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THE LOCAL IMPACT OF MOZAMBICAN REFUGEES IN MALAWI

Study prepared for the U.S. Embassy and USAID/Malawi
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I. Executive Summary

Malawi, one of the poorest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, provides asylum to over 800,000 Mozambican refugees. The refugee population is equal to over ten percent of the country's total population and in the regions where refugees have primarily settled, comprises between 20 and 54% of the local population. Despite a very well-organized and extensive relief effort, the continuing influx of Mozambicans is affecting Malawi's development. A recent Government of Malawi and World Bank Team estimated that uncompensated public expenditures from the direct and indirect costs of the refugee influx total $US25 million. The Team's calculations, however, did not include the costs incurred by Malawians who had given up their lands and shared their own private and communal resources.

In this study we analyze how refugee settlement has affected Malawians in four southern districts — Dedza, Ntcheu, Mulanje, and Nsanje. In group and individual interviews with Malawian party and traditional leaders, we asked them to describe how the refugee influx had changed their lives. Our purpose was to identify the costs and benefits at the local level and to determine how the provision of asylum affected relationships between the two groups.

In all four districts we found considerable effects at the local level. All but one of 20 traditional leaders reported giving up between 16% and 75% of their own plots for refugees. Other small landholders likewise suffered losses and villages as a whole gave up portions of their communal lands (which particularly affected those without personal holdings). Malawians in the refugee-impacted areas also reported an accelerated rate of deforestation. Although Malawians in all four districts benefit from the construction of new health clinics and boreholes, they also reported that they must spend more time obtaining these services. Long waits at boreholes and clinics and deforestation negatively affect women, in particular, because they are traditionally responsible for fetching water and firewood, and caring for children.

Despite the costs, relationships between refugees and the local population remain good. The Government's open door policy accords with traditional norms of hospitality. Marriage between the two groups, particularly between Malawian men and Mozambican women, appears to be increasing. Malawian men are taking Mozambicans as second and third wives which potentially increases a household's food security since the Mozambicans receive refugee rations. Malawians are also responsible for the daily operations of the refugee assistance program, while UNHCR and the nongovernmental organizations coordinate or support their activities.

At the same time, party and traditional leaders evince increasing concern with the duration of the conflict and wonder whether the refugees will ever repatriate. The Malawian leaders' own assessments are mixed and many believe they face a long term refugee situation. They suggest that the Mozambicans will not return to their country until: (1) the conflict has ended, (2) food supplies are adequate, and (3) Mozambique's infrastructure (schools, roads, clinics, wells) can be rebuilt.

Recognizing that the refugee influx will continue to affect Malawians, we recommend targetted assistance to NGOs through the SHARED or other project mechanisms for: (1) income generation projects, (2) community reforestation, and (3) fuel efficient stove projects. We also recommend a Food-for-Work program to promote income generation activities and off-farm employment for Malawian small landholders who have lost their lands to refugees. In addition to food assistance, strategies need to be devised to halt deforestation. Our final recommendation is that UNHCR and donors explore alternative sources of cooking fuel for both Malawians and Mozambicans.

II. Background to Study

Malawi, one of the poorest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, provides asylum to over 800,000 refugees from civil war in Mozambique. Of the 39 countries in the region, Malawi has the seventh lowest GNP per capita and the third lowest life expectancy (Sahn et.al. 1990). Despite its own extreme poverty, the country has maintained an open door policy towards refugees from Mozambique. The refugee population has grown steadily from 60,000 in the middle of 1986 to the present level, which is equal to over 10% of Malawi's population (Martin 1990). The refugee population is the third largest in the world, the largest in Africa, and per capita one of the largest in the world.

Refugee immigration to Malawi continues to exceed repatriation to Mozambique (UNHCR Interviews). Although FRELIMO, the Mozambican Government, and RENAMO, the opposition, have begun to negotiate, progress on peace talks is slow. Recent refugee arrivals report that fighting between the two sides, as well as enforced slavery and torture of local populations by RENAMO, as documented in the Gersony Report (1988), continue. Recent arrivals also report widespread food scarcity and lack of any public services or infrastructure in the conflict areas. Given the current situation, refugees, Malawians, and relief officials alike doubt that the refugee burden on Malawi is likely to be mitigated in the near future.

The Government of Malawi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Program, bilateral donors, and several nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) provide emergency relief to the refugees. Within the Government, the Food Aid Relief and Rehabilitation Unit (FARRU) in the Office of the President and Cabinet is responsible for refugee policy and assistance. The Government implements health, water, sanitation, education, and human service programs with funding from UNHCR and assistance from NGOs. In 1990 UNHCR's projected budget is $US25 million for these activities. However, actual donor contributions may not cover this level of projected expenditure. Because of worldwide budgetary difficulties, the overall level of UNHCR assistance has not kept pace with the growing refugee population. In 1990 the World Food Program and bilateral agencies provided 150,000 MT of emergency food supplies (Government of Malawi et.al. 1990). NGOs active in refugee relief include the Malawian Red Cross, Christian Council of Malawi, Medecins Sans Frontieres, Lutheran World Federation, International Rescue Committee, American Refugee Committee, Save the Children U.S., Africare, and World Vision. The Red Cross distributes food and clothing, while MSF, the League, ARC, and IRC are involved in health programs.

Although there is a very well organized and extensive relief effort, the influx of Mozambicans is having a developmental impact on the Malawian economy. A joint Government of Malawi (GOM), World Bank, UNDP, and UNHCR team (1990:1) found that:

> The influx of Mozambican refugees into Malawi in 1987-90 has created a significant stress on the economy and is beginning to undermine the country's development program and structural adjustment initiatives.

The team identified three direct and indirect costs related to the refugee

influx: (1) government revenues expended for refugees, (2) pressure on public goods and services, and (3) increased demand for scarce goods and services. The team observed that the GOM is increasingly unable to fund recurrent and capital costs to redress the developmental impact of refugees in forestry, livestock, health, education, transport, and other sectors of the economy. They recommended an $US25 million emergency assistance package, which included $7.9 million for roads, $5.0 million for health, $2.2 million for education and water, $7.3 million for forestry, and $2.6 million for veterinary services. The assistance package was designed to restore public goods and services to pre-refugee levels but not to cover recurrent costs.

The team derived the $25 million figure by calculating the direct and indirect costs of uncompensated public expenditures. Their calculations, however, did not include the costs incurred by Malawians who gave up their lands and shared their own private or communal resources. The refugees are located primarily in the South with about 60% settled in Malawian villages and the remaining in camps (Martin 1989). Approximately 40% are located in Dedza and Ntcheu districts, just south of Lilongwe, and over 25% are located the southernmost district, Nsanje, where they outnumber the district's Malawian population. Refugees overall comprise a little more than 10% of the Malawian population, but in the southern districts they comprise between 20 and 54%. The refugee impact in these communities is considerable.

Economic analyses to date, such as the GOM and Bank Study, address primarily national level impact rather than the differential impact of the refugee population on local communities. Studies of refugee settlement both in Malawi (Oxford Study 1989) and elsewhere (Chambers 1990, Hansen 1989) suggest that the wealthy usually gain, while the poor are more likely to lose. The type of settlement — an organized camp versus an integrated village settlement — may also have a differential impact on the local population. In this study, we analyzed how refugee settlement has affected Malawians in four districts in the south — Dedza, Ntcheu, Mulanje, and Nsanje. Specifically, we asked traditional and party leaders in several communities to describe how the refugees had changed their lives. Our purpose was to identify costs and benefits for these Malawian communities and to determine how the provision of asylum affected relationships between the two groups. The communities we interviewed in Ntcheu, Mulanje, and Nsanje lived within or adjacent to camps, while those in Dedza lived within or adjacent to integrated village settlements. In virtually all the areas where the refugees have settled, they outnumber the Malawians in the immediate environs. However, in Nsanje the refugees outnumber the villagers district-wide.

The interviews were usually held in group sessions. In three villages in Ntcheu, we interviewed only the village headman. Those who spoke English, primarily the party leaders, answered us directly. Otherwise, a party leader, teacher, or UNHCR Malawian field representative translated from the local language — Chichewa, Lomwe, or Yao — for us. In only one instance did we notice an obvious unwillingness on the part of a party leader to translate the concerns of a traditional leader. In one of the interviews in Ntcheu, refugee leaders were also present. Regardless of the interview situation, we were impressed by the Malawians' frankness as well as their evident concern for the welfare of both their own communities and the refugees.

Malawi is often commended for its exemplary treatment of refugees. Although we primarily look at the local impact in our study, we also hoped to derive useful lessons from the Malawian experience for refugee situations elsewhere.

III. Major Issues

In this section, we present the major issues that emerged during the interviews. Throughout the interviews, traditonal and party leaders consistently raised concerns in the following three areas: (1) land use and production, (2) firewood, and (3) infrastructure (roads, schools, and water, and health facilities).

A. Land Use, Trade, and Agricultural Production

Traditional leaders in all four districts described how they and others in their community had given up productive lands for refugees. According to one Ntcheu traditional leader, "land is the biggest impact on the consciousness of the people." This leader claimed that he had given up several acres of maize fields and that where he had once harvested enough to sell ten to 15 bags of maize, he now bought six bags to feed his household. Although the accuracy of retrospective information is questionable, we heard similar estimates throughout the interviews.

To derive some magnitude of the losses, we asked people to report: (1) how many acres they had before and after the refugees' arrival, (2) how many bags of maize, sorghum, and goa beans they sold or bought over the past two years and before the refugees' arrival, and/or (3) how many granaries were filled over the past two years and before the refugees' arrival. The majority of those interviewed were smallholders with plots between one and eight acres. Many were unable to estimate the number of acres they owned, but could tell us how many bags or granaries they filled. The estimates of acres and bags or granaries filled usually correlated. In some cases, we walked around the farmer's lands and verified the amounts in the granaries.

Of the twenty or more traditional leaders who provided estimates, all but one reported giving up some of their own productive lands. The amounts given up ranged from one acre out of six (16%) to six acres out of eight (75%). The leaders would probably have more land than other villagers and the losses of poorer members of the village may be even more significant.

According to several leaders, this year had a particularly bad harvest. One explained, "I had two granaries before the refugees came, now I have less than one." When we visited his granaries, one was completely empty, the other was a third full. The late rains have made the harvest particularly bad, but a review of the last two years also showed that the loss of land has affected production. Declines in production were not being offset by improved technologies. Only two traditional leaders used fertilizer or hybrid seeds.

The traditional leaders also reported giving up common lands as well as their own plots. Some of the common lands were given up for refugee graveyards. "There are so many deaths — particularly children. We are running out of room to bury them," one leader stated. In some cases, it was unclear whether the leaders distinguished personal from common plots in their estimates. The loss of common lands for small holders and for the poorest without any land is particularly significant, because the common lands extend their resources and serve multiple uses — cattle grazing, firewood, and gardening. The loss of common lands affects not only the entire village's production but also its reserves.

When we asked why people were willing to give up their lands, the leaders explained, "The Government told us we must assist." Yet, the

leaders universally expressed sympathy for the refugees and many villages assisted the refugees before the Government made a formal policy statement. As one leader reported, "We didn't put the refugees outside but brought them inside our lands." Explaining the dilemma they now found themselves in, he added, "Our food is growing less."

The potential impact of refugees on rural wages was not directly addressed except in the Mulanje region, where Government workers observed that refugees may be taking jobs and depressing wages in the estate sector. While there is no hard evidence to suggest that the increased labor supply depresses rural wages, there is circumstantial evidence (Hale 1990). Since refugees receive food and social services, they may be able to work for lower wages. Given their previous wage base in Mozambique, they may also be more willing to accept a lower rate.

At the same time, there are potential benefits from the increase in population. An economic benefit could be the creation of new markets and an increased volume of trade in Malawi. Leaders in all four regions reported selling relishes and other vegetables to refugees, although others reported no increases in trade. "We have nothing to trade, they have nothing, too", explained one leader. In Ntcheu and Mulanje, however, refugees sell firewood collected in Mozambique to the Malawians. Both Mozambican and Malawian women produce and sell beer and for many Mozambican households, beer profits are a major source of livelihood. In Ntcheu and Nsanje, refugees also harvest maize from across the border in Mozambique which they sell to ADMARC, the Malawian grain marketing board, and in local markets. The leaders were not afraid that the increased supply of Mozambican maize would drive down the price. "Ours is better quality," a Nsanje leader observed.

Another Nsanje leader agreed that the increased demand had brought more trade into the region. "People are operating more shops, there are more supplies in the grocery — new goods — clothes, soap, salt, and sugar." His observation was supported by the level of market turnover as measured by tickets for trade (a kind of market licensing system). Since 1987, the number of tickets had more than doubled in value, from 15,349.36 in 1987/89 to 36,604.38 in 1989/90 (interview with Patrick Rutherford). At the same time, leaders reported that there had been an extensive cross-border trade prior to the war, which had declined with the fighting in Mozambique.

Refugee markets in Mulanje and Nsanje are very active and support tailoring, shoe repair, and teashops, as well as traditional market vendors. In a survey of the Mulanje market, we found the following items sold: dried fish, local and U.S. maize flour, EEC oil, soap, cocoa, yams, bread, scones, notebooks, gas lamps made out of tin cans, nails, buttons, thread, and vaseline. These items, however, are primarily limited to basic necessities and/or goods obtained through food aid. The items sold are not likely to be exported to larger markets nor will they generate a surplus. The few luxury items are brought in by traders from Blantyre. Our market survey to some extent supports an Oxford Team's (1990) observation that the potential economic benefits of the refugee influx are not accruing to poorer Malawians. Specifically, the Oxford team found,

> In general, refugee labour has merely displaced local Malawian labour; and/or been funded through the commodisation of previously unmarketed resources, especially edible weeds and field greens.

A few non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have begun income generation projects, such as a World Vision tailoring or Lutheran World Service (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Malawi) stove project. These projects employ both Malawians and Mozambicans and are producing goods that can be sold in wider markets (e.g., the tailors make school uniforms). A Ntcheu traditional leader, however, spoke eloquently of the need for more refugee employment:

> The refugees are not doing proper work for themselves. They simply stay in the villages without doing work. Every refugee should work, make bricks and we would sell. We don't .. only staying here eating and dancing. When they go home they would be responsible people and we would benefit. They must work, make a proper project and they would help. Those who are doctors should be as doctors, those who hoe should hoe, and those who could make bricks should make bricks. But we keep just feeding them — only the teachers are being responsible.

Given that the Malawian smallholders are also incurring losses, both Malawian smallholders and Mozambicans would benefit from more income generation projects.

B. Forest Reserves and Natural Resources

Traditional and party leaders universally cited deforestation as the second major impact of refugee settlement. Deforestation is a problem throughout Malawi, but the problem is particularly acute in the refugee areas. Refugees use wood for poles for their houses and for cooking. Alternative fuel sources are not readily available at a price most refugees could afford.

According to a traditional leader in Ntcheu, "Before the refugees came, we used to have forests. The refugees have wiped out the forests." He reported having to buy firewood to compensate for the loss. His experience was echoed by several others. The reported price for firewood ranged from 15 tambala (six cents) a headload from the Mulanje reserve to eight kwacha ($3.31) a bundle (several headloads) in Ntcheu. The leader from Ntcheu estimated that a household bought about four loads a week on average.

Nsanje traditonal leaders reported having to go as far as the Tengani mountains approximately ten miles away to collect firewood, whereas before the refugees' arrival, they had collected wood from their own or communally held lands. Deforestation negatively affects women, in particular, because they are usually responsible for collecting firewood and must walk greater distances to find wood. One Nsanje woman reported:

> We leave home when the first cock crows and come back about until almost sunset. The men have to follow to find us because the women are taking too long.

A Nsanje leader reported that people are digging the roots of trees for wood, while leaders from several districts reported that Malawians are substituting maize or millet stalks when available for firewood.

Malawians also buy firewood from Mozambican women who walk across the border to find wood and grass for housing in Mozambique. This strategy works in Dedza, Ntcheu, and Mulanje, but is reportedly too dangerous in Nsanje. Even in the relatively more secure regions, Mozambican women risk

being blown up by mines planted along the border. Several Mozambican children in Dedza, who said that their mothers had left to find firewood in Mozambique, showed concern about whether their mothers would return that evening.

Mulanje party leaders admitted that both refugees and Malawians steal from nearby forest reserves at night. According to a Mulanje party leader, many Malawians resettled further up in the reserves when the refugees arrived. The Government now faces the problem of trying to dislodge these Malawians, but has no other lands to give them. A Ntcheu traditional leader complained that "five forest reserves had been eaten by the refugees, they steal at night." In most cases, however, traditional leaders recognized that both Malawians and Mozambicans lacked firewood and that they were mutually responsible for resolving the problem.

Nsanje leaders also blame deforestation for the massive soil erosion after the 1989 floods. The Shire River runs through much of Nsanje, an alluvial plain. The flood left many Malawians and refugees who lived along the river without shelter or land and many had to relocate to higher grounds. The floods also hurt the fishing industry. According to a traditional Nsanje leader, "deforestation changed the course of the Shire." Heavy rainfall on deforested lands may have led to the change in the course of the river as this leader observed.

The Government, with funding from the World Bank, has initiated several reforestation projects. Mulanje has one of the more extensive reforestation projects organized by the Forestry Department. According to the forester, they planted 53 hectares in 1989 and planned to plant 100 hectares each year in 1990 and 1991. A World Bank financed project in Mulanje reforested 1,886 hectares and plans to reforest 4,094 by 1994. However, such projects are not keeping pace with the dimensions of the problem. "Trees are being cut faster than they can be planted. We should have been planted at a higher rate. We are losing our indigenous trees," a Mulanje forester explained. Both Malawians and Mozambicans continue to encroach on the reserves. "They don't know the rules and cut trees without following procedures. Some camps are digging roots," the forester explained.

The large reserve projects do not address the problems of communities at the local level. Community level projects include National Tree Planting Day and some tree planting activities financed by UNHCR. UNHCR has funded some small scale community reforestation activities. The Lutheran World Service (LWS), as noted earlier, has also organized a project to produce fuel efficient stoves. Several models of fuel efficient stoves had been financed by donors and NGOs, but party leaders report that the LWF model is the most cost-effective and adaptive. Traditional and party leaders suggested that community-level reforestation activities, such as planting of fruit trees, be expanded.

A project financed by UNDP addresses the demand side of the issue. UNDP supplies six kilograms a month of firewood by truck to refugees in the Dedza region from local forest reserves. NGO and UNHCR workers pointed out, however, that the average household level of need is closer to six kilograms a day. The project cannot be expanded to cover all refugee impacted regions, because there are not sufficient reserves in the north. Alternative fuel sources for the refugees, such as kerosene, may need to be investigated in the short run to halt deforestation. Reversing the damage that has already occurred will require intensive reforestation at both local and regional levels.

C. Infrastructure: Health Clinics, Water, Schools, and Roads

The third issue raised by traditional and party leaders in all four regions is the impact of the refugee influx on local infrastructure. Unlike the land and deforestation issues, leaders spoke of both positive and negative impacts. They observed that Malawian communities are benefitting from UNHCR construction of new schools, clinics, and bore holes, and from road improvements and maintenance. However, leaders also told of longer waits and lines to use these services. Women, who traditionally fetch water and take children to the clinics, are more directly affected by the longer waits at boreholes and clinics.

Health Clinics: In Dedza, UNHCR has paid for the construction of a government clinic. UNHCR also provides support to the Private Hospitals Association of Malawi (PHAM) clinics, so that they will offer their services free for refugees. However, the PHAM services are not free to Malawians and a traditional leader asked if this same service might be extended to poor Malawians.

In Ntcheu, Mulanje, and Nsanje districts, several government officials spoke of increased administrative burdens on staff. "There is the feeling that we have more work since the coming of the refugees but staffing load is the same," observed one official. In Mulanje even before the war Mozambicans would come to Malawi for health services. A health official estimated that Mozambicans use between six and 23% of the health services in general and more than 50% of the services in three to four clinics along the border. The health official observed that the increased demand is not only related to the war, but also to underdevelopment in Mozambique.

A Mulanje health official reported that the refugee influx is not affecting day to day operations of the hospital, because new dispensaries have been opened in several camps in the district. However, a Nsanje health official reported that the hospital occupancy rate (of 155 beds) in his district has increased from 140% in 1986 to 215% in 1989 and that Mozambicans account for 60% of the increase. According to the same official:

> The number of Malawians treated has decreased and it is not due to better health services. They are just not asking with crowded services.

Traditional leaders concurred with the problem of overcrowding. "There is plenty of medicine, but long waits," a leader explained. "Our clinic and hospital are not enough. There are too many, so they are not enough." At the same time, another Nsanje leader reported that because a new clinic has been constructed in his village, Malawians do not have to go as far for their health care. It should also be noted that there are health clinics in each of the camps in the Mulanje and Nsanje districts.

Water: Leaders in all four districts reported that UNHCR has drilled new boreholes, which provide a more assured water supply than they had before the refugees came. In the Nsanje district, UNHCR plans to drill 15 village boreholes in 1991 and has drilled five to date. According to the leaders, the five are not sufficient; there are long queues and frequent breakdowns because the boreholes are used continuously. When there is not enough water, Mozambicans and Malawians obtain water from the Shire River, which causes increased incidents of biharzia, cholera, and gastroenteritus. The UNHCR field officer reported that ten more boreholes

need to be built and ten rehabilitated. Traditional leaders estimated that women have to queue from before sunrise until ten or eleven in the morning. Throughout the four districts, however, we observed several people milling around boreholes, but no exceptional queues.

In the Ntcheu district, traditional leaders in an Ngoni village reported an acute water shortage. Four boreholes had run out of water and people now must walk two kilometers to a stream. Although the Ngoni villagers suffered water shortages in the past, the leaders reported that before the war they could get water from Mozambique. Kaloga village leaders in the same district reported that they depend primarily on wells and a borehole, but they also continue to obtain water from across the border. They also reported that Frelimo troops have contaminated their water supplies. Kabilonjo village leaders reported that they depend on boreholes and a well. Before the refugees' arrival they had only the well. "The wells don't run dry, but people take too long to bring water home," the leaders told us.

In the Dedza district, UNHCR has drilled and is drilling several new boreholes. Chigwammova leaders reported that of three boreholes drilled in their village, two are not working and that the piped water is not dependable. Chipusile leaders reported that they now have five boreholes, whereas before the refugees came, they used to obtain their water from the river.

In the Mulanje district, government officials reported that water shortages and long lines are less of a problem, because most refugees are in camp settlements where boleholes are provided. According to a local government administrator:

> when Mozambicans go home, Malawians will benefit, but now Malawians don't have as much. Malawians have to walk further [than Mozambicans] to the water supply.

In many Malawian villages in the four districts, there has always been an insufficient supply of potable water. In several villages, the construction of new boreholes benefits both Mozambican refugees and Malawians. However, if construction does not continue to keep pace with the increased population, the shortages that villages have always experienced will be exacerbated.

Schools: In all four districts, UNHCR has funded school construction for Mozambican refugees. These schools enroll only a small percentage of school age children. In many cases, the schools are built to conform with standard Malawian school construction and if and when the refugees leave, these schools could be taken over by Malawians. Mozambicans and Malawians usually also study in separate schools. The refugee schools follow the Mozambican curriculum and Portuguese is the medium of instruction, whereas in the Malawian schools the medium of instruction is English. Given the additional school construction and separate educational streams, Malawian schools have not been affected by the refugee influx in most areas. However, leaders reported that Malawians pay school fees of 3.50 a year, but that the refugee schools are free.

In at least two districts, Dedza and Nsanje, some schools are shared by Mozambicans and Malawians. Several Nsanje leaders reported that a few schools in their district had instituted a double shift system whereby Malawian children in the lower grades studied from eight to 11 in the morning and Mozambican children studied in the afternoon. This means that the Malawian children's school day, which usually runs from eight to 11:30

has been shortened by a half hour. When we visited a Malawian schools in Nsanje, we also learned that Mozambican children are paying the fees to enroll in Malawian schools. They enroll to advance to higher levels later on, because the refugee schools offer only the first two to three grades. This was also reported to be the case in a Dedza school. The Nsanje teachers said that they were unable to distinguish the Mozambicans from the Malawians in their classes, but that the enrollment in the school has almost doubled in the past two years. This influx into Malawian schools was not reported in Mulanje or Ntcheu.

Roads: Only the Nsanje leaders mentioned the impact of the refugee influx on the roads. A Nsanje leader described the main road south as:

> designed for low haulage, our roads are in bad shape most of the time. Before they could be in good shape most of the year; there is more transport to Nsanje or Blantyre, trucks stuck in mud.

Other Nsanje traditional and party leaders admitted that the road has never been good and that the increased trade has only made it harder to maintain. However, weighing the pros and cons, they also admitted that the increased traffic has improved transport to Blantyre and other larger centers.

IV. Community Attitudes and Relationships

A. Household Interactions

Across all four districts, leaders described their relationships to the Mozambican refugees as one of between "brothers and sisters." Kinship ties extend across the border. In many cases the refugees came from the same ethnic group, but were not directly related and had known one another previously as friends and/or through trade. In most cases the refugees and Malawians spoke the same language -- Chichewa, Lomwe, or Yao -- or had learned the language of the district.

Although several leaders stated that the Government had told them to accept the refugees, the decision appeared to accord with traditonal norms of hospitality. According to a Dedza party leader, "refugees are amongst themselves." Another explained:

> When refugees came here, we welcomed them. Supported them with poles, bamboo and mango trees, shared what little we have.

Likewise a Mulange party leader explained:

> We were not prepared for them when they came. Couldn't go to the border and say wait a minute. Traditionally and historically, there has been a lot of intermarriage; local people extended hospitality and gave small portions of their lands.

Malawian leaders further reported that marriage between the two groups is increasing. In one meeting, for example, a fourth of the Malawian traditional leaders interviewed (five out of 20) have taken Mozambican women as second and third wives. Although Malawians initially said that Malawian women were as likely to marry Mozambican men, on further questioning we learned that in the majority of the cases, Malawian men were marrying Mozambican women and often as second or third wives. One Malawian traditional leader laughingly explained, "Those Mozambicans they bring in some beautiful ladies." Intermarriage is reportedly fairly pervasive; in only one interview in Ntcheu did leaders report that there were no marriages between the two groups. Along with these reports there was also the perception that Mozambicans were more polygynous. Several male leaders said that whereas Malawians will take only one or two wives, Mozambicans can take up to three.

There is widespread sympathy for the refugees' situation. Many Malawians share the view of one Nsanje traditional leader who said, "We are poor, but they are poorer." A Ntcheu leader observed, "Most of the dwellings in which Mozambicans live are so small, need so much." There was also genuine concern for the refugees' welfare and security. A Dedza traditional leader said, "We are worried about our neighbors when they cross in Mozambique to collect firewood, they can be killed."

At the same time, several also expressed the view of a Nsanje leader who observed, "No problem with them but the problem is that we lack so many things that they lack too." Several traditional leaders reminded us that poor Malawians do not have enough food. They asked if poor Malawians might be entitled to food rations and be given the same opportunities to benefit from income generation projects for refugees. Although UNHCR and several NGOs believe that the number of food recipients is inflated and

that some of the food is going to Malawians, one UNHCR field officer observed that excess may be taking the pressure off Malawians who are bearing the refugee burden. The practice of taking a second or third Mozambican wife may also be a rational strategy to increase a household's food security since the Mozambicans are entitled to receive refugee food rations.

Unlike many other refugee situations, there were very few incidents of increased crime or antagonism between different groups reported. In Nsanje, some Malawian juveniles had been arrested in 1988 for looting refugee food supplies. They have recently been released from prison and the Malawian police is monitoring food distributions to prevent the same youths from looting again. The Nsanje police chief reported that overall there has been no increase in crime or in the number of prisoners since the refugees' arrival. "Mozambicans are exemplary in their behavior," he said.

A Ntcheu traditional leader emphasized the importance of maintaining peaceful and harmonious relationships with one another. He observed that acculturation process was sometimes difficult and gave as an example:

> It takes time to understand each other's way of life, difficult to cope with differences. When someone goes wrong and elders try to explain, you would think that the man [Mozambican] would understand what elders said, but he goes back and does it again.

The most negative comment we heard was, as mentioned earlier, an Ntcheu leader's comment that the refugees should be productively employed. Even though he was critical of refugees' behavior, the leader was also concerned with finding solutions. In general, traditional and party leaders are pragmatic in their concern with making the best of the situation for Mozambicans as well as Malawians.

B. Prospects for Repatriation

Party and traditional leaders evinced increasing concern with the duration of the conflict and with whether the refugees would ever go home again. The Nsanje Party Chair stated,

> We thought it would be a small conflict, but it didn't end. They are still coming today. Those who settled in our gardens still can't cultivate.

Their assessments as to the likelihood of refugees returning were mixed. A Dedza traditional leader observed:

> Some will go, but so many will remain here. So many are willing to stay here. They have their business, gardening.

In the same vein, a Nsanje traditional leader said:

> Some will go back and others will not because of how well they are staying here. Some ran away from war and will go back to get their families. Some say they will surely go back, others are very doubtful about peace in Mozambique.

In Dedza and Ntcheu districts, Mozambicans are beginning to farm across the border, which is a positive sign that the security situation is improving. In the Mulanje and Nsanje districts, however, traditional and party leaders saw little improvement. A Mulanje party leader doubted whether given the level of conflict any refugees would go back in the near future. "Refugees aren't going back," he asserted.

The most poignant and insightful assessment of the situation came from a Ntcheu traditional leader who observed:

> Some will go back, others will remain especially those who saw war. For those who didn't see blood, they will be the most willing to go. Those who saw a relative die, it is hard to forget.

A Nsanje traditional leader echoed his sentiments:

> For the time being some say that they will go back, but some show they will not go back. Each one tells his own experience of how it was there. Say they will never go back.

Another elderly traditional Nsanje leader, however, took a more long-term perspective:

> We think they will go back. They have just had troubles, which they have not yet forgotten, but later perhaps they will go back.

Whether the Mozambicans eventually repatriate or not, the general consensus was that they are not likely to do so in the near future.

We realized from these interviews that most Malawians believe that they face a long term refugee situation. Even if peace could be negotiated tomorrow, Malawians and Mozambicans alike recognize that Malawi offers more material resources to many Mozambicans than Mozambique. Marriage between the two groups is also diminishing the likelihood of repatriation for some Mozambicans, unless both Malawians and Mozambicans can be attracted across the border. For repatriation to work on a massive scale, a repatriation program will need to provide: (1) political stability and security, (2) household food security, and (3) adequate infrastructure (schools, clinics, roads, wells) in Mozambique. In the interim, Malawian traditional and party leaders at the local level recognize that the refugee situation is no longer a temporary one.

C. Organization of Refugee Assistance

Given Malawi's extraordinary hospitality, it may be difficult to transfer lessons learned about facilitating local relationships to other refugee situations. However, Malawi may also be a particularly exemplary situation because refugee assistance has been well organized and managed. The team was very impressed with the UNHCR operation in Malawi and would like to conclude this section with some brief observations about the positive aspects of the operation.

UNHCR Malawi in coordinating refugee assistance activities has been very careful to ensure that refugees are not advantaged in comparison to Malawians. Although refugees have certain advantages in terms of school and clinic fees, in general, Malawian leaders did not believe that refugees were better off than the Malawians. By selling some of their

food in the local market, refugees maintain their traditional dietary patterns while the food supply for Malawians is increased. Further, Malawian small landholders benefit from being able to sell their relishes to the refugees.

UNHCR Malawi field staff are also sensitive to the potential refugee impact on the local population. Field officers were well aware of the issues we have written about here and regularly include the local Malawian population in their health, nutrition, and employment monitoring activities and programs. They also maintain a good on-going communication with Malawian traditional and party leaders and were responsible for organizing several of our interviews. We found the communication between UNHCR and the leaders to be positive and open. UNHCR field staff were also sensitive to the need to address the food security needs of the Malawians and to consider the long term developmental impact of the refugee program.

Unlike many refugee situations, the Malawians have the primary role in organizing refugee assistance. An indigenous NGO — the Malawian Red Cross — distributes food, household supplies, and clothes provided by donors to the refugees. The international NGO presence is limited to providing management assistance in critical areas, while Malawian ministries are responsible for overseeing and implementing refugee activities relating to health, forestry, education, and roads, etc. The few income generation activities sponsored by international NGOs employ both Mozambicans and Malawians. Extensive Malawian participation means that Malawians are employed by and have ownership of these programs. Malawians are also gaining skills and expertise which may be useful to their own future relief and development activities.

Ensuring that Malawians have direct control over relief operations, that Malawians are not disadvantaged in comparison to refugees, and that there is on-going and open communication between Malawian leaders and those involved in the relief effort are three successful aspects of the Malawian refugee operation that could be applied elsewhere. Other aspects of the success of the program may be more difficult to emulate since the relief program's success may reflect in large part the unusual hospitality of the Malawian people. However, this hospitality has also resulted in some immediate costs to the Malawian people in terms of their own food security and some long run costs in terms of their resources.

V. Conclusions

The local effects of the refugee influx are considerable. Malawians in the districts where refugees have settled have given up their own and communal lands and have suffered corresponding losses in production. The majority already have very small holdings and cannot afford the losses in household income. Income generation projects are limited and there are few off-farm employment opportunities. Although the volume of trade has increased, many of the items sold come from food aid and/or outside the area. The few indigenous products are not likely to be exported to larger markets to generate a surplus. Thus, social and economic welfare of the small landholders in the refugee-impacted areas is deteriorating.

The refugee influx has also accelerated the rate of deforestation. Communities have increased tenfold in some areas. Forests are rapidly disappearing as refugees clear land and cut the grasses and wood for their housing and cooking. Compensating for the scarcity, Malawians, particularly the women, walk further distances, burn maize and millet husks, and buy firewood when available from Mozambicans or Government reserves. Poaching of Government reserves by both Malawians and Mozambicans may also be increasing. Although these strategies are allowing Malawians to meet their needs in the short run, they are not viable long-run solutions.

Malawians in the districts where refugees have settled have also been differentially affected by the increased demand on public services and infrastructure from the refugees. These effects to some extent have been mitigated by the construction of new boreholes, clinics, and schools, and road improvements. However, Malawians, particulary women, must spend more time obtaining these services. If the construction of new infrastructure does not keep pace with the population growth, Malawians will be further disadvantaged by the refugee influx.

Although the refugee influx has increased government expenditures at the national level, the direct costs are also accruing at the local level. Communities who are hosting refugees have incurred private and social costs and budgetary support at the national level will not offset the costs incurred by villagers, who have lost their own and communal holdings and reserves. Offsetting these costs requires inputs targetted to the local level.

Despite the strains and longevity of the refugee situation, relationships and attitudes between Malawians and Mozambicans remain good. A Government open-door policy reinforces traditional norms of hospitality. Malawians have taken responsibility for and are invested in the refugee assistance program, while UNHCR and the international NGOs have played a supportive and constructive role. Administering emergency aid through existing government structures assures that relief assistance accords with Government priorities and programs.

Yet, can these relationships be sustained and for how long? Like refugee situations in other parts of Africa, the burden falls hardest on the poorest Malawians and affects their long run prospects for development. The Chairwoman of the Malawi League of Women in Mankokwe, Nsanje summarized her perceptions of the changes:

> Since our friends from Mozambique came, there are some changes. They are our brothers and sisters. But since they have come here, they have overriden our gardens, food is scarce to us Malawians. We had plenty of trees around us here, but now have finished them. We had shallow wells and boreholes, but since the refugees came, they are less to us. This was the problem ... medical facilities. We had our hospital here, but since our friends have come, now there are less facilities. Schools, under five clinics are less because of this large number of friends. Plus roads. They construct our roads yearly but due to heavy goods, this causes damage to our roads.

That Malawians have absorbed such changes in their lives and yet continue to speak of Mozambicans as their friends reflects the incredible generosity of the Malawian people. However, that generosity is not without its costs. As a Ntcheu traditional leader sadly observed, "I am old. I don't worry about myself. I will die soon. But, what about my children?

VI. Recommendations

Our recommendations to the Government of Malawi, donors, international organizations, and NGOs based on the above findings fall into three areas:

* community-level projects,
* a food aid program for Malawians, and
* a strategy to halt deforestation.

In addition, we suggest some long-term development concerns, which are being accentuated by the refugee situation.

Community-level Projects: Donors and international organizations should consider increasing targetted assistance through NGOs, which work at the local level and are better positioned to develop community level initiatives. Based on our findings, the team recommends that donors and international organizations support NGO initiatives for:

(1) income generation projects aimed at larger markets (e.g., brick making, tailoring, fuel efficient wood stove production, etc.),

(2) local community reforestation projects, and

(3) projects aimed at improving fuel efficiency.

Given current portfolio and staffing constraints, USAID/Malawi, in particular, might consider supporting such initiatives through its PVO umbrella project, SHARED. Such NGO initiatives would assist small holders and communities who are directly impacted by refugee settlement, while also improving their longer term development prospects.

Food Aid Program: In addition to NGO activities, donors and international organizations need to address the short-run food needs of Malawian small landholders in the districts where refugees have settled. Maintaining or increasing current levels of refugee food aid may indirectly benefit Malawians. However, Malawians in these districts would directly benefit from a targetted food aid program. Although we did not quantify the level of need in the districts, a formula for estimating food allotments could be based on the amount of productive lands given up by the particular community. Traditional leaders, who determined which lands would be given up and by whom, could be responsible for distribution within the community. Structured as a Food-for-Work program, such assistance could also be used to promote income generation activities and off-farm employment. The Food-for-Work concept might be further expanded to include a Fertilizer and Seeds for Work program (Hale 1990). This would raise the productivity of the reduced land parcels while freeing up the recipients' time for reforestration projects (Ibid.).

Deforestation: In some districts of high refugee settlement, the resource base may no longer be sustaining the population increases. In addition to food assistance, the GOM with donor and UNHCR assistance needs to devise strategies to halt deforestation. Transporting wood from the north is not likely to be cost effective. Fuel efficient stoves can only decrease the rate of deforestation. The GOM, donors, and UNHCR may wish to explore alternative sources of cooking fuel for both Malawians and Mozambicans.

Long-run Concerns: While programs targetted at the local level are essential to offset the immediate social and economic costs, the indirect and more long run costs of the refugee burden have implications for Malawi's development policies and programs. The plight of the small landholders underscores the importance of the land tenure issue and the necessity of creating more off-farm employment opportunities. The accelerated loss of Malawi's forest reserves in the densely populated districts of refugee settlement attests to the importance of reforestation programs and sound conservation policies. The increased strain of the refugees on limited infrastructure and services points to the importance of increasing spending for the social sectors.

Interviews

DEDZA DISTRICT

Leah Thatcher, International Rescue Committee
L. Chinkonda, Area Chairman Malawi Congress Party (MCP)
Edward Mbewe, Area Committee Member MCP
Ali Aidi, Local Branch Secretary MCP
Amina Matolo, Area Women's League Chairperson
Witty Madaya, UNHCR Assistant Field Officer
Ezekiel Gama, Party Chair
Binzi, Women's League
John Sichole, Branch Chair
Mphande, Ministry of Health
Precious, Ministry of Health
German, Traditional Leader
Ndamela, Traditional Leader
Chika, Traditional Leader
Sichole (senior), Traditional Leader
Kambadza, Traditional Leader
Ndatopa, Traditional Leader

NTCHEU DISTRICT

Irene Nkhomo, ADRO DC
L.C. Ntonga, Lizulu
J.M.M. Mwachitete, Community Development
S.S. Kanthula, Inkosini Headquarters
L.S. Chimlutete, Clinical Officer
J.H. Mzamani
Chigwammowa Village Headman
Kalilomba Village Headman
JecJede, School Committee
T.A. Chalchumbira
J.P. Kawala, Headmaster
I.V. Njairo, Mozambican Teacher
Augustine Bick, Mozambican Headmaster
Evaristo Basilio, Mlauda Mozambican School
P. Holla, Malawian Teacher
Armando Pears, Mozambican Teacher
Inkosi Gomani, Ngoni Paramount Chief

Banda, District Regional Officer
Mwanza, District Committee Chair
Mengeisha Kebede, UNHCR Field Officer

MULANJE DISTRICT

H.P. Kawonga, District Committee Chair
Henry Soka, UNHCR Asst. Field Officer
Daniel Spear, District Medical Officer
District Forestry Officials (2)
District Relief Officer
District Education Officer
District Water Officer (1)

BLANTYRE

Patrick DeSousa, UNHCR Deputy Representative
Edie Gedalof, UNHCR Social Services Officer
Barnabas Barnabas, UNHCR Senior Project Officer
Joel Boutroue, UNHCR Associate Project Officer
Douglas Osmond, UNHCR Associate Project Officer
Marie Pierre Allier, Medecins Sans Frontieres Country Director
Patrick Joly, Medecins Sans Frontieres
Galatiya I. Jimu, Assistant Relief Coordinator, Malawi Red Cross
Marcel Fortier, Advisor to Malawi Red Cross, League of Red Cross and Red Crescent
Herve L. Cheuzeville, Project Officer, World Food Programme
Hussein Aboo Jakhura, Trader, Rab Processing Company
Malcolm Perry, Regional Director, World Food Programme

NSANJE DISTRICT

Ouma Ba, UNHCR Field Officer
Amilu Chilingulo, UNHCR Assistant Field Officer
Stanley Miselen, UNHCR Assistant Field Officer

District Joint Operations Committee:
Zambezi, Party Chair
Veteran
Assistant District Labor Officer
Post Office Director
Kamanga, Agricultural Officer
Education Officers (2)
Security Officers (2)
Kissi, Forestry Official
Koma, Social Welfare Official
Community Services Officer
Water Department
Prison Official
Information Officer
Klaas, District Relief Officer

Mankhokwe

B. Nyamathanga, Camp Administrator
Ndamera, Chief

F. Thomu, Area Chairman
M. Makawi, Mankokwe Area Chairman
G.V.H. Nghacha
G.V.H. Nyathando
Mofolo Jozef
M. Kavembe, League of Malawi Youth
A.V. Hmkupira of Nyachikadz
Nyachikadza, Chief
Charles C. Nyirenda, Relief Clerk
N.C. Kamasho, Councellor .
A. alufisha, Marka Area Chairman
L.M.W., Dmayouza Chairperson

Tengani Camp

Khomani, Malawi Congress Party Chair
Chinsomba
Ngona Headman
Chazuka
Nthumba
Subolla, Women's League
Mpomba, Nyamitutu Village Women's League
Mafuga, Ward Councellor
Reno Headman
Chitsa Headman
Mphamba Headman
Mtondo Headman
Kachere Headman
Nkmoeba, Malawi Congress Party
Bhima Militai, Malawi Youth League
Lingestoni, Malawi Youth League
Harem Mchacha
Muasalapa, Ward Councellor
Chokolo Village Head

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