



NEWSLETTER

ADDRESS → Rue Dejoncker 46, 1060 Brussels, Belgium tel. +32 (0)2 5411360 fax +32 (0)2 5349953
e.mail: secretariat@ngovoice.org **PUBLISHER** → Kathrin Schick

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1. VOICE NEWS

***VOICE would like to thank
its Members and friends
for their collaboration and
support in 2002***

***We wish you all the best
for the holiday season,
and a happy, healthy and
successful 2003!***

VOICE Secretariat Closed for the Holidays

The VOICE office will be closed from 23 December 2002 through 2 January 2003. An answering machine and a fax will be working during this period, should anyone wish to send us a message.

Public Interest in VOICE

VOICE has received more and more requests for information from outside bodies in recent months. For example, on December 4, VOICE had a visit from 28 students from Coventry University in the UK. VOICE presented the NGO point of view, the various NGO networks in

Brussels, and an overview of its activities. VOICE's intervention and the NGO perspective were well received by the group, which had a very formal and bureaucratic view of Brussels from their other visits.

VOICE has also received several requests and visits from the European Union Visitors Program (EUVP), which brings individual visitors from the South to learn about European policies, institutions and civil society.

VOICE Participates in ETIKUMA

As part of our dedication to improving the quality of humanitarian aid delivery, VOICE took part in the ETIKUMA conference in Lyon on 9 and 10 December. This conference, organized by Bioforce and entitled "ETIKUMA 2002: What governance for European humanitarian agencies?" brought together several VOICE members. VOICE will seek to follow up on the issue in the coming year.

AIC Project Closing Down

VOICE's Aid in Conflict/Conflict in Aid Project, which was financed by ECHO and involved a conference, a publication and a training of trainers, is now coming to a close. For those who are particularly interested in the topic of this conference, the final report, the final publication, and the guidelines that followed from the Training of Trainers are available for distribution. These are also available on the VOICE website (www.ngovoice.org), in the "projects" section.

2. ECHO/EU NEWS

FPA Brief

A meeting of the FPA Task Force and ECHO took place on 13 December. ECHO plans to send out a communication to all its partners outlining the measures discussed – mainly the consequences of the Commission's new financial regulations on the implementation of the new FPA. If you have not received this, please check the VOICE website (www.ngovoice.org), clicking on "activities" and "relations with ECHO" for our notes.

ECHO Has a New Website

As of late November, ECHO has updated and redesigned its website in a measure to make it more attractive and user-friendly. The new site also features an "In the Field" section that highlights ECHO activities in a given country. This time it's Iraq, while next month the focus will be on the Horn of Africa.

In the future, ECHO hopes to make its system more interactive, and to redesign the pages relating to ECHO's Partners.

The new site is located at:

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

Convention on the Future of Europe

The Convention's Working Group VII on "External Action" published its revised draft final report on December 9. The report mainly concentrates on the principles and objectives of future EU External Action and on the future institutional structure of the EU.

The report makes a separate mention of humanitarian assistance (paragraph 57), noting its specific independent and impartial nature, and making reference to international obligations, effective delivery and the security of aid workers. But to our regret, it does not state that humanitarian aid should be kept outside of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). There is a distinct risk that humanitarian assistance will be made into a tool for CFSP unless the Convention makes a strong statement against this option.

For more information about VOICE's position towards the Convention, see on our web page:

<http://www.ngovoice.org/publications&materials/page/ConventionStatement.doc>.

The text of the report is available on the Convention website: <http://european-convention.eu.int/docs/wd7/6024.pdf>

Nielson Contribution to the Convention

Development and Humanitarian Aid Commissioner Poul Nielson made a contribution to the Convention on the Future of Europe concerning the role of humanitarian assistance in relation to EU external action. The contribution stresses the importance of safeguarding the specificity and autonomy of humanitarian assistance vis-à-vis EU foreign policy, especially

regarding its separate rationale rooted in universal values and international law principles. His argument is that humanitarian assistance cannot and should not be subordinated to EU foreign policy agendas, notably in the context of crisis management, but must remain allocated on the basis of needs alone.

The Commissioner also forwarded this contribution to VOICE, with a letter encouraging NGOs to support this conception of humanitarian assistance, and to work together with the Commission to defend and promote it at the EU Member State level.

Read the contribution on the Convention Website: <http://european-convention.eu.int/docs/wd7/5441.pdf>

ECHO Exits from Albania

On 14 December, ECHO ended its activities in Albania after 10 years. Between 1992 and 2002, Albania has benefited from over €142 million in humanitarian aid spent in sectors such as health, water and sanitation, and local infrastructure rehabilitation. ECHO, through its partners, has supported Albania through three crises, in 1992, 1997 and 1999.

Since the end of 2000, ECHO has been preparing the ground for a phase out of humanitarian aid. Longer-term EC assistance such as the CARDS programme -Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation- has already started to provide the necessary support to Albania.

(Source: IP/02/1877)

Camp Closures in Ingushetia; The EU Responds

In spite of Russian assurances that they would fully respect the principle of voluntary return of people displaced by the war in Chechnya, and following the closure of Znamenskoye camp last July, the Russian and Ingush authorities closed the Aki Yurt refugee camp in Ingushetia on 3 December. 1,700 Chechens who had sought refuge there have been forced to leave the camp, with no alternative accommodation proposed, in the middle of a harsh winter. Part of the families have had no other solution but to return to

Chechnya, where their whereabouts are unknown and where their lives are at risk.

ECHO has given continued assistance to the camps in Ingushetia. Its NGO partners, including VOICE members, have been working on protection, shelter, education, medical aid, food aid, water and sanitation projects and psycho-social projects there. With the recent closure, these projects have had to stop abruptly and NGO staff requested to leave the camp.

The European Commission and the EU Member States have made all efforts possible to prevent the closure of Aki Yurt. On 3 occasions in the last months, Commissioner Nielson has publicly expressed its concerns (on 14 and 27 November, and most recently on 4 December) as has the UNHCR. The EU has expressed the same message to the highest political levels in Russia, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Ivanov.

(Source: IP/02/1810)

3. MEMBER NEWS

MDM Campaign on the Day Against AIDS

December 1 was the International Day of the Fight against AIDS. In recognition of this occasion, Médecins du Monde-International issued a press release condemning the indifference, the insufficiencies and the failings of the International Community and the Governments in battling AIDS. The press release demanded that the Secretary-General of the United Nations create a specific Emergency Committee on AIDS. MDM also called for enough resources to be allocated to this Committee, for a definitive and final response to the unprecedented challenge that this epidemic poses to Humanity.

For more information, see:

<http://www.mdm-international.org/international/pages/sidapremierdecembre.htm>

VOICE Visits Swedish Members

VOICE visited its Swedish members on December 5. A full-day meeting organized by PMU Interlife was held in the outskirts of Stockholm. 9 NGOs were in attendance. The discussion aimed to strengthen the

NGOs' understanding of Brussels-level issues, as well as VOICE's plans for the coming year. The morning session was dedicated to the EU's framework for crisis management and the challenges, opportunities, and threats for humanitarian assistance NGOs it represents.

Oxfam GB Briefing on Mauritania

In late November, Oxfam GB released "The Humanitarian Situation in Mauritania – An Oxfam GB Briefing." In response to the ECHO support to the communities in need in both Southern Africa and the Horn, Oxfam has released this briefing in order to draw attention to the drought-affected communities in Mauritania. The Briefing urges the Commission to make further support available to Mauritania by supporting the WFP appeal for 2003 (55 million tons of food) and other impartial actors. Oxfam's assessment finds that the main needs are food supply, seeds, fences, and access to clean water.

For information: Sharon Prendiville in Dakar, sprendiville@oxfam.org.uk

4. OPPORTUNITIES

DIPECHO Call for Proposals in the Caribbean

A call for proposals is open under budget line B7-219 for a program aimed at funding activities destined to prepare for, prevent or mitigate against the impact of natural disasters in the Caribbean Region. The objective for 2003 is to improve the state of preparedness and reduce the vulnerability of the poorest and most vulnerable people in case of a natural disaster.

The global indicative amount available under the present call is €2,500,000. Individual grants will range between €50,000 and €500,000. The project duration is limited to 12 months. Haiti and Cuba are considered the two most vulnerable countries in the region; applications for these countries will be given priority. Actions focused on regional integration will also be given priority.

The deadline for submission of project proposals for the DIPECHO Action Plan is 20 January, 2003, at 4.00 pm.

*Access the full Call for Proposals online at:
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/echo/pdf_files/call_dipeco2002_2_en.pdf*

GTZ Funds available for HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria

With its "GTZ Backup Initiative", German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) has made funds available for activities related to the fight against HIV/AIDS, TB, and Malaria linked to the Global Fund. Funds are available for all the countries where GTZ is active (120 countries).

For more information write to gtzsante-rdc@ic.cd, mentioning "Initiative GTZ BACKUP/ complément d'information"

Forced Migration Online

The Program on Forced Migration and Health of Columbia University (NY), together with the Refugee Studies Programme of Oxford University, have created a web-based portal to assist in the location of published and "gray" literature on the subject of refugees and internal displacement. The website was launched in November 2002. It provides access to a wide variety of online resources and, currently, about 3000 documents.

The Columbia University team is also seeking the assistance of NGOs in the health sector to contribute relevant unpublished literature. They would like to identify unpublished reports, including evaluations, reviews, studies, or even books by NGOs, which shed light on problems, priorities and operations related to health.

See Forced Migration Online at www.forcedmigration.org.

To help the initiative identify relevant literature, contact Steve Hansch, instructor at the School of Public Health of Columbia University, at shansch@verizon.net, or Ronald Waldman, director of Columbia's Program on Forced Migration and Health, at rw178@columbia.edu

Aid Workers Network

The Aid Workers Network is an independent learning community of aid workers providing mutual support and practical advice based on experience. It is run by aid workers for aid workers, and member-

ship is free. Subscribers receive "Aid Workers Exchange", a weekly e-mail for knowledge sharing among humanitarian relief and development field staff.

There is also a website for the exchange of knowledge and experience among aid workers around the world. It provides compact "how-to" guides, checklists, background briefings and links to other online resources which have been recommended by fellow field workers.

For further details: www.aidworkers.net

Ecogia Protection Seminars

The ICRC is offering practice-oriented seminars for experienced humanitarian workers on protecting civilians in the midst of conflict. Four two-day seminars will be held from January to March 2003, at the ICRC's training centre (Ecogia), near Geneva. These are intended to help participants understand the conceptual framework of protection activities, identify and analyse the responsibilities of humanitarian and human rights organizations, review possible strategies for dealing with protection problems, and consider how various organizations can work in a complementary manner to put these strategies into practice.

For information and application, see: www.icrc.org/ecogiaprotsem.

InterAction Seminar

In connection with their Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and high yield explosives (CBRNE) working group, InterAction, the US network of humanitarian agencies, is organizing a senior-level seminar entitled "Traditional Responders: Non-Traditional Roles" in Hawaii on February 3- 5, 2003. The seminar, aimed at senior-level disaster response personnel, will provide a basic background on CBRNE contaminants, begin the dialogue on how NGOs can respond to disasters in a CBRNE environment, and explore the issues NGOs may need to consider when planning future operations in high risk areas, which may have a potential CBRNE dimension.

For details, see: http://www.apan-info.net/peace_operations/upcoming_events.asp, or contact Mr. Joe Uson at +1 808-433-7444 or joe.uson@coe-dmha.org.

UNU/INCORE International Summer School on Conflict Resolution

The International Summer School of UNU/INCORE (a joint research institute of the United Nations University at the University of Ulster) provides an intensive week of training, networking and discussion in the field of conflict resolution. The School, aimed at mid- to senior-level policy makers, practitioners and academics, attempts to bridge the gap between policy, practice and research. Three courses are on offer for June 2003:

- 1) Managing Peace Processes
- 2) Track Two Diplomacy and Conflict Transformation
- 3) Evaluation and Impact Assessment of Peacebuilding Projects

For further details:

www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/news/events/ss/index.html

FDI Training Courses

The Field Diplomacy Initiative will organise two training courses in January 2003. From January 20-24, the Training Course in Field Diplomacy teaches the variety of components of the practice of field diplomacy and peacebuilding. The second training course, to be held from 27-29 January, will introduce the concept of Conflict Impact Assessment: a system for estimating the impact of an intervention on the (potential) conflict environment in which it takes place, and vice versa.

For information, write to

initiative@fielddiplomacy.be, or see: www.fielddiplomacy.be

5. REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

UN Secretary General's Report on Children and Armed Conflict

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has submitted a report for consideration by the Security Council listing parties to conflicts on the Council's agenda that continue to recruit and use child soldiers. The list, says the Secretary-General in his report, represents "an important step forward in our efforts to induce compliance by parties

to conflict with international child protection obligations.”

In response to a request from Council, the Secretary-General's third Report on Children and Armed Conflict contains a list of 23 parties, including both governments and insurgents, in five conflict situations – Afghanistan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia and Somalia – that recruit or use children. The list is confined to situations currently on the agenda of the Security Council.

The report also highlights other conflicts not on the agenda of the Security Council – including Colombia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sudan, northern Uganda and Sri Lanka – where children are recruited and used as combatants, as well as conflicts that have recently ended – Angola, Kosovo, Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau – where demobilization and/or reintegration programmes for child combatants are underway.

For information: nkolo@un.org

HPN paper on Humanitarian NGOs and the Military

The Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN) issued an excellent “Network Paper” in January 2002 on humanitarian NGOs and the military. The publication is currently undergoing evaluation.

“A Bridge Too Far: Aid Agencies and the Humanitarian Response”, by Jane Barry with Anna Jeffreys, discusses the increasing involvement of military forces in humanitarian assistance in the last decade, including questions of principle, policy and practice.

For a copy of the paper, write to the VOICE secretariat or go to the website at www.odihpn.org. HPN is also seeking to expand its database for mailings. To get on their mailing list, contact a.prescott@odi.org.uk.

DFID Briefing on Southern Africa

DFID has recently released a background briefing on the Humanitarian Crisis in Southern Africa. The briefing focuses on Zimbabwe and Zambia, two of the worst-affected countries. It describes the crisis as “slow moving, non-conflict related, covers a large geographical area and has had little detailed coverage in the

international press”. The briefing concludes with figures: The US has provided \$276 million (all but \$10 million of which is as in-kind food contributions), the European Commission \$175 million.

The paper is published on ReliefWeb: <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/2294cde2f8a68418c1256c8d003dac1d?OpenDocument>

6. RECENTLY GRANTED AID

Commission Grants €2 Million in Humanitarian Aid for Victims of Landmines in Sri Lanka

Brussels, 13 December 2002

The European Commission has adopted a humanitarian aid decision worth €2 million to help victims of landmines in the war-affected areas of Sri Lanka. The funding from this decision will be channelled through ECHO's NGO partners on the ground, who will conduct minefield surveys, humanitarian mine clearance and mine risk education.

The cease-fire between the new government and the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam), announced in February 2002, has boosted long-term peace prospects. However, the internal conflict has left an estimated 600,000 mines in the conflict area, and many IDPs are returning to find their houses and gardens mined. It is estimated that between ten and fifteen Sri Lankan civilians are injured or killed in landmine accidents each month.

(Source: IP/02/1876)

Commission Adopts Three New Humanitarian Aid Decisions Worth More than €2 Million

Brussels, 11 December 2002

The European Commission has recently taken humanitarian decisions concerning Nicaragua (€0.5 million), Paraguay (€0.92 million) and Cuba (€0.6 million).

Nicaragua - €0.5 million

The Autonomous North Atlantic Region (RAAN) of Nicaragua is one of the poorest and most isolated in the country. Between

June and September 2002, the area suffered heavy rains and floods, leading to the destruction of up to 90% of crops in certain districts. The floods occurred against the backdrop of an already severe food crisis.

The assistance will benefit around 20,000 people, especially women and young children. The funds will be concentrated on providing nutrition, boosting food security and improving water and sanitation systems.

Paraguay - €0.92 million

This decision targets more than 32,000 people living in rural areas. Parts of western Paraguay have been suffering from drought for the last two years, leading to the declaration of a state of emergency in October 2002. The drought particularly affects indigenous communities who live on subsistence crops, forestry and hunting.

Immediate needs identified are for food rations and clean drinking water for at least three months. Funding will also be provided for the supply of basic medicines to treat respiratory infections, tuberculosis and parasitic diseases.

Cuba - 0.6 million

ECHO's funding will go towards providing food supplements, lodging and drinking water for some 28,000 victims of hurricanes Isidore and Lili. In September and October 2002, 55,000 homes were damaged or destroyed, roads and medical facilities were badly hit and there were significant crop losses. In some areas, up to 60% of water supply systems were damaged, increasing the risk of digestive infections, especially among children.

(Source: IP/02/1846)

Ethiopia: Commission to Increase Emergency Aid Even Further

Brussels, 9 December 2002

On top of the further €4 million in non-food humanitarian aid for victims of drought in Ethiopia that the European Commission approved on 29 November, which brought the total for ECHO for 2002 to €6.5 million, the European Commission is currently preparing a €70 million emergency food aid assistance programme to be adopted before the end of the year, in response to the Ethiopian Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) appeal for emergency requirements in 2003.

The new contribution is equivalent to about 260,000 metric tons (Mt) of cereals and will meet food aid requirements during the first half of the year 2003.

This comes in addition to the food aid assistance already provided for the needs of the last quarter of 2002 (€23 million 97,000 Mt). It will bring the total EC emergency aid to the present crisis in Ethiopia up to €97 million for 2002. Member States are bilaterally providing €35 million in humanitarian aid and food aid in response to the present crisis in Ethiopia, bringing the total EU amount to €132 million.

The allocation of the additional €70 million should be approved before the end of 2002 and delivery of food to the most seriously affected is expected to start in February 2003. Most of the funds will be allocated directly to the Government and local/regional purchase of cereals -whenever possible - will be given preference. Part of this allocation will also be made available for food aid distribution through national and international NGOs.

(Source: IP/02/1822)

7. UPCOMING DATES

15/01/03, Brussels: FPA Watch Group Meeting

23/01/03, Brussels: Humanitarian Affairs Council (HAC) Meeting

24/01/03, Brussels: VOICE LRRD Working Group Meeting

30/01/03, Brussels: New NGDO Structure General Assembly

8. JOB VACANCIES

MEDECINS DU MONDE: Operational Co-ordination Officer

Under the authority of the International Secretary of the Médecins du Monde international network based in Paris, he/she will ensure operational co-ordination among delegations in emergency missions and will develop the project monitoring tools for a better co-ordination of the different delegations' long-term programmes.

Qualifications sought:

- M.A. and 2 to 4 years experience in the association sector
- Field experience essential
- Bilingual French-English
- Full availability / presence required in the field in emergency contexts.
- Essential qualities for and interest in communication and negotiation

*Please submit applications under Réf :
Secrétariat International to:
MDM – Fabienne Alarcon- 62 rue
Marcadet - 75018 PARIS
or Ingrid.bureau@medecinsdumonde.net
(no phone calls please)*

**Oxfam GB
Humanitarian Programme Coordinator**

Job Location: Colombia (Bogota)

Key Responsibilities: In close co-ordination with the Colombia Programme Manager, Regional Humanitarian Co-ordinator for South America, and the Colombia programme team, to manage, coordinate, and direct the implementation of the Humanitarian Programme in Colombia...

Required: Experience of programme management, including planning, writing and implementation of proposals and projects, ideally in an emergency environment; Fluency in spoken and written English and Spanish.

Closing date: 6 January 2003

*Please apply online at www.oxfam.org.uk,
reference number INT217*

**Danish Refugee Council
Programme Manager, Livelihood and
Reintegration Programme in
Somaliland**

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) invites applications for the position of Programme Manager for the livelihood and reintegration programme in North West Somalia - Somaliland.

The Programme Manager represents the DRC in Somaliland and has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the DRC programme and further programme development. This includes management of the DRC office in Hargeisa, further development and planning of the pro-

gramme components, as well as overall responsibility for reporting.

Duty station: Hargeisa, Somaliland.

Contract: 1 year, salary and conditions in accordance with Danish Refugee Council regulations.

Job start: 1 March 2003.

Closing date: 5 January, 2003

*For further information:
www.flygtning.dk/job and
www.flygtning.dk/international/Somalia; or
contact Anders Knudsen by phone: + 45
3373 5057*

**Merlin (Medical Emergency Relief
International)
Health Project Manager**

Working with: Merlin, MAP and Local partners

Responsible to: Country Medical Co-ordinator

Location: Occupied Palestinian Territory: Ramallah and Hebron (West Bank)

Duration: From ASAP until the end of July 2003 with possible extension

Closing date 27 Dec 2002

*For information see:
<http://merlin2.org/template3.asp?PageID=71>*

**GOAL
Country Director, Dem. Rep. of Congo**

The GOAL Country Director is responsible for the management and ongoing development/expansion of GOAL's work in the country.

Length of Contract: Twelve months

Job Location: Based in Kalemie with regular visits to Manano and Goma

Reporting to: GOAL Director in Dublin

Responsibilities relating to:
Security, Donors, Projects, Personnel,
Financial Accountability, Resource
Management, Representation, Knowledge,
Media/PR/Visibility

Excellent French required; Post-graduate qualification in Development or Humanitarian Assistance is desirable.

Closing date: 20 Dec 2002

*For more information:
applications@goal.ie or <http://www.goal.ie>*