take steps to protect the safety and security of their personnel to the maximum extent possible.

ECHO also funds specific security projects with appropriate partners in places where particular problems exist like Chechnya and Sudan. In addition, security provisions for ECHO’s own field staff are being upgraded.

During 2001, ECHO committed €40 million for the victims of the conflict in Chechnya. Much of this was delivered to beneficiaries inside Chechnya itself, where ECHO’s partners like the International Committee of the Red Cross, Danish Refugee Council, the MSF family, and Action Contre La Faim deliver food, clean water, medical services, shelter materials and mine awareness training to over 400,000 people - around half the population of the Republic.

ECHO works with well-established partners, who have extensive experience of operating safely in such difficult conditions. They have had to develop innovative ways of working and depend heavily on the many dedicated, courageous local staff like Timur, who are at the sharp end of delivering life-saving assistance to people in need.

To support this work in Chechnya, ECHO has funded the UN-led security operation, which assists aid agencies with information, training and practical advice.

The European Commission has also worked hard to persuade the Government of the Russian Federation to ensure unhindered access to populations in need, facilitate the work of aid agencies and give permission for NGOs to use VHF radio communications – as is the norm in almost every other aid operation in the world. Unfortunately, these efforts have, so far, produced little or nothing in the way of tangible results. Timur, however, is back at work. “My wife has asked me not to go to Chechnya so often!” And what was the worst thing about getting shot, “Not being able to see my first child for a month. My son was born the same day I was injured”.

## INDIA (GUJARAT)



MARIO MARIANI, ECHO

**The rubble that used to be home.**

*A victim of the Gujarat earthquake contemplates the future.*

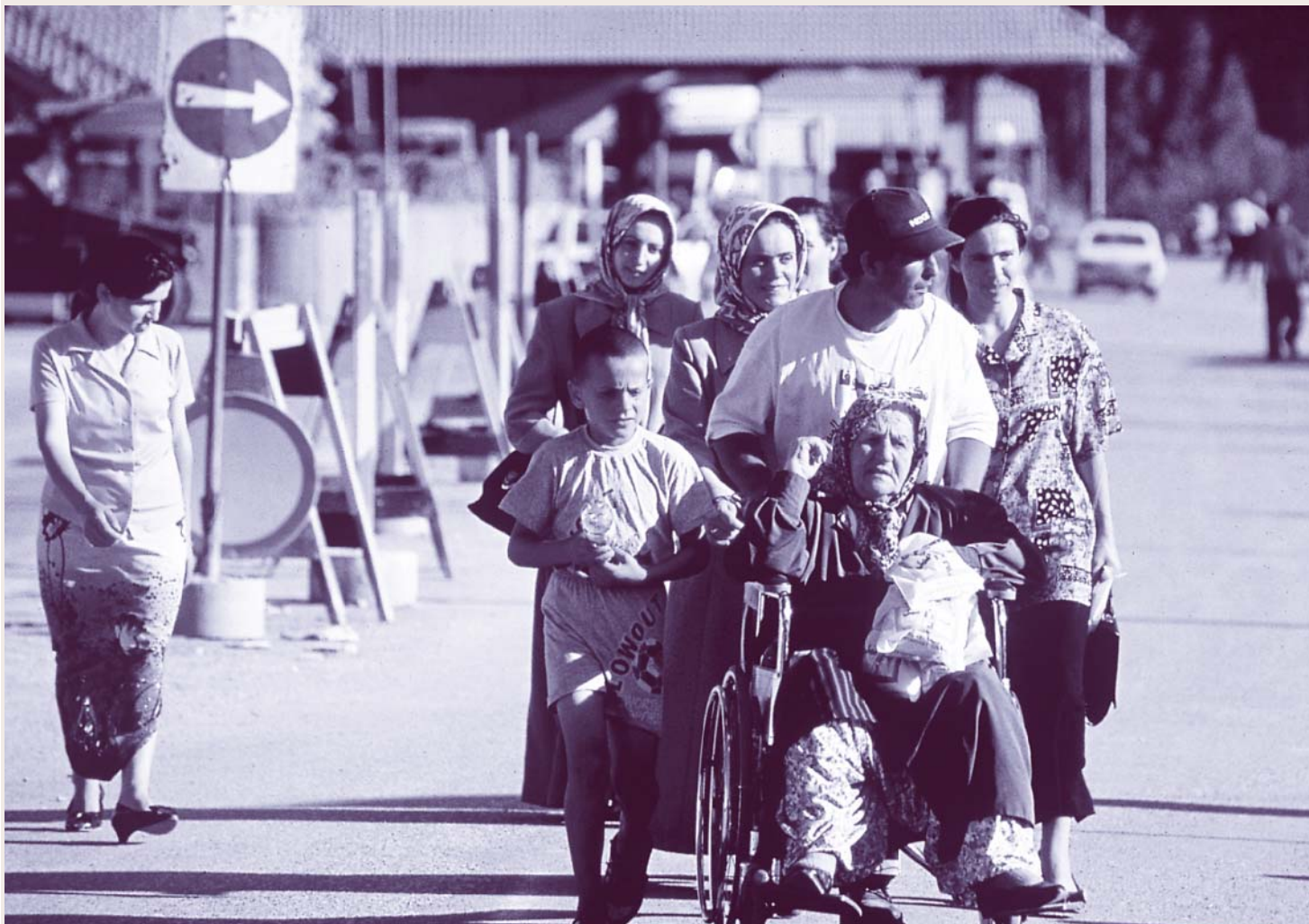
The largest single natural disaster of 2001, in terms of loss of life, was in the Indian state of Gujarat, which was struck by a massive earthquake at the end of January. More than 20,000 people died, many more were injured and thousands of buildings were reduced to rubble.

Initial relief efforts were focused on organising shelter for people whose homes had been destroyed, supplying food and clean drinking water and delivering medical assistance.

ECHO intervened promptly to provide tents and shelter materials for 40,000 homeless families. It also gave financial support for the operation of the field hospital in Bhuj, run by the German, Finnish and Norwegian Red Cross organisations. The hospital performed a vital role in treating large numbers of earthquake victims in the immediate aftermath of the disaster.



## THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA (FYROM)



UNHCR/J. AUSTIN

**On the road.**

*Displaced people flee from the fighting in FYROM.*

Although there was an improvement in the overall situation in the Western Balkans, open conflict between ethnic Albanian fighters and government forces in the first half of 2001 gave rise to new humanitarian needs in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Tens of thousands of people were forced to flee their homes, a large proportion of whom sought refuge across the border in Kosovo.

ECHO provided essential assistance for these refugees and their host families as well as for internally displaced people inside FYROM.

The situation stabilised in the second half of the year following the signature of a peace agreement in which the rebel forces agreed to hand over their weapons in return for greater recognition of ethnic Albanian rights. NATO troops were deployed to supervise the disarmament process and the implementation of the peace accord.

## WESTERN SAHARAN REFUGEES IN ALGERIA



UNHCR/A. HOLLMANN

**Refugee children at play.**

*Still no sign of a lasting solution to the Western Sahara crisis.*

For more than two decades, 155,000 refugees from Western Sahara have been living as refugees in the Tindouf region of Algeria – victims of one of the world's most forgotten conflicts. Conditions in the camps are precarious, to say the least, with recurring problems of food supply. For the second year in succession, food consumption in the camps fell below the minimum daily calorie intake recommended by the World Health Organisation.

ECHO has long been one of the main contributors of humanitarian assistance to the Western Saharan refugees. In response to the latest shortages, it provided funding for buffer stocks which have helped stabilise the flow of food to the camps.

Morocco continues to claim sovereignty over the territory of Western Sahara. a claim which is rejected by the Polisario independence movement.



## ABOUT ECHO

# HUMANITARIAN ACTION WORLDWIDE

ECHO is the European Union's Humanitarian Aid Office, a service of the European Commission under the direct responsibility of Commissioner Poul Nielson.

Since 1992, ECHO has funded relief to millions of victims of both natural disasters and man-made crises outside the EU. Aid is channelled impartially, straight to victims, regardless of their race, religion and political beliefs. ECHO works with more than 200 operational partners, mainly organisations which have signed a framework partnership agreement with the Commission. Its partners include specialist United Nations agencies, the Red Cross and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

ECHO is one of the biggest sources of humanitarian aid in the world. In 2001, it provided €544 million in funding (not including aid that the EU's 15 Member States gave separately). ECHO 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. ECHO also funds disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation projects in regions prone to natural catastrophes.

## ACRONYMS

<b>DIPECHO</b>	<i>ECHO's disaster preparedness and prevention programme</i>	<b>ICRC</b>	<i>International Committee of the Red Cross</i>
<b>DRC</b>	<i>Democratic Republic of Congo</i>	<b>IDP</b>	<i>Internally displaced person</i>
<b>ECHO</b>	<i>Humanitarian Aid Office</i>	<b>LRRD</b>	<i>Linking relief, rehabilitation and development</i>
<b>EU</b>	<i>European Union</i>	<b>NGO</b>	<i>Non-governmental organisation</i>
<b>FPA</b>	<i>Framework Partnership Agreement (between ECHO and its operational partners)</i>	<b>UNAMSIL</b>	<i>United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone</i>
<b>FRY</b>	<i>Federal Republic of Yugoslavia</i>	<b>UNHCR</b>	<i>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</i>
<b>FYROM</b>	<i>Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</i>	<b>WFP</b>	<i>World Food Programme</i>





ECHO - Humanitarian Aid Office

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OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES  
L-2985 Luxembourg

ISBN 92-894-3334-5



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KR-AA-02-001-EN-C