

# Global reach

## Humanitarian funding by country/region

### Afghanistan and Pakistan

**Funding - €72.754 million**

In 2002, Afghanistan had to cope with one of the largest refugee influxes in living memory. Defying all predictions, between 1.5 million and two million people returned from Pakistan and Iran, together with 500,000 who went back to their home areas from elsewhere in the country. They returned to a situation devastated by more than 20 years of war: homes destroyed or uninhabitable, fields uncultivated and an absence of even basic infrastructures. Two-thirds of those returning settled in Kabul or the area between there and the Pakistan border, thus placing enormous strains on these locations. In the south, they faced the added burden of five years of continuous drought, one of the worst in living memory. Meanwhile, substantial numbers of people continued to be displaced either inside Afghanistan or as refugees in neighbouring states, in particular as old scores were settled and ethnic minorities forced out.

ECHO maintained its ongoing humanitarian commitment to the victims of the Afghan crisis providing substantial funding for a wide range of actions. The overall aim has been to maintain the sustainability of the return and thus prevent further displacements and to enable people to stay alive and not have to move from the drought-affected areas. For returnees, support included the construction of shelters, latrines and water supply networks, health interventions, the distribution of seeds, fertilisers and basic non-food supplies such as blankets and fuel, and income-generating schemes. Victims of drought were provided with drinking water, irrigation, primary health care and nutritional support. For IDPs and refugees in

neighbouring countries, measures were taken to provide water/sanitation facilities and healthcare. ECHO also supported projects to boost awareness of the dangers of unexploded mines and bombs.

In December, additional funds were provided to help nearly 700,000 vulnerable people through the winter, when temperatures in Afghanistan can reach -20°C.

The overall funding of almost €73 million included €2 million allocated to help victims of the earthquake which struck the Baghlan region on 25 March.

### Angola

**Funding - €12 million**

After 30 years of war, the possibility of real peace came to Angola with the signature of a ceasefire between the government and UNITA forces. With the fighting ended, enormous needs were identified among displaced people living in previously inaccessible areas. Angola has an estimated four million IDPs.

Significant humanitarian support is required for the foreseeable future together with rehabilitation and longer term development assistance, to help the most vulnerable sections of the population and consolidate the peace process.

The €12 million channelled through ECHO was part of a €129 million action plan drawn up by the European Commission for a wide range of actions including demining and mine awareness, child protection and family tracing, return and resettlement support and the provision of medicines.

ECHO's assistance was used for nutrition, health projects, co-ordination and logistics, as well as emergency relief. In addition, some €2 million was provided for Angola in a humanitarian aid decision for Southern Africa taken by the Commission in September (see the "Southern Africa" rubric in this Global Reach section). Angola benefited under this

## Reducing the risk of returning home

After nineteen years of conflict, a death toll of 65,000 including many civilians and the displacement of more than 800,000 people, a truce was signed in February between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil Tigers. The agreement has raised hopes of peace for the uprooted people scattered throughout Sri Lanka,

and already 200,000 have returned to their home areas.

The greatest danger they face is unexploded ordnance (UXOs), and in particular, the thousands of anti-personnel mines laid along the changing battle lines of almost two decades of fighting in the north and north-east of the country.

Following an assessment mission in early 2002, ECHO allocated €770,000 for the demining programmes of two specialist European NGOs: HALO Trust working in the Jaffna peninsula and the Mine Advisory Group (MAG) operating in the Vanni area. The work included minefield surveys and demarcation, training for deminers and the bulk destruction of UXOs. The scale of the problem revealed by the initial findings prompted ECHO to allocate further funding for humanitarian de-mining operations by the two NGOs and to support a third partner working in this area, Norwegian People's Aid. The direct aid for demining was completed by mine awareness activities and psychosocial support to mine victims, implemented through UNICEF. ECHO's overall financing for these operations in 2002 amounted to €3,050,000.

In many post-conflict situations, the large-scale return of displaced people to their homes is accompanied by a big increase in mine accidents. The fact that no such increase was recorded in Sri Lanka shows the positive impact of the mine clearance and awareness-raising work supported by ECHO and other agencies.

A SRI LANKAN WORKING WITH HALO TRUST IN JAFFNA RECEIVES TRAINING ON THE SAFE DISPOSAL OF BURIED ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES.



Antoine Lemasson - ECHO

regional programme through resettlement support and health-related actions.

## Brazil

**Funding - €0.350 million**

Relief assistance was provided to the victims of landslides and floods which struck Brazil in December 2001 and continued during January and February 2002.

## Burkina Faso

**Funding - €0.175 million**

ECHO supported a meningitis treatment programme, following a serious outbreak of the disease in Burkina Faso in 2001.

## Burundi

**Funding - €17.5 million**

Since 1993 Burundi has been in the grip of a civil war involving opposing Tutsi and Hutu armed groups. Despite the peace agreement signed in August 2000 and the inauguration of a transitional government in November 2001, sporadic fighting continues to force many people from their homes, and the situation was further exacerbated in 2001 by severe food shortages. At the beginning of 2002, it was estimated that a million people (15% of the population) relied on humanitarian assistance. ECHO continued its relief programme for vulnerable groups in Burundi including displaced people, women, children and the elderly. Its "global plan" of €17.5 million focused particularly on expanding the provision of primary health care.

## Cambodia

**Funding - €5.5 million**

Although Cambodia has been relatively peaceful for the past decade, some areas of the country have only recently become fully accessible and there are still significant needs, especially in the north. Vulnerable groups include returnees and populations of remote areas lacking access to basic services such as healthcare and clean water. Rural communities still face a serious threat from anti-personnel mines scattered during past fighting. ECHO supported a range of projects including water supply works, the provision of essential items (tools, seeds, drugs and medical equipment), training for health personnel and other public service workers, small-scale rehabilitation and mine clearance. €700,000 was also allocated to help prevent a threatened epidemic of Dengue haemorrhagic fever.

## China/Tibet

**Funding - €4.45 million**

In June, landslides and floods provoked by torrential rain affected some 80 million people in China. More than 900 deaths were reported, up to three million housing units were destroyed or damaged and four million hectares of farmland were inundated. Untreated effluent contaminated surface and groundwater reserves, leading to a dramatic increase in cases of diarrhoea, fever and skin infection. Funds were allocated for a range of actions including the distribution of rice and wheat to subsistence farmers and their families (up to 100,000 people), the supply of medicines, quilts, clothing and mosquito nets, and the construction of 14,000 hygienic toilets, 500 water tanks and two primary schools.

ECHO also supported the victims of heavy snowfalls in the Ngari prefecture of Tibet. Many nomadic people lost their livestock and thus their only means of subsistence. The aid was used to buy food for 25,000 people, to purchase almost 8,000 sheep and to supply essential drugs.

## Colombia

**Funding - €9.2 million**

ECHO maintained its support for IDPs forced to flee from their homes because of the continuing conflict. Its strategy is to provide emergency relief during and immediately after displacement and to offer post-emergency assistance including shelter, healthcare, sanitation and psycho-social support in the main reception areas. It is estimated that up to 200,000 IDPs were assisted under ECHO's programme for 2002 located mainly in rural areas, including some 125,000 immediately after their displacement.

## Congo (Democratic Republic)

**Funding - €38.1 million**

The long-running crisis in the DRC has caused suffering on an almost unimaginable scale. The number of displaced people has doubled since 1999 and now stands at more than three million, including some 360,000 refugees from neighbouring countries. Many areas face severe food shortages and malnutrition is widespread. The collapse of health and water delivery systems has resulted in the re-emergence of many diseases.

In ECHO's "global plan" for the DRC in 2002 (€32 million), the focus was on health, nutrition and food security. ECHO concentrated on delivering relief to the least accessible areas of the country, where there are enormous unmet needs. Funding was used for medicines and vaccines, medical supplies and training, targeting 2.7 million people. Despite the scale of the humanitarian crisis, there are stable areas in Congo where ECHO is looking to hand over established programmes to other, longer term aid instruments.

On 17 January, Mount Nyiragongo, an active volcano close to Goma in eastern DRC, erupted. In a single day, most of the town's 300,000 inhabitants left on foot as lava flows advanced, destroying everything in their path. ECHO responded rapidly to the crisis, providing air transport to the stricken zone (through ECHO Flight) as well as €5 million for water/sanitation, shelter, food and medicines. ECHO's support covered the immediate needs of 100,000 people.

In a separate decision, €1.1 million was allocated to support Angolan refugees in the provinces of Bas Congo and Bandundu.

## Côte d'Ivoire

**Funding - €1.5 million**

Funding has been provided to assist victims of the internal conflict that broke out in Côte d'Ivoire in September. In areas affected by the fighting, access to food and health services has become increasingly difficult. ECHO supported the running of primary and secondary health facilities and supplied supplementary food rations for the most seriously affected sections of the population.

## Cuba

**Funding - €0.6 million**

In September and October, Hurricanes Isidore and Lili swept through western Cuba, causing floods and

widespread destruction. ECHO financed emergency rehabilitation and the provision of essential relief, including drinking water, for 28,000 victims of the storms.

## Ecuador

**Funding - €1.248 million**

Heavy rains in February, March and April caused widespread flooding in Ecuador, washing away roads and bridges in coastal areas and destroying more than 7,000 homes as well as crops of rice, coffee, maize, bananas and cocoa.

ECHO allocated €800,000 to repair water supply systems and purify polluted water, providing 10,000 families with access to clean drinking water.

In November, the volcano "El Reventador" erupted scattering ash across a large area and causing widespread damage to homes, crops and infrastructures. ECHO provided immediate relief assistance worth €448,000 under its fast-track "primary emergency procedure".

## Eritrea

**Funding - €1.75 million**

ECHO continued supporting humanitarian operations in favour of vulnerable people in the aftermath of Eritrea's border war with Ethiopia. Once the UN-monitored Temporary Security Zone was established along the frontier in May 2001, most of the estimated 300,000 internally displaced Eritreans returned to their villages. However, up to 60,000 people remained in camps, dependent on international assistance for their survival. These included Eritreans unable to return home because of the threat of unexploded mines, and refugees from Ethiopia and Sudan.

ECHO funded essential relief items for both camp residents and returnees, as well as mine-awareness education for people returning home. It also supported the protection programme of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the UNHCR for the return of Eritrean refugees.

## Ethiopia

**Funding - €7.75 million**

In addition to funding for specific emergencies, such as in response to a major outbreak of meningitis, ECHO financed a "Pastoral Early Warning" programme for the victims of drought and conflict.

In response to the new and very widespread drought at the end of 2002, ECHO provided further assistance, in coordination with the Commission's ongoing and large-scale food aid response. This new funding was focused on tackling life-threatening malnutrition and other drought-related acute illnesses. It included health care, supplementary and therapeutic feeding, livestock support and the provision of safe drinking water and sanitation to prevent the spread of waterborne diseases. Additionally, 30,000 Somali refugees living in five camps in south-east Ethiopia were assisted in their return home. The voluntary repatriation package covered food, transport, and small cash-grants. ECHO also financed the short-term provision of water and sanitation in Somaliland for the returnees.

## Gabon

**Funding - €0.3 million**

In December 2001, Gabon was struck by the deadly Ebola virus for the fourth time in ten years. This latest outbreak was thankfully rapidly contained by the prompt intervention of Médecins Sans Frontières and the World Health Organisation.

## Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador

**Funding - €5.028 million**

Over the last three years, Central America has experienced disruption to its usual rainfall pattern, with severe drought in some areas and heavy flooding in others. The unusual weather has reduced crop yields. Coupled with the region's economic problems, this has led to increased food insecurity. In Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, ECHO funds were used mainly to tackle malnutrition, but also covered food and seed distribution and improvements to drinking water and sanitation systems.

ECHO also provided follow-up assistance during 2002 for training in rebuilding of homes in rural areas of El Salvador following the two powerful earthquakes that brought death and destruction to the country in early 2001. This was in addition to €10 million provided in the immediate aftermath of the earthquakes and reported in last year's ECHO Annual Review.

## A place to forget about the war

More than three years after the beginning of the second Chechen conflict, the population of the republic continues to endure terrible suffering. Artillery bombardments and mines have wrought widespread destruction, while many people have been physically abused or have simply disappeared. No family is untouched by this tragedy and almost everyone has lost relatives or friends. In this atmosphere of daily terror, children are particularly affected, and many suffer from severe psychological trauma.

It is important to protect the children, as much and as early as possible, from the horrors of the war and provide them with a secure environment where they can go every day and experience some kind of normal life. This is why UNICEF, with financial support from ECHO, has opened seven child-friendly spaces in the Chechen capital, Grozny. These provide a safe haven for children of pre-school age, and a relaxed atmosphere where they can benefit from recreational and educational activities.

UNICEF



A SAFE HAVEN FOR CHILDREN LIVING IN A TRAUMATIC ENVIRONMENT.

## Haiti

### Funding - €0.4 million

Urgent aid was provided to victims of floods in Haiti, following torrential rains in May. The funds were used to purchase emergency supplies and medicines, to construct water supply systems and to restore health services.

## India

### Funding - €5 million

Rajasthan, India's second largest state and one of its poorest, suffered a prolonged drought during the spring and summer causing water and food shortages. 80% of crops were lost. ECHO intervened to provide clean water for more than 100,000 beneficiaries and food supplies for some 350,000 people. Other projects were set up to mitigate the effects of future droughts. A total of more than seven million people benefited directly or indirectly from the programmes funded under this decision. Assistance was also provided for victims of conflict in Kashmir and communal violence in Gujarat, as well as for Sri Lankan refugees in the camps of Tamil Nadu. The aid included nutritional support, sanitation measures, psychosocial support and education for children affected by the conflicts.

## Indonesia and East Timor

### Funding - €5.475 million

Now that East Timor is independent and stability has been restored, the focus of the European Commission's work in the country is shifting from relief operations towards rehabilitation and development. During 2002, while in the process of concluding its operations in East Timor, ECHO continued to support up to 70,000 East Timorese refugees still living in camps in West Timor (Indonesia). It provided nutritional support, water supplies and health education to camp residents, with a particular emphasis on pregnant and breastfeeding women, and children. The aid package included support for the voluntary return of displaced East Timorese families.

In Indonesia, ECHO assisted victims of natural disasters and civil unrest which have resulted in the displacement of more than 1.3 million people within the country. Many IDPs faced severe hardship including malnourishment and disease. In Jakarta, flooding caused serious sanitation problems in slum areas. ECHO helped to improve the living conditions of highly vulnerable groups through the provision of clean water and sanitation, health items, food and other basic essentials.

## Iran

### Funding - €0.5 million

237 people were killed, 1,300 injured and 25,000 made homeless by an earthquake that struck north-western Iran on 22 June. In response to this disaster, ECHO funded the provision of basic water and sanitation infrastructures in the affected area.

## Iraq

### Funding - €13 million

Since 1980, the humanitarian situation in Iraq has progressively deteriorated as a result of two major conflicts (the Iran-Iraq war and the Gulf war) followed by ten years of strict international sanctions. Basic infrastructures have crumbled with health services particularly affected. The education and water/sanitation

systems are also in a very poor state due to a lack of investment.

ECHO's humanitarian effort in Iraq has been designed to complement the UN's 'Oil for Food' programme allowing the Iraqi government to sell oil in return for food and other basic supplies. ECHO's main emphasis has accordingly been on providing health care, clean water and sanitation in the centre and south of the country where the greatest needs have been identified. In 2002, ECHO was the largest single donor of external assistance to Iraq.

## Kenya

### Funding - €2.5 million

In north and north-east Kenya, poor rains during 2001 prevented a recovery in agricultural production after the devastating drought of 1999-2000. ECHO's assistance was targeted at 70,000 pastoralists with support for health, nutrition, livestock and water/sanitation actions.

## Laos

### Funding - €1.13 million

In Laos, ECHO provided humanitarian aid for vulnerable displaced people and possible victims of resettlement policies. Actions funded included improvements to water and sanitation systems, the construction of an access road, the distribution of hygiene kits and education in mine-awareness. An underlying aim was to boost ethnic minorities' access to a sustainable livelihood as an alternative to resettlement. There was also financing for mine clearance and health training for IDPs.

## Madagascar

### Funding - €1 million

The Commission provided assistance to tackle a major locust infestation which threatened crops in the southern provinces of Madagascar. The funds were used to purchase insecticides and for the spraying of locust breeding grounds using helicopters.

## Mexico

### Funding - €1 million

ECHO support was directed towards vulnerable people in the Chiapas region of Mexico, where the after-effects of the 1994 uprising continued to be felt. A large number of people were still displaced and many of those who had returned home had urgent nutritional and health needs. The funding was used to provide food rations and medical services to around 30,000 people, and to train farmers in sustainable farming methods.

## Middle East

### Funding - €35 million

ECHO continued to provide substantial support to ease the plight of people living in the occupied Palestinian territories, and of the most vulnerable Palestinian refugees and non-refugee populations in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. After many months of violence, the economic and social situation of the Palestinians worsened significantly. Job losses resulting from closures and movement restrictions contributed to the suffering and big increases were recorded both in the numbers of malnourished children and in the incidence of preventable diseases. Part of the funding from ECHO was used for nutritional support, psychosocial treatment for children and adolescents, training for medical staff and health education.



Other funds went to help meet the needs of vulnerable Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza through the distribution of food, medicines, medical supplies, hygiene kits, cooking fuel and other basic essentials. ECHO also helped to restore clean water supplies and boost professional medical coverage. Specific areas of operation include Jenin, which suffered widespread destruction following incursions by the Israeli army and Ramallah, where the hospital faced a serious shortage of medicines.

## Myanmar (Burma) and Thailand

**Funding - €8.965 million**

ECHO continued to offer vital assistance to Burmese refugees living in the border regions of Thailand. In addition to providing basic food supplies, ECHO funded improvements to health infrastructures, health and hygiene training, immunisation and the provision of drinking water.

Within Myanmar, ECHO was involved in the effort to combat malaria through the supply of medications and improvements to water and sanitation systems.

## Nepal/Bhutan

**Funding - €3.675 million**

The plight of more than 100,000 Bhutanese refugees living in camps in south-east Nepal is one of the world's "forgotten crises". The refugees rely almost entirely on rations channelled through the World Food Programme, as they are not permitted to seek work or cultivate land outside the camps. During the last two years, WFP has experienced increasing difficulties in supplying adequate food to the camps. ECHO therefore allocated €2 million for the purchase of food on the local market.

The remaining funds went to help the people of Nepal affected by the internal conflict between government forces and Maoist rebels. Since November 2001, 5,000 people have been killed in the fighting and the economy has been badly affected. In the far west, the health system is under enormous strain due to the mass displacement of conflict-affected populations. ECHO supported protection activities for harassed and intimidated populations, with an emphasis on re-establishing family contacts and promoting international humanitarian law. Primary health care was also targeted.

## North Korea

**Funding - €21.025 million**

Since the early 1990s, there has been a steady decline in economic and social conditions in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Supplies of food, water and medicines have diminished drastically leading to a big increase in malnutrition and preventable diseases, especially among children. Droughts and floods since the mid-1990s have exacerbated the situation.

ECHO funding has been used to finance the procurement and distribution of 39,000 tons of cereals targeted mainly at children and mothers of new-born babies. The aid is being channelled through the WFP, which has outlets at community level.

Support was also provided for initiatives to improve basic health and nutrition while around 250,000 people benefited from ECHO-funded improvements to water and sewerage systems.

Floods during the summer caused substantial damage in the west of the country and ECHO responded with €300,000 in emergency aid to meet the immediate needs of some 22,500 people.

## Paraguay

**Funding - €0.92 million**

A two-year long drought in western Paraguay threatened the lives of 200,000 people, including indigenous communities who live on subsistence crops, forestry and hunting.

ECHO supplied food and clean drinking water for 32,000 vulnerable people living in rural areas, as well as basic medicines to treat respiratory infections, tuberculosis and parasitic diseases.

## Peru and Bolivia

**Funding - €1.3 million**

Southern Peru and the department of Potosi in Bolivia were affected by snowstorms and extremely low temperatures in July. ECHO provided emergency assistance to rehabilitate 500 homes, protect 50,000 livestock and train local people on how to respond to natural disasters.

## Vital support for hospitals

After more than a decade of conflict in Somalia, most of the country's health facilities and other social services have crumbled. Yet the ongoing violence generates a steady stream of casualties who need medical assistance. In Mogadishu alone, some 5,000 people suffer gunshot or stab wounds every year. ECHO supports an ICRC programme for three hospitals that carry out emergency war surgery. Other urgent cases such as road accident victims are also treated. Since 1999, about 11,000 people have had surgery or other treatment under this programme - possibly the ICRC's largest caseload of war injuries in the world.

Another hospital (SOS-Kinderdorf) provides maternity and paediatric services, with support from ECHO. This includes an extensive nutritional programme for children and expectant mothers. About 75,000 benefited from these services in 2001-2002.



INFANTS' WARD IN A MOGADISHU HOSPITAL.

## Russian Federation/Northern Caucasus

### Funding - €28 million

The second armed conflict in Chechnya, which began in 1999, has led to the displacement of large numbers of Chechen people in the Northern Caucasus. There are some 140,000 IDPs within Chechnya itself and around 120,000 in Ingushetia and 5,000 in Dagestan. A complete lack of security was the main impediment to return to normal life in the Chechen Republic. IDPs continued to depend on humanitarian assistance. Since there was an upsurge in violence throughout 2002, it was clear that most of the IDPs would not be able to return home under acceptable conditions. Humanitarian agencies operating in the region continued to face access problems, particularly within Chechnya itself, making it impossible to deliver assistance in accordance with basic humanitarian principles. The bulk of ECHO's funding was allocated to cover the primary needs of vulnerable people affected by the conflict within Chechnya or displaced in neighbouring republics. ECHO financed the supply of food, shelter and non-food items (bedding, tents, clothes etc), water and sanitation and medicines, as well as protection, psychosocial support and legal advice. ECHO is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance in support of victims of the conflict in Chechnya.

## Senegal

### Funding - €0.75 million

ECHO supported a mass emergency vaccination campaign against yellow fever, covering 1.6 million people, following a serious outbreak of the disease in September.

## Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia

### Funding - €19 million

These three coastal West African countries have experienced conflict of varying intensity over the last twelve years resulting in widespread destruction, huge population displacements and an overall deterioration of basic services.

In 2002, the main focus of instability was Liberia. In Sierra Leone and Guinea, the situation continued to stabilise although the after-effects of Sierra Leone's long civil war continued to be felt. The country still had some 550,000 uprooted people while almost 200,000 Sierra Leoneans and Liberians were registered as refugees in Guinea. Many of the estimated 75,000 people who have returned to Sierra Leone since August 2001 also require humanitarian assistance and further needs have been identified in previously inaccessible areas of Sierra Leone. ECHO funded primary health care as well as measures to tackle malnutrition. Given the large number of displaced people in the region, there was a focus on providing shelter materials and basic non-food items such as blankets and cooking utensils. Another priority sector was water and sanitation, with targeted actions aimed at boosting the availability of clean water, improving sanitation systems and promoting hygiene through education and training at community level.

## Somalia

### Funding - €4.5 million (excluding ECHO Flight)

Somalia continues to face some of the most difficult humanitarian conditions in the world. Basic infrastructures have been destroyed and cycles of drought

and flooding have added to the already huge needs generated by the country's decade-long internal crisis. ECHO funded a range of humanitarian activities including improvements to primary health care, measures to reduce acute malnutrition and the rehabilitation of water and sanitation systems. In the centre and south of the country, there was a particular emphasis on meeting the health and nutritional needs of the most vulnerable sections of the population, through the distribution of emergency seeds and tools, veterinary support and treatment for cholera victims.

## Southern Africa (Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe)

### Funding - €36.5 million

In 2002, large areas of Southern Africa were confronted with a complex and developing humanitarian crisis due to a variety of factors. A combination of drought, bad governance and inappropriate food security policies left up to 13 million people facing serious food shortages. Much of the region's population was already highly vulnerable, due to poor economic conditions in general and the terrible toll exacted by the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The bulk of ECHO's funding was allocated in a regional decision for €30 million to support food aid operations including nutritional surveillance and logistics, projects in the water, sanitation and medical sectors and agricultural rehabilitation. Most of this funding was directed to Zimbabwe and Zambia.

In Malawi, ECHO supported the national network of nutritional rehabilitation units as well as improvements to the nutritional monitoring and surveillance system. After the previous year's devastating cholera epidemic, it also mounted a cholera preparedness operation throughout the country.

Special attention was paid to Zambia's growing refugee population with assistance for new arrivals and vulnerable groups in the refugee camps as well as local host communities. Actions funded included food aid, health screening, vaccinations, and water/sanitation projects. The decision for €30 million included some €2 million funding for Angola which mainly involves repatriation assistance for refugees (see also the Angola rubric on page 13).

## Southern Caucasus

### (Armenia and Georgia)

### Funding - € 2.5 million

Humanitarian assistance was provided to finalise support to farmers in Southern Armenia affected by droughts in 2000 and 2001. ECHO's support was used for training and the installation of irrigation systems. Funds also went towards promoting diversification and sustainable farming activities.

In Georgia, the effects of the internal conflict that broke out in 1992 are still being felt in particular in and around the autonomous republic of Abkhazia. This conflict led to the displacement of 250,000 people and caused serious economic disruption. Abkhazia itself suffered enormous damage and tens of thousands of the republic's former inhabitants are still displaced within Georgia, mainly in the west. ECHO funds were used to distribute dry foodstuffs, maintain food canteens and support an

income-generation programme for people living on either side of the border line between Abkhazia and Georgia proper. Projects were targeted particularly at the elderly and destitute.

## Sri Lanka

**Funding - €8.3 million**

After 19 years of fighting, the ceasefire signed in February between the government and Tamil separatists brought new hope for peace. It was also the catalyst for a large-scale movement of IDPs back to their home areas. Almost 200,000 displaced people returned home in 2002. ECHO continued to support an ICRC project to maintain a vital sea transport link with the Jaffna peninsula. The ship was used to deliver medical and other supplies to the area, where 900,000 people were effectively cut off from the rest of the country until the re-opening of the main north-south road.

Following the truce, further funding was allocated to help returnees re-establish themselves in their home areas, where houses and infrastructures had been destroyed or damaged during the war. Sri Lanka has an estimated 600,000 unexploded mines scattered around the former conflict zones, posing a serious threat to returnees and local residents. ECHO therefore also supported mine clearance work and mine-awareness training.

## Sudan

**Funding - €18 million**

As the civil war between the Sudanese government and armed groups controlling much of the south of the country entered its 19th year, the suffering of the population continued. The situation has been aggravated by humanitarian access denials affecting large parts of the country, as well as recurring droughts and floods that impair food security and contribute to the high incidence of serious diseases. An estimated four million people (13% of the population) are internally displaced. ECHO's 2002 funding was aimed mainly at preventing a further deterioration in the conditions of the most vulnerable sections of the population, with a special focus on IDPs. Priority areas were health/nutrition, benefiting 660,000 people, water/sanitation, benefiting a further 355,000, food security, emergency preparedness and logistical support for humanitarian operations and special mandates.

## Tajikistan

**Funding - €10 million**

Continued humanitarian support was provided to help the victims of the worst drought Tajikistan has experienced for 75 years. The drought further stretched the coping mechanisms of the 6.5 million population, 85% of whom live below the poverty line, in a country recovering from civil war.

A key component of ECHO's programme for the victims of this largely forgotten crisis was the funding of basic food aid for 55,000 people, including 15,000 children suffering from acute malnutrition. It also concentrated on improving access to safe drinking water and primary health care with the aim of reducing the mortality rate caused by epidemics of infectious diseases.

## Tanzania

**Funding - €27 million**

ECHO continued to support the running of the refugee camps in Tanzania, which host around half a million people who have fled from conflict in neighbouring countries. This is the largest refugee caseload in Africa and one of the biggest in the world. Most of the people living in the camps come from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The funds were spent on a wide range of activities including food aid, logistics, water/sanitation, health, nutrition, shelter and protection.

ECHO is the largest single donor to the UNHCR's refugee programme in Tanzania. It has channelled more than €90 million in humanitarian assistance to the camps since 1999.

## Uganda

**Funding - €2.12 million**

The northern and eastern districts of Uganda have an estimated one million displaced people due to local instability, violence by armed groups and civil war in neighbouring Sudan and DRC. The general insecurity has led to the concentration of thousands of people in compounded areas where basic services are either inadequate or non-existent. The situation has been made worse by recent droughts.

ECHO supported vulnerable people including IDPs and host communities providing primary health care, clean water and sanitation. Funds were also used to help reintegrate child soldiers into society.



TEACHING  
DISASTER  
PREPARATION TO  
LOCAL PEOPLE.  
VITAL TRAINING  
WHICH COULD  
HELP SAVE LIVES.

## Disaster preparation pays dividends

Over the last two decades, Nicaragua has been hit by floods, drought, volcanic eruptions, a tidal wave, an earthquake, and four hurricanes, including "Mitch" - one of the most devastating storms in the history of Central America. As a developing country, it struggles to provide the resources needed to be ready for disasters and to cope with their effects when they occur. A pilot action financed by the DIPECHO programme in the

Chinandega and León regions of Nicaragua shows that disaster prevention can be effective. The motto of the project, run by Italian NGO Movimondo, was 'prevention is better than cure'. It involved supporting the Nicaraguan authorities in implementing an existing law on the prevention, mitigation and management of natural catastrophes. Scientific surveillance of earthquake and volcanic risks was improved, and a system of broadcast warnings to the population was established. Water tanks were built to boost storage capacity in an area prone to drought. Efforts were also made to establish a disaster prevention 'culture' through mass distribution of information packs, the establishment of an information centre on natural risks in the area, teaching in schools, and training courses for adults.

Local people proved ready and able to prepare for disasters effectively once equipped with the necessary skills. "I used to be afraid of earthquakes, but now I know why they happen and what I should do when one occurs", said Mercedes, a pupil at one of the local schools. Another participant, Juan, explained: "For a long time the people of Tololar did not understand these natural phenomena or what we should do to prepare for them. Now we have a local emergency plan, which means we are better prepared to act before and when we are faced with any kind of emergency." In 1998, Tololar was badly damaged in a mudslide following the passage of Hurricane Mitch, and 24 of the town's inhabitants were killed.

Movimondo

## Vietnam

### Funding - €1.195 million

ECHO provided aid for victims of tropical storms, landslides and flooding which struck Vietnam in July. Support included improvements to water and sanitation facilities, and education on personal hygiene and nutrition with the aim of reducing epidemics. Funding was also provided to cover a serious shortfall in stocks of the diphtheria-pertussis-tetanus vaccine.

## Western Sahara

### Funding - €14.34 million

ECHO continued to support the 155,000 Western Saharan refugees living in the Tindouf region of Algeria whose plight attracts little international media coverage. The refugees, in exile for 27 years, live in four large camps in south-western Algeria, and they depend largely on international assistance for their survival.

The main emphasis of ECHO's programme was to diversify the refugees' diet by providing complementary food items such as tuna, grilled maize and powdered milk. In addition, to assist the WFP, which is responsible for basic foodstuffs, ECHO financed the supply of barley, rice, pulses and wheat flour. It also supported local production of eggs and livestock and provided gluten-free wheat flour for children suffering from coeliac disease. As regards "non-food items" ECHO funds most of the medicines supplied to the refugees as well as the purchase of tents, blankets and clothing kits.

## Western Balkans (Serbia, Kosovo, Albania, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

### Funding - €43 million

The recovery of the Western Balkans from the 1999 Kosovo crisis continued in 2002. This was reflected in the ongoing process of phasing out humanitarian assistance in favour of longer term development instruments.

The majority of ECHO funds were spent in Serbia where there were still significant humanitarian needs among the large refugee and IDP populations. Operations were also funded in Kosovo, Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

ECHO assisted half a million people who were either refugees, IDPs or members of other vulnerable groups, providing food, non-food items, healthcare and housing. In addition it supported repatriation and social integration schemes, facilitated access to healthcare and funded legal and psychological support projects.

In Kosovo, ECHO also helped to finance specific protection actions implemented by UNHCR in favour of minority groups living in enclaves and isolated areas.

## Yemen

### Funding - €1.59 million

Yemen is a mainly rural society many of whose people do not have access to basic services and who are vulnerable to extreme weather conditions. The country is still suffering the after-effects of the civil war which ended in 1994, and there are significant humanitarian needs, particularly in isolated regions.

Since 1998, ECHO's strategy has been to target these isolated areas. In 2002, support was provided to upgrade primary health care institutions and supply medicines, benefiting around 110,000 people. ECHO also funded improved access to clean water for around 24,500 people.

## Other financing decisions

## 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 2002, the Commission took two decisions amounting to a total of €8 million for projects in South America, Central America and South-East Asia (for details, see page 12).

## ECHO Flight

### Funding - €8.4 million

From its base in Nairobi, and satellite hubs in Mogadishu and Hargeisa (Somalia), Mandera (Kenya) and Goma (DRC), ECHO Flight continued to provide free air transport capacity to aid agencies operating relief and development programmes in Somalia, north-eastern Kenya, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Personnel and cargo were flown aboard scheduled services using a fleet of five light aircraft.

Since its launch in May 1994, ECHO Flight has clocked up over 50,000 missions and carried more than 200,000 aid workers and 6,000 tonnes of food and medical supplies to some of the world's most vulnerable populations. The service has also carried out more than 200 emergency medical or security evacuations.

## UNHCR

### Funding - €11 million

ECHO provided financial support for UNHCR programmes in the fields of protection, registration and staff security in refugee hosting countries, with a focus on Africa.

Over the last ten years, UNHCR has been ECHO's most important partner in the United Nations system. Refugees seeking international protection are increasingly encountering problems, such as closed borders, lengthy asylum applications and being sent back to states where they face persecution and danger. UNHCR is developing a standardised global registration system for refugees.