



“Tuko Pamoja - We’re in this Together”

Photo exhibition on WFP operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Side event on the margins of the second regular session of the Executive Board

13–16 November 2017 (all day)

Seed to Feed Area, WFP Headquarters

Context

The recent history of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been marred by the plundering of resources and by violence. Between 1998 and 2007, conflict claimed the lives of an estimated 5.4 million people, mainly through starvation and preventable or treatable disease. What became known as the Second Congo War ended in 2002. However, local conflicts involving numerous armed groups, continue in the eastern provinces (North and South Kivu, Ituri, Haut-Uele) and in the southeastern provinces of Haut-Katanga and Tanganyika. The current fighting continues to be characterized by violence and brutality against civilians which causes huge waves of internally displaced persons (IDPs), by abduction of children to become soldiers, widespread sexual violence, as well as murders and kidnappings of civilians and humanitarians. The crisis of the Kasai region (provinces of Kasai, Kasai-Central, Kasai-Oriental, Lomami, Haut-Lomami, Sankuru, Kwilu and Kwango) in the center of the country has become the most serious crisis in the country in terms of people affected, population movements and new humanitarian needs: 1.4 million have fled from their villages in the Kasai region since the start of this new conflict in August 2016. An estimated 30,000 have taken refuge in Angola and the deteriorating situation may see many more fleeing into some of the nine neighbour countries of the DRC.

With 3.8 million displaced persons, the DRC is the African country most affected by internal displacements. This figure has doubled compared to the 1.8 million of March 2016. The upsurges of internal conflicts in the Kasai, Tanganyika, North and South Kivu are the main causes to this new figure.

One of the consequences, is the dramatic increase of the food insecure households in the provinces of North Kivu (from 40 percent of severe and moderate food insecure households in 2014 to 60 percent in 2016) and South Kivu (from 32 to 64 percent of households in severe and moderate food insecurity).

DRC’s child mortality rates are among the highest in the world. According to the country’s Demographic and Health Survey 2013, some 14,8 percent of children under the age of five suffer from acute malnutrition, and about 43 percent are chronically malnourished and show signs of stunting. In North, South Kivu and Kasai provinces that figure is around 53 percent.

In addition to extreme poverty and internal instability due to armed groups, the sustained and complex emergency includes civil unrests in the neighbouring Central Africa Republic, Burundi and South Sudan, as well as the internal political crises resulting from the postponed presidential elections initially planned in November 2016.

Objectives

To raise awareness about the drastic degradation of the situation in the DRC. The idea is to highlight the immediate impact of WFP and FAO's humanitarian assistance on beneficiaries; to show that more than ever, the resilient DRC population, and particularly women and agencies like WFP and FAO to stand by their side and help them recover; and to show them that "...we are in this together..." as we have always been over decades in facing the challenges that women face every day in this country. The exhibition should induce the fact that, beyond the deep humanitarian crisis, hope is still allowed. This requires a strong involvement from all sides. We owe it to the Congolese women and people and their unbeatable positive energy displayed on many pictures.

Rationale

The heart of the campaign will be a photo exhibition showcasing visual evidence of WFP's achievements in the DRC (including towards women) and WFP/FAO's huge challenges, especially in the Kasai region.

Working title: "*Tuko Pamoja - We're in this Together*" is an expression we often hear in the field and in the IDP sites when we explain WFP's work and constraints, including budget cuts and subsequent slashing by half of ration sizes to the beneficiaries, they understand our limitations but always remain grateful for the very little we can still bring. In this specific context, these words sound like a reason to keep on hoping and like an appeal not to let them down. Giving a Swahili name to the exhibition provides a strong local anchorage.

List of themes/operations:

- 1) New IDPs in Kasai region
- 2) New IDPs in Tanganyika province
- 3) WFP/FAO joint visit of emergency directors in June
- 4) Women and children beneficiaries