

PREMIERE URGENCE

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN AID

FINAL REPORT

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

PROGRAM OF FARMING AND FISHING RECOVERY
IN FAVOUR OF
VULNERABLE AND SPONTANEOUS RETURNEES

PROVINCE OF EQUATOR
DISTRICT OF SOUTH OUBANGUI

54,720 RECIPIENTS

From the 1st of July 2002 to the 31st of March 2003

Kinshasa / Paris, 15th of July 2003

I - Executive Summary

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Program Title: 'Program of farming and fishing recovery in favor of vulnerable and spontaneous returnees'

Cooperative Agreement/Grant No : HDA-G-00-02-00154-00

Country/Region : Democratic Republic of the Congo, Province of Equator, District of South Oubangui, along the Oubangui river.

Disaster/Hazard : War - 3 years of war between the Congolese Army Forces (CAF) and "le Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo" (MLC) in the targeted area. Displacement of populations. Destruction of buildings and infrastructures. Disorganization of agricultural and fishing activities. Breaking of river trade. Food insecurity.

Time Period Covered by This Report : from : the 1st July of 2002 **to :** the 31st March of 2003.

Activities 'summary during the reporting period

Between July 1999 and July 2001, the Oubangui's riverside populations living in the Province of Equator have been deeply affected by the combined effects of recurrent war between the Congolese Army Forces and the rebel forces of the "Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo", and the breaking of the river trade with important cities as Kinshasa, Republic of Congo and Central Africa.

In this context, the overall objective of Première Urgence is to contribute to the reinstallation of civilians, mainly returnees, and participate to the restoration of food security for the most vulnerable population.

The 3 main expected results of the program are :

- The improvement of the food situation of 7,600 targeted vulnerable households,
- The recovering of the farming and fishing production of 7,600 targeted vulnerable households and the security of their nutritional state,
- The generation of the targeted 5,200 agricultural households and 2,400 fishermen households' incomes, through selling a part of their production.

International and national staff

The international team in charge of the following of the mission and the program arrived on the field between the beginning of July and the beginning of August. Six expatriates were employed for the carrying out of the program for the seven months previously planned. The position of logistician for distribution have not been renewed for the two following prolongation months, since in-country staff were experienced enough to carry out the distribution with autonomy.

This expatriated team was composed by :

- 1 head of mission : Erwan Legrand, and then Hakim Chkam,
- 1 program co-ordinator : Jean Javogues, and then Laurent Van Reeth,
- 1 administrator : Marie Pierre Delclève, and then Nathalie Couget,
- 1 logistician/security officer : Hugo Trochet,
- 2 logisticians for distribution : Cé Théa and Laurent Van Reeth, and then Gaël Farigoules,

Note : part of the expatriate team has been replaced (three positions) after having performed the installation phase and begun the distribution phase.

In Kinshasa, after several procedures with the Congolese Ministry of Agriculture, Première Urgence obtained an agreement allowing the organization to work temporarily as a NGO in DRC. The final agreement is under process and should be obtained in few months.

In Equator, after many appointments with Mr. Jean Pierre Bemba, the President of the « Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo » (MLC) and his General Secretary, Mr. Olivier Kamitatu, a protocol agreement was signed between the MLC and Première Urgence in order to allow us to work in the best conditions.

Concerning the local staff of Première Urgence in North Equator, 57 persons have been selected after a very strict and serious recruitment with many theoretical and practical tests, and a final interview for each of them. This team selected in Gemena, Libenge and Dongo was composed by :

- eight (8) monitors, all agronomist engineers with a serious experience in vulgarization.
- Four (4) team managers, all agronomist engineers with a serious experience in the management and a good knowledge of international NGOs.
- Sixteen (16) distributors with enough knowledge concerning the stock management and the management of workers within NGOs,
- Five (5) reception officers and one (1) reception manager, with big experiences in the warehouse and stock management and the management of workers within NGOs,
- Six (6) drivers, specialized in mechanic for gazoil vehicles,
- One (1) administrative assistant (based in Gemena),
- Sixteen guards in charge of the security of the houses, offices and warehouses.

Their contracts were realized in Gemena as regarding as the local legislation. The salaries grid was calculated on the base of salaries given by other international NGOs working in the area. All of our employees are registered at the National Institute for the Social Security.

Concerning the unloading of goods and material, we decided to share the workers' teams for the distributions and the workers' teams specially employed for the unloading of the barges.

For the unloading of the barges, between 100 and 200 workers were employed. In order to facilitate the management of all this staff, we worked with existing workers' associations in the project area.

As far as the daily loading work is concerned, we have been employed around fifteen to twenty workers. They are in charge of the loading of the trucks from the warehouses and the unloading of these trucks on the distribution points. They have also to help the distribution teams inside each distribution point by bearing the kits of the beneficiaries out from the distribution area, in order to avoid accumulation of people in this area.

Moreover, around eight to ten villagers are employed each distribution day, directly on site, to help the distribution teams to share the rations and to assure the security around each distribution point.

Logistic installation

Six (6) NISSAN 4x4 pick-up vehicles, four (4) YAMAHA motorbikes, one (1) 25 CV EVIRUNDE/JOHNSON outboard motor and two (2) YAMAHA generators were bought in Kinshasa and sent through cargo planes in Gemena. Three trips were necessary to bring all this equipment. Besides, each trip allowed us to load other kind of equipment useful for the installation of our bases.

With the important logistical support provided by OCHA office in Gemena, we were able to find and install an office in Gemena which constitutes our administrative base.

Two offices / houses were found and installed in the operational bases of Libenge and Dongo. One other office has been rent in Libenge in order to allow our distribution managers and monitors to work in good conditions for their distribution reports and their evaluation studies on our beneficiaries.

In total, eight (8) 4x4 MAN trucks have been rent from Gemena and Dongo bases for the first distribution phase (rations + kits). Then, six (6) from them will be used for the following ones (rations).

Two (2) warehouses with a total area of 500 m² in Libenge base and one (1) warehouse with a total area of 300 m² in Dongo base have been rent. These three warehouses were completely rehabilitated in order to protect all our rations, seeds and tools in the best conditions.

Contracts

After a call for tenders realized by Première Urgence four (4) contracts for the purchase of seeds and tools :

- **Contract for food crops seeds**
Selected firm : LEDYA
Amount of the contract : 43.000 US\$
- **Contract for market gardening seeds**
Selected firm : Erco-Consult
Amount of the contract : 5.817,9 US\$
- **Contract for agricultural tools**
Selected firm : Quincaillerie DOZ
Amount of the contract : 51.170 US\$
- **Contract for fishing kit**
Selected firm : Cogeli
Amount of the contract : 24.165 US\$

Moreover, in order to check the appropriated seeds quality, as regarding as the technical description given in the contracts, two tests were realized in parallel by :

- The SENASEM (the Seeds National Office)
- Première Urgence agronomist.

Beneficiaries' selection

The selection of the recipients was done in three phases :

The first phase on site was the monitoring for the selection of our program beneficiaries. It consisted in information meetings with local authorities, aiming at explaining the goal of the program and the selection criteria. For each village, the local chieftain was entrusted with selection forms in order to list the most vulnerable families. After collection, Première Urgence's monitoring teams have checked the list validity directly on the field, then established the final beneficiaries lists.

This final selection was performed by taking into account the composition of each family and according to their vulnerability state, in one hand, and in the other hand in accordance with the following assumption : one active man (between 15 and 55 years old), either farmer or fisherman, is able to provide for his own needs plus those of two other of his relatives ; one active woman (between 15 and 55 years old), either farmer or fisherman, is able to provide for her own needs plus those of one other of her relatives (pregnant women are not considered as an active one) ; finally, one elderly active farmer or fisherman, either man or woman, is able to provide for his/her own needs but no more.

The results of this monitoring showed that the vulnerability and the needs were not the same within the totality of the project area, but that "village pockets" were existing, where people went back very recently, living in real poor conditions. We focused our selection in priority in these villages

This first monitoring phases allowed us to select the majority of the program beneficiaries. However, our monitors have continued this work concurrently to the distributions since a serious amount of households were not taken into consideration during the first monitoring weeks. Indeed, a lot of them came back in their villages when they learnt our presence and the aim of our program.

Families who were not able to prove their permanent reinstallation were not taken into account.

During the distribution, our team managers have been taken claims from families that were not pre-selected but estimate to correspond to the program criteria.

For all these cases, we have performed further monitoring and later distributions (fishing kits or market gardening seeds for which the seeds season period is less strict an limited than for the food crops seeds).

The second phase of selection aimed particularly to collect and to register complaints and objections, concerning possible forgotten people, and expressed by the Heads of localities or by the population after the first selection phase and the first distributions. This phase was particularly important for the program, since we expected some returns of refugees as a result of the first distributions. However, it appeared that information given by the population representatives was not reliable anymore : in one hand, the non beneficiary population put pressure on their representatives in order to be registered in the selection forms ; in the other

hand, the data defining each selected family have been broadly falsified, as the final selection method and criteria were well understood by everybody.

Many heads of family have presented themselves as newly returned in their village of origin and affirmed the will to definitely stay with all their relatives. In spite of the collusion with their neighbors, it has been easy to understand that the main part of the family was still on the other side of the boundary and that there were no real wish nor will but receiving anything for free.

A systematic verification has been carried out in each locality and corrections have been made in the recipients lists when necessary. Additional distributions have been therefore achieved for the new selected families. The case of the village of Engalango, close to Imese, is particular : it has been completely rebuilt by the villagers, who all returned there consequently to Première Urgence activities.

The third and last selection phase concerned the FAO specific gardening kits and fishing kits. Their specificity, as well as the wideness of the area already touched by the program, led us to target specific recipients : as it was firstly suggested by FAO representatives, this phase has therefore been devoted to association. Selection and monitoring of the local associations was achieved in December, and had to be followed by specific information and training phases regarding stock management and associative work. The kits distributions have been brought into effect in accordance with the motivation and the seriousness of the members, which were obvious during the beginning of the agricultural and of the fishing seasons.

Preparation and unloading of the barge

The choice of the company in charge of the transportation of the rations with the barge was realized by the WFP. Then, we signed a contract with the same company (TFCE) for the transportation of our tools and seeds in the same barge. The cost was 60 USD per ton for the transportation of these products until our bases.

The loading from Kinshasa took ten days. The barge left the port on the 2nd of August and arrived only in Dongo on the 27th of August. Première Urgence started the unloading of the barge on the 28th of August and finished to unload the required quantities for Dongo base on the 31st of August. The barge left Dongo on the 1st of September and arrived in Libenge on the 3rd of September. The unloading started on the same day and finished on the 10th of September.

Concerning the unloading of the barges, we signed a contract with existing local workers associations. The amount of the contract signed with the workers' association in Dongo is calculated on a basis of 2000 Fcfa per ton. In total, we unloaded 256 tons of rations, seeds and tools in Dongo. The final amount was around 730 USD. In Libenge, we signed a contract with the local association calculated on a basis of 1000 Fcfa per ton. 486 tons of rations, seeds and tools were unloaded. The final amount in Libenge was around 690 USD.

The second barge only concerned WFP rations. It arrived in Dongo on the 09th of December and reached Libenge on the 13th of December. The unloading finished the 19th of December..

Distributions

During the unloading of the barge, we started the first distributions in Dongo area from the 30th of August. The first distributions of rations and the agricultural kits were completed on

the 4th of September. The distributions of the fishing kits started in the area on the 5th of September and finished on the 7th of September. Last beneficiaries were identified in the meantime, in particular the village of Engalengo, close to Imese, whose inhabitants returned home as a result of our presence. The first distribution phase was definitively completed the 12th of October.

In Libenge area, the distributions of rations and agricultural kits started on the 9th of September and finished on the 28th of September. A second kits and rations distribution has been performed then for FAO food crops kits. The fishing tools' distributions in Libenge have been then completed. Our strategy consisted indeed in separating agricultural kits and fishing kits distributions, by starting with agricultural kits distributions in order, on a first hand, to respect the season planning and on an other hand to facilitate our logistic organization.

Remaining store goods in Dongo's warehouse allowed us to perform the second rations distribution phase in this area and to start the third and last one. Then, the distribution schedule was linked to the second barge arrival. Dongo's distributions were all completed the on 11th of December 2002. Libenge's distributions were completed on the 22nd of February 2003.

During the all program, have been distributed :

Dongo area:

- 2342 machetes
- 1171 hoes
- 1021 files
- 1021 axes
- 10960 kg of maize seeds
- 750 kg of beans seeds
- 40,84 kg of vegetables seeds

For 1171 farmer's families

- 750 fishing nets
- 69 kits with reels and hooks

For 369 fisherman's families

- 273 738,1 kg of maize
- 57 855,6 kg of leguminous
- 16 071 kg of oil
- 2571,36 kg of salt

For 3 turns of food rations for 9941 people

- 236 nets
- 116 reels
- 98 boxes of hooks

That is tools for 4 fishing associations, gathering an average of 30 members

Libenge area :

- 7368 machetes
- 3729 hoes
- 3269 axes
- 3041 files
- 35015 kg of maize seeds
- 1000 kg of soybean seeds
- 1250 kg bean seeds

For 3729 farmers' families

- 2745 fishing nets
- 301 kits of reels and hooks

For 1403 fisherman's families

- 569 015,8 kg of maize
- 155 188,9 kg of leguminous
- 42 761,1 kg of oil
- 6890,38 kg of salt

That is 3 turns of food rations or 57 444 individual food rations

- 190 machetes
- 690 hoes
- 3 axes
- 197 rakes
- 26 files
- 675 kg of maize seeds
- 4350 sachets of vegetables seeds
- 121 675 kg of maize
- 34 465,5 kg of leguminous
- 10 161,75 kg of oil
- 1616 kg of salt

That is gardening kits and food rations for 21 associations (2682 families)

- 669 nets
- 195 reels
- 281 boxes of hooks

That is fishing kits for 6 fishing associations (a total of 220 members)

In total, have been recipients of the program :

- 4900 families of farmers
- 1772 families of fishermen
- 2682 families of farmers (through the gardening associations)
- 340 families of fishermen (through the fishing associations)

Monitoring and follow-up

Concurrently to the distributions, monitoring teams have carried out a follow up phase aiming at :

1. collecting and checking complaints expressed by possible forgotten people and families or by people recently returned to their village of origin
2. verifying the concrete and effective use of the distributed tools and seeds
3. answering to technical questions expressed by recipients, particularly regarding the correct use of vegetable seeds, which seemed to be more problematic.

First facts noticed subsequently to this follow-up phase are :

1. An ignorance relatively frequent about the farming and cropping calendar.

Although climatic conditions are highly favorable for the running of two following cropping seasons, most of the beneficiary farmers plan their works for the only A season (from March to June). This season allows the specific works of clearing of the lands and burning of vegetation, which are possible only at this time, after the dry season. Superior yields resulting of this choice justify the recipients' reaction : most of them showed recalcitrance as for sowing in August or September, right after the distributions, and expressed the wish to keep the seeds for the A season.

2. Significant differences within the targeted area in terms of needs and of expectation.

Problems regarding the agricultural calendar have been particularly obvious in the southern part of the targeted area, between the localities of Dongo and Imese, whereas almost all recipients living in the North of Dongo have achieved the sowing as soon as the distribution were done. We now know that the majority ethnic group "Lubala" in the southern region do not consider maize as a major component of their diet. They firmly wanted to conserve the seeds for a better season, in order to get higher productions and incomes, since the main goal of the crop is trade. They even met difficulties for the consumption of the grains, because of the lack of material and practical knowledge concerning the processing of maize and the making of flour.

This problem has been the same for the beans and soybeans seeds. Only a few groups of farmers were able to crop and to consume them, according to the extent of the area touched by the vulgarization programs carried out before the conflict.

3. Significant differences regarding families structure and composition.

From the beginning of the selection and of the distribution phases, we have been forced to manage with an important range of family sizes, since beneficiary vulnerable families can be made of one only person as well as 30 persons and recipients are more numerous than foreseen. Initially planned for each member of each beneficiary family, food rations have been therefore abated and limited to 5 persons as a maximum per family.

4. A lack of technical knowledge.

Technical gaps particularly regard vegetables crops which indeed require special care. Firstly, recipients were puzzled facing the common names written on the seeds sachets and a translation in vernacular languages has been necessary and achieved directly on the field. Unfortunately, recipients are too numerous and it was not possible to visit and to inform each

of them. Then, in each locality, we chose a particularly motivated recipient and put him in charge of the spreading of the information. Moreover, these recipients profited by a more steady follow-up and training from the monitors, in order to become a reliable reference for the other recipients of the same village.

5. A lack of organizing for the fishing activities.

One of the first complaints registered after the distributions came from the fishermen of Imese, who had received fishing nets : they said that the quantity distributed (5 nets per two fishermen) was insufficient. In one hand, it seemed that one fisherman needed 9 nets to carry out efficient fishing activities, and in the other hand that the recipient found it impossible to obtain by themselves the strings necessary to bind the nets and make them operational.

This complaint has been registered several times and in different villages.

After verification, we concluded that those problems were due to the only individualism of the fishermen. Indeed, some recipients put in common their kits (5 nets for two fishermen) and were therefore able to quickly resume their activities; what means that the quantity of nets distributed was relevant.

So, we urged the fishermen to carry out their activities in an associative way, or, at least, to work in twos. Eight fishermen associations have been created or reorganized further to the action Première Urgence. These associations, including a majority of non beneficiary fishermen, have been followed by the monitoring teams and became the purpose of a specific part of the program, concerning the specific fishing tools kits funded by FAO.

This fact regarding fishermen is not valid for farmers, who indeed are particularly dynamic and efficient in terms of associative works, within the program activity area. An other specific part of the program has therefore been devoted to these last ones, aiming to check their actual reliability, to identify their needs in terms of activities organizing and finally to initiate specific tools kits distributions and collaboration.

FAO had funded agricultural tools kits specifically devoted to market gardening, which are, consequently, different to other kits. It was therefore clear that those kits had to be distributed to specific recipients or group of recipients as suggested FAO representative in the beginning of the program. Dynamism of the gardeners associations was a fortunate opportunity.

Nevertheless, this phase only regarded the area of Libenge, because of the two following reasons :

- contrary to Dongo area, which have profited from the prompt resumption of fluvial trade following the arrival of the first humanitarian barge, Libenge area stayed relatively enclosed, because of both fluvial and terrestrial communication stoppage, and in spite of humanitarian barges unloading. The village markets are obviously poor, and a complementary action was relevant in order to revive production activities and to durably improve inhabitants living conditions,
- most of the dynamic market gardening associations are actually located in Libenge area.

Thus, 21 associations have been selected. One is located in Batanga, two in Mawuya and the others in Libenge and the surroundings.

The follow-up phase ended with a satisfactory inquiry, aiming to assess the program impact for the targeted populations and regions. Results are presented in § III.

Objective : Restore the agricultural production and re-start fishing activities in favor of 7200 vulnerable Oubangui riverside households who return in Equator, in the districts of North and South Oubangui.

Indicator and Current Measure

- Food self-sufficiency

Since the distributions have started, the food situation of the area's population has been secured by the food rations. They were first composed of 11,1 kg of maize, 2,7 kg of beans or peas, 0,75 kg of oil and 120 g of salt per person. Then, when the selection phase showed that the amount of beneficiaries was superior to the one previously forecast (mainly because of the size of the beneficiary families : 7,2 persons by family as a field average against 6 persons by family as a WFP standard), quantity of maize has been abated to 9 kg.

Objectives are obviously attained as far as food security and revival of farming activities are concerned. But this fact is, up to now, only true for the during of the program.

Reconstitution of a food stock, disappearing of hunger and strength for the works are the most favorable impact .We highlight two essential factors contributing to the program success :

- firstly, an adequate and regular alimentation which gives the required physical capacity to carry out farming works,
- then, reconstitution of the food stock strongly contributes to an atmosphere of appeasement and confidence (some said pleasure and joy), which is necessary for any undertaking.

In parallel, The fishermen which were distributed with fishing tool kits have started to produce. Their self-sufficiency considerably improved and they were able to feed their families and to sell the surplus few weeks after the distribution.

- Production surplus progressively commercialized

All the recipients who have sown, have as well consumed part or all of their productions. Half of them have conserved part of the vegetables in order to produce further seeds. Very few stored products for the constitution of food stocks, what is quite difficult with vegetables. As far as maize is concerned, all beneficiary farmers have stored part of the production for the making of a bigger seeds stock. Prices and sold quantities given by the recipients are not reliable and very varying.

The main objectives are attained, particularly as far as agricultural activities revival and food security are concerned. Moreover, durability of the action is guaranteed since half of the beneficiary farmers have produced and conserved new seeds.

An other positive fact for the farmers is the discovering of new kind of vegetables and new varieties, and their integration into the usual diet.

Selling of the products, however, have been anecdotal and occasional. This is particularly due to the low local purchase power, as well as to the low amount of surplus to be sold.

For the fishermen, the results are very satisfying, with regards to the food security objectives. As far as sale is concerned, difficulties are mainly linked to the bad state of the roads, which isolate considerably the fishermen villages. Usually, they are not able to do the selling by themselves and have to do it trough intermediary dealers, who transport the fishes by bicycle, to the main market places. Anyhow, trade of fresh fishes is unconceivable.

We have seen that hook fishermen were able to start their activities earlier. Selling have consequently resumed earlier as well, and first results are encouraging.

Season for net fishing occurs later and is shorter. Moreover, maximum of production happened in a troubled period for the region, notably with the events in Bangui, where selling are possible.

- Restoration of exchanges flux

As far as the kits distributions are concerned, no exchange flux have been restored yet since the farmers and fishermen are just restarting their activity.

Nevertheless, the presence of Première Urgence as international NGO in the place, and more particularly the arrival of the barge from Kinshasa, have obviously strengthen both population and traders in the feeling of security. This fact resulted in the restoration of river trade exchanges flux between Kinshasa and Dongo. Now, it regards only bad quality stocks of maize, coffee and groundnut that were remaining in warehouses from former harvesting.

Indubitably, quality yields expected through the distributed seeds will be quickly sold, as soon as the river is accessible again (what means on the beginning of April) and provided that producers find a way to meet traders.

Resources

Budget for Objective : **585,501 USD** Expended This Period : **582,223 USD**
Cumulative Expenditures to Date : **582,223 USD** Balance : **3,277 USD**

II - Program Overview

A) Goal and Objectives of the program

1. Goal

The main goal of Première Urgence is to contribute to the reinstallation of **54,720** vulnerable and spontaneous Oubangui's riverside returnees in their former villages (**7,600 households**) and to participate to the restoration of food security for the targeted population.

2. Objective

- Main objective

In order to reintegrate beneficiaries and participate to the restoration of food security in quick and acceptable conditions, Première Urgence proposes to restore traditional farming and fishing activities in favor of **5,200 households of farmers and 2,400 households of fishermen**. This project should then allow the most vulnerable to be self sufficient and to reach again the same level of living conditions that they use to have before the war.

- Secondary objectives

The other objectives of Première Urgence is to contribute to :

- revitalize the flux of commercial exchanges,
- Improve health conditions of populations by providing them with the sufficient and balanced level of food
- develop local competencies: Première Urgence has been locally employed its staff and trained them to its distribution methodology,
- multiply cultural exchanges within this isolated area of intervention.

B) Targeted population and critical needs identified

The targeted population is the vulnerable Congolese refugees and displaced persons who return back in one of their villages, located on the axis Libenge – Imese, in the South Oubangui district.

As far as the distribution project of farming and fishing inputs is concerned, the targeted beneficiaries are based in favor of around 45 % of the total population of the area divided as follows: 4,300 households of farmers, around 40 % of the households of farmers, and 1,900 households of fishermen, around 60 % of the households of fishermen.

1,400 additional agricultural tool kits and fishing materials given by the FAO are reserved for the Pygmy population and other beneficiaries that have not be yet registered during our assessment mission.

The needs expressed by this population are simple and constant : to come back to their former living place and to restart a normal life. So far, the data collected on the field show that more than 80% of the inhabitants have come back to reinstall themselves in their former village; when the others (mostly refugees living in camps) wish to come back but can't decide to return in a durable way without having the minimum means to ensure their subsistence. Most of the people who had fled because of killing, destruction and looting, lost the little goods they had and are not in a position to find the basic tools, essential material and seeds they need to restart their former farming, fishing or trade activities.

C) Geographic locations of all major activities

Organisation: Première Urgence

Date: August to December 2002

Country: Democratic Republic of Congo

First Administrative Unit: Province of Equator

Second Administrative Unit: District of South-Ubangui

- **Première Urgence administrative office :**

Place : Gemena (N3° 14' 48.0" E19° 46' 46.8")

- **Première Urgence operational base N°1 :**

Place : Libenge (N3° 39' 03.6" E18° 37' 45.6")

Activity : Distribution of farming tool and seed kits, of fishing equipment and of food rations

- **Première Urgence operational base N°2 :**

Place : Dongo (N2° 43' 46.7" E18° 24' 22.8")

- **Main distribution points :**

Depends on base of	Distribution point	Coordinates (° ' ")
Libenge	Batanga	N3 42 34.3 E18 35 47.5
Libenge	Ngoli	N3 41 05.2 E18 42 13.0
Libenge	Yalibi	N3 35 54.9 E18 41 30.2
Libenge	Lebo I	N3 32 41.8 E18 39 45.2
Libenge	Libanda	N3 30 07.6 E18 44 20.0
Libenge	Ambuma	N3 28 27.9 E18 45 52.7
Libenge	Bado	N3 26 05.7 E18 40 53.2
Libenge	Lebo II	N3 22 54.2 E18 38 40.1
Libenge	Mbongo Gbata	N3 17 56.3 E18 41 37.4
Libenge	Mawuya	N3 14 01.5 E18 41 06.9
Libenge	Zambi Cum	N3 09 35.0 E18 37 44.4
Libenge	Mbongo atembima	N3 09 22.2 E18 44 59.3
Libenge	Balagonda	N3 05 40.7 E18 38 48.4
Libenge	Libenge centre	N3 39 03.6 E18 37 45.6
Dongo	Dongo centre	N2 43 46.7 E18 24 22.8
Dongo	Nguna	N2 31 26.1 E18 21 53.2
Dongo	Mangbala	N2 14 16.9 E18 09 36.7
Dongo	Ngbanza	N2 46 14.8 E18 38 31.1

III - Program Performance

A) Description of the program performance (*vis-a-vis the program objectives as outlined in the grant*).

Quantitative and qualitative aspects of distributions

Designation	Total reception			Total distribution	% distribution
	1st barge	2nd barge	Total		
	Quantity	Quantity	Quantity	Quantity	%
Maize (kg)	504000	409905,5	913905,5	896 988,3	98,15
Leguminous (kg)	123063,4	123 850	246913,4	246 814,9	99,96
Oil (kg)	34125,66	35672,51	69798,17	68 366,11	97,95
Salt (kg)	5500	5500	11000	10 980,24	99,82
Machetes (FAO + BCECO)	9900		9900	9900	100,0
Axes	4296		4296	4293	99,9
Hoes (FAO + BCECO)	5600		5600	5590	99,8
Files	4100		4100	4088	99,7
Maize seeds (sacks)	4665		4665	4665	100,0
Soybean seeds (sacks)	100		100	100	100,0
Bean seeds (sacks)	200		200	200	100,0
Rakes	200		200	197	98,5
Fishing nets BCECO	3750		3750	3750	100,0
Hooks N°8 BCECO (boxes)	399		399	399	100,0
Hooks N°12 BCECO (boxes)	200		200	200	100,0
Hooks N°16 BCECO (boxes)	200		200	200	100,0
Reels N°18 BCECO	399		399	399	100,0
Reels N°27 BCECO	400		400	400	100,0
Hooks FAO (boxes)	252		252	252	100,0
Reels FAO	320		320	320	100,0
Fishing nets FAO	650		650	650	100,0

Concerning the qualitative aspect of the distribution, we have firstly used the grouping method of distribution which consists in calling several families of the same size and distributing them in the same time. These groups couldn't be of more than 20 persons unless some problems can happen in the sharing of the rations.

For the following food distributions, our teams used the scooping method, which consists in giving directly the food ration to each family, considering the size of the family, without grouping them with other family.

Impact of the project

A satisfaction inquiry was carried out by Première Urgence's monitoring teams towards the recipients, between February (Dongo area) et March 2003 (Libenge area), and aiming to assess the results and the impact of the program.

Recipients have been randomly chosen in every targeted localities and questioned by means of a standard inquiry. Results of the inquiries have been registered in specific forms

The recipients have been questioned directly, with no intermediary, so that their answers were not influenced by a third person (such as the Head of the locality, the wife, the husband, ...).

Although all the questions are listed in the forms, the inquiry has been carried out as an open interview. We took particularly care not to force recipients' answers, so that they did not feel themselves under the pressure of a cross-examination. So, the forms registered the exact answers of each recipients (or the non answer).

Those forms, even if they are only partially completed, are the basis for the presentation of the program results, by giving the necessary additional information, complementing the observations and the experiences gained directly on the field and during 9 months by Première Urgence's teams.

Results are presented here below, and are separated in four distinct parts. The first three parts correspond to the three types of distributed stuff : tools, seeds and food. The last part regards a prospective view of the activities.

These results firstly concern the farmers living in the Libenge area and having received a BCECO farming kit (they represent the majority of the recipients) : 2 machetes, 1 hoe, 1 axe, 1 file, 10kg of maize seeds and 40g of vegetable seeds.

They are then completed with the results of the Dongo's farmers, of the farmers having received a FAO crop farming kit : 2 machetes, 1 hoe, 10kg of food crop seeds (maize plus soybean or bean) and the results obtained by the associations.

1. Distribution of agricultural tools

Question 1 : How many agricultural tools do you own now ?
--

➤ Goal of the question :

To check that agricultural tools distributions have been achieved in compliance with the agreements entered with the donors; to check that the kits have not been sold by the recipients, and that they still are in their possession.

➤ **Results** :

74,5% of the answers show that the tools presently owned by the recipients correspond to the sole tools distributed by Première Urgence (2 machetes, 1 hoe, 1 axe, 1 file).

13,6% of the recipient say that they own a third machete, beside the tools distributed by Première Urgence. In most of the cases, this third machete is the old one, extremely timeworn and unusable, that they owned before the program.

7,3% have more than two additional tools, mainly locally made machetes, axes or spades.

4,5% of the recipients own at the present time less tools than they received through the program. The reasons are mainly :

- losses, particularly for the small files
- shortfalls occurring sometimes during the distributions (200 files and 4 axes were missing at the barge unloading, and 10 hoes, 12 files and 3 axes have been lost during the carrying out of the activities, probably due to stealing during the transportation journeys).
- quick deterioration of the tools : particularly for the files, which were actually too small, and for some machetes, which have broken because of a too tough and non adapted sharpening (high heating followed by a strong hammering). Some hoes get broken as well, but very rarely.

➤ **Comments and conclusions :**

It seems therefore that no trade have been done with the tools distributed, whereas many rumors said the contrary.

The lack of tools has often been expressed as the most important problem, even more than seeds and food (since the region still offered abandoned but still producing farming lands right after the conflict : cassava, various bananas and other perennial crops were sufficient to provide a sufficient amount of basic food, at least in terms of energy-giving and for a short time. It was clear, therefore, that selling would have regarded the food rations and the other agricultural inputs, but not the tools.

Actually, this first question concerned more particularly the pygmies communities, who usually lose their goods for the benefit of their neighbors, military or not.

During the inquiry, no distinction has been made between the different communities or the different ethnical groups. Knowledge of the name of the recipient's origin locality can give us an idea about the belonging to an ethnical group, since those last ones are geographically distributed, and as far as Bantus groups are concerned. Pygmies group, however, is relatively evenly distributed.

Since these ethnical groups are very diversified, as are the relative ways and customs, it was impossible to include this data into the inquiry, unless to make its analysis too difficult.

Moreover, this inquiry, as we said above, has been designed as a complement of the observations made during the follow-up carried out directly on the field, and during which specific actions have been achieved such as growing awareness of specific purposes for specific communities.

That means that monitoring teams spent part of their time to convince Pygmies communities that the tools distributed are effectively theirs, and that they are in their right do keep them.

As a conclusion, we can say that all Pygmies recipients have kept their tools. We can put forward two reasons (beside the specific works carried out by the on-field teams) : first reason is that tools are efficiently hidden in the forest; second reason is that Pygmies are much more efficient in harvesting the Bantus' farming lands when they already own the necessary tools.

The question of the integration of Pygmies communities in the region, and more particularly in the program, is now laid down. A brief discussion will be set up later.

Question 2 : Are you satisfied with the distributed tools and why ?
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➤ **Goal of the question :**

To check that the distributed agricultural tools did answer to the recipient expectation.

➤ **Results :**

82% of the recipients affirm that they are satisfied, none of them expressed dissatisfaction, 18% did not answer.

The reasons of their satisfaction are :

agricultural works made easier (91% of the answers),
agricultural works and other works made easier (5,4% of the answers),
free gift (3,6% of the answers).

➤ **Comments and conclusions :**

At this stage of the enquiry, expectations seem to have been satisfied. We will see later that the satisfaction have been moderated, mainly because of the number of tools distributed per family, which has been estimated too low, according to some recipients. Whatever, the results are not surprising, since, as we said before, acquisition of tools was the main preoccupation.

On the contrary, it is surprising that nobody complained towards the files, which were too small and of bad quality (in spite of the renewed trademark : « Diamond »). We know that fraudulent imitation are frequent in Kinshasa's suppliers shops, and it is not possible to check everything, a fortiori for 4300 files.

Moreover, farmers are not used to use this kind of tool; machete are sharpened with specific stones, what is not efficient enough but for maintain the blade in good state. Now, the actual problem regards the first sharpening : some recipients find a way to use a grindstone (some are working in the other side of the river), what means additional expenditures; some others use traditional method, by heating and hammering, what resulted in a few catastrophes.

We highlight that the use of a well sharpened machete (or axe) reduce significantly the hardness of the works, and consequently the relative output, for more than 50%.

Putting community grindstone in place, at least for the first sharpening, could represent an important aid for farmers.

Question 3 : What kind of works have you achieved with the tools ?

➤ **Goal of the question :**

To assess the effective use of the tools by the recipients; to have an overview of the global works process leading to farming production; to identify possible gaps to be filled up and improvements to be made in order to increase outputs and yields.

➤ **Results :**

68,1% of the recipients answered that they used the tools for the standard farming works, with no precision;

16,1% precise that those works consist in cleaning (machete) and keeping clean (machete and hoe) the farming land;

2% add to those works some building works;

1,2% add supplying of wood (axe);

1,2% include salongos (community works);

11,4% did not answer.

➤ **Comments and conclusions :**

Beneficiary farmers were rarely able to list the tasks they have traditionally to do for the cropping of their land. This entails an essential consequence regarding the farm-scale economy, since those tasks are directly linked to production costs.

Many people told us about this problem, though nobody expressed it in the present inquiry, saying that farmers are unable to calculate an accurate and reliable price for their products.

At the present time, only intermediary traders fix the price, all the more easily because selling opportunities are very few.

As a consequence, and according to farmers themselves, many of these last ones can do nothing but lose money, so that they prefer to abandon the activity.

Though recipient have effectively worked with their new tools, we can fear that, in one hand, disposal of the products will be difficult, and in the other hand, that the presently existing selling opportunities won't be reliable, because of no profitability.

Whereas the first point of view was taken into account in the program objectives (revival of trade axes and exchanges), we refused to initiate any action regarding the second one, that is to say, regarding the regulation of selling and purchasing prices, and despite a lot of requests.

Indeed, activities of Première Urgence, and particularly the arrival of the first barge, have considerably revived and improved the economic activities (which were almost null), since many trading barges came after that to Dongo from Kinshasa. The targeted region, isolated for 4 successive years, had then 4 months to take advantage of the re-opening of the fluvial axe (before the decreasing of the water). Thus, any actions aiming to regulate the prices, and beside the fact that this kind of action has to be carried out in close collaboration with all parties, would probably have entailed delays and failures for the transactions.

Reduction of the hardness of the farming works, thanks to the acquisition of new tools, should have resulted in a decreasing of the purchasing prices of basic foodstuffs.

Note : very few recipients declared that they already used the axe. This last one is mainly useful during the dry season, what means after the inquiry. However, we saw the works achieved by the communities, particularly with the axes, for the maintaining of the roads : side trees avoiding the water correct evaporation have been all cleared.

We also have seen the first works achieved for the preparation of the farming land for the A season. We assessed approximately that the cleared areas are of about 0,75 ha per household, as an average (no real measures have been done).

Conclusions regarding tools distributions

The tool distribution phase can be considered as a success, since objectives regarding farming activities revival have been clearly attained and since recipients declare that they are satisfied.

Further remarks will complement this conclusion at the opportunity of the following questions.

2. Seeds distribution

Question 4 : What quantity of seeds have you sown (% of seeds distributed), what surface ?

➤ Goal of the question :

To check the correct use of the kits; to assess the surface farmed; to assess the farming production potential.

➤ Results :

Only **13,6%** of the sounded recipients have sown all the seeds they received;
18,6% have sown all the vegetable seeds but not maize;
32,2% have sown more than half of the seeds they received (vegetables plus maize);
35,6%, that is to say the majority, have sown nothing;
59,3% of the recipients have not sown the maize seeds.

➤ Comments and conclusions :

These results do not fit with the objectives. They are directly linked to the technical knowledge of the recipients and to the follow-up carried on the field by the monitoring teams : recipients are used to achieve sowing of maize between March and April, after the dry

season and the burning of the forest, sowing of vegetable in January, during the dry season, when prices are higher and losses due to pests are lower ; as for monitors, they advised recipients to sow all the seeds as soon as possible, since the main goal is to constitute again and quickly sufficient food stocks. For this last purpose, the first distributions (including the seeds and the tools) have been hurried, so that sowing in August – September were possible.

Thus, the results can be explained with the intensity and the regularity of the visits on the field : the more recipients have been followed, the more they have sown.

Now, we can notice that the behavior of the recipients has generally been cautious and relevant, since most of them did sow; they sew only a part of their seeds stock, but sew sufficiently, taking into account the difficulties for selling, as for storage. That means that recipient did manage to work sufficiently so that to support their family until the A season, which should be more profitable.

So, most of the farmers banked on the high quality seeds and on the consequently high productions of the A season, even if it entails disobedience towards Première Urgence's representatives.

Nevertheless, more important early sowing would have produced bigger amount of quality seeds for the following season, and beside the food devoted to the family support. We know that storage conditions are really bad, and we can fear that the seeds which have been stored, waiting for the A season, would be of considerably reduced quality.

The strategy of conserving seeds for a best season already failed as far as vegetables are concerned, since the month of January has been much more dry than it was expected, whereas no irrigation system are currently working.

Note : it is practically impossible for the recipients to know the areas of land farmed. The only obvious fact, which has been registered by the monitors, is that these areas vary as much than sowing densities. As a consequence, we don't have any reliable information about the yields of the different crops, and we have to use qualitative estimations.

Question 5 : Are you satisfied with the seeds you received ? Why ?

➤ **Goal of the question** :

To check that the distributed seeds corresponded to the expectations of the recipients

➤ **Results** :

81% of the recipients questioned seem to be satisfied;

1,4% are not satisfied;

17,5% did not answered.

Reasons of dissatisfaction are :

- failure of germination (0,35% of the answers) ;
- no sowing (0,7%) ;
- no precision (0,35%)

Reasons of satisfaction are :

- the food supply, thanks to the distributed seeds, as said 69,6% of the questioned recipients (among them 6,5 % talk about food supply and about income generation; 4,3% about protein supply; 2,2% about food diversity).
- 13% are satisfied because the seeds are exactly what they needed;

- 8,7% are satisfied merely because this is an aid;
- 3,3% express their satisfaction towards the species chosen and towards the yields.

Among those who did not reply : 65% did not precise why; 28,6% wait the A season; 6,1% did not yet see the seeds germinate. In total, 80% did not give data about the harvesting.

➤ **Comments and conclusions :**

These results are surprising, considering the bad quality of the seeds and particularly of the maize seeds.

Indeed, and in spite of the germination tests achieved by Première Urgence (and by the SENASEM: National Society for the Seeds), and which were positive, the maize seeds bought in Kinshasa were not of sufficient quality. It seems that the 43000 kg have been made of three different batches, among which only one has effectively presented on the field the characteristics of improved seeds.

We have checked by ourselves that the failures of germination were effectively due to the seeds bad quality, and not to technical errors from the recipients. This bad quality was obviously caused by the advanced age of the seeds, and by bad storage conditions, plus the difficult journey in the barge. Consequences on the production will be discussed later.

Results for the vegetable seeds are less bad, although they should have been better, as we will see later.

Whatever, acquisition of quality seeds was one of the main requests expressed by the communities (after the tools), what is evident since it concerns agricultural population.

Question 6 : What quantity have you harvested ?
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➤ **Goal of the question :**

To assess the quantities produced and the resulting food stocks

➤ **Results :**

Very few data have been registered, since the few recipients who had sown were unable to assess neither the areas farmed, nor the exact quantities they harvested. Thus, production results presented here are only indicative.

Maize : 10 to 800 kg (mean of 15 kg)
 Amaranth : 300 g to 15 kg (mean 5 kg)
 Sorrel : 2 to 3 kg
 Spinach : 300 g to 10 kg (mean 3 kg)
 Gumbo : 3 to 4 kg
 Nightshade : 2 kg
 Pepper : 100 to 500 g
 Cabbage : 0 to 500 g

➤ **Comments and conclusions :**

Results are very diversified, relatively to the farmers.

For the maize, results are excessively low and are a direct consequence of the bad seeds quality. Since farmers who sown, have sown about a quarter of the 10 kg bag, productions should have reached 90 to 100 kg !

Now, some results show productions of 800 kg, in spite of the B season. That means that the germination potential of the seeds is real and that problems of low harvesting are not due to a bad variety selection. If farmers manage to multiply these seeds, they will be able to reach average yields of 1 to 2 tons / ha.

In the frame of this program, and despite the fact that the action won't lead the recipients to an income generation (at least for this season), the multiplication of the quality seeds at the household level will amply contribute to the improvement of the regional food security.

As far as vegetables are concerned, results are quite good, except for peppers and cabbages, which generally failed to germinate. Other failures are due to a lack of technical knowledge, which is as well general in the targeted region. Many requests have been registered, regarding training for the gardening cropping, and monitors would not have been able to face so many trainees. Therefore, we have selected one beneficiary farmer per locality, who have benefited to extra follow-up and training, so that he was able to teach the other villagers (beneficiary or not), or at least to demonstrate efficient techniques. This method did not work perfectly, since chosen farmers did not teach all other villagers, but only few of them and mainly people belonging to the family clan. Moreover, rural communities are used to apply techniques teach by the agronomists, provided that they hear him themselves.

Question 7 : How much do you harvest usually ?

➤ **Goal of the question :**

To check whether the impact of the seeds distribution is positive or not

➤ **Results :**

	Usually (kg)	With the program (kg)
Maize	2000	15
Amaranth	2	5
Sorrel	1	2,5
Spinach	2	3
Gumbo	1	3,5
Nightshade	1	2
Pepper	1	0,3
Cabbage	0	0,2

➤ **Comments and conclusions :**

As we saw previously, results for maize are bad. Nevertheless, this table includes errors and misunderstandings regarding the cropping areas and the sowing density.

As far as the program is concerned, most of the beneficiary farmers have sown a small part of their maize seeds in order, either to please the Première Urgence's monitors, or to test the seeds by themselves.

Results for the vegetables are much better, all the more because technical knowledge were non sufficient. Except peppers and cabbages, all vegetable crops productions have been double than usually.

Question 8 : What have you done with your productions ?

➤ **Goal of the question :**

To assess the impact of the program towards food security

➤ **Results :**

All the recipients who have sown, have as well consumed part or all of their productions. Half of them have conserved part of the vegetables in order to produce further seeds. Very few stored products for the constitution of food stocks, what is quite difficult with vegetables. As far as maize is concerned, all beneficiary farmers have stored part of the production for the making of a bigger seeds stock.

Selling regards only 5% of the questioned recipients, as far as maize, amaranth and spinach are concerned, and 0,1% for cabbage, gumbos and nightshade.

Prices and sold quantities given by the recipients are not reliable and very varying.

➤ **Comments and conclusions :**

The main objectives are attained, particularly as far as agricultural activities revival and food security are concerned. Moreover, durability of the action is guaranteed since half of the beneficiary farmers have produced and conserved new seeds.

An other positive fact for the farmers is the discovering of new kind of vegetables and new varieties, and their integration into the usual diet.

Selling of the products, however, have been anecdotal and occasional. This is particularly due to the low local purchase power, as well as to the low amount of surplus to be sold.

Note: teaching and demonstrations of drying conservation techniques could entail a quick improvement regarding the constitution of food stocks, that is to say regarding food security. These techniques are now of easy use and implementation. Moreover, dried farming products (as vegetables) can be easily stored and transported at long distance (to Kinshasa, as an example). It would be then possible to sell farming products despite the lack of big logistical means, such as refrigerated barges.

Conclusions regarding seeds distributions

Although seeds quality has been disappointing, results obtained by the farmers show that following productions may be important, provided that the seeds keep the germinating power.

Efforts regarding technical training should be carried out, particularly for market gardening, since vegetables have to be an important part of the diet.

3. Distribution of food rations

Question 9 : Are you satisfied with the food rations ? Why ?

➤ **Goal of the question :**

To check that food rations corresponded to the needs and the expectations of the recipients

➤ **Results :**

93% of the answers are favorable ; the other **7%** did not answered

Main reasons of this satisfaction are (Cf. annex 5) :

- reconstitution of a food stock (30,6%) ;
- gratitude for the aid in a crisis period (27%) ;
- disappearing of hunger, diversification of the meals and pleasure to eat good food products (10,9%) ;
- strength resulting from the consumption of the rations and making the works easier (7,7%).

➤ **Comments and conclusions :**

Objectives are obviously attained as far as food security and revival of farming activities are concerned. But this fact is, up to now, only true for the during of the program.

Reconstitution of a food stock, disappearing of hunger and strength for the works are the most favorable impact : recipients explained us how happy and confident they were since they had the certitude of having a meal before the hard works, as well as after them, as well as the following day, and for the whole family. Some also said that the rations had made the family relationship better.

We highlight two essential factors contributing to the program success :

- firstly, an adequate and regular alimentation which gives the required physical capacity to carry out farming works,
- then, reconstitution of the food stock strongly contributes to an atmosphere of appeasement and confidence (some said pleasure and joy), which is necessary for any undertaking.

We have seen that sowings (even more than the harvesting) was not sufficient to maintain the stocks, what means that once rations will be consumed, recipients will find again the previous food situation, except a few more vegetables. Nevertheless, we know as well that farming land preparing for the A season has been important (partly thanks to the food rations) and that the seeds have a high production potential, provided that they keep their germinating power. It is possible, therefore, that some problems occur between the end of the program period, and the next harvesting one (July – August).

This problem can become very serious if the present politic and economic circumstances stay unchanged :

- commercial exchanges with Centrafrique did stop (consequently to the last putsch in Bangui, when MLC troops were confronted with the recent president's soldiers) and we can expect the return of the Congo people who resided there
- exchanges with Kinshasa are just slowly resuming, mainly because of the lack of efforts from the two parties (administrative processes, taxes and controls are quite dissuasive)
- refugees still living in camps are numerous, mainly in Congo Brazzaville, where, as we heard, the living conditions and the reception are growing bad.

The fact that recipients stress that the aid have been given during a crisis period prove that food rations were considered as a crucial need, all the more if they say that hunger has disappeared.

The aid considered as a free gift can be a problem if it results in a wait-and-see behavior. This will be made obvious at the occasion of the other questions. Whatever, we notice that

no significant quarrels nor serious rivalries have opposed recipients and non recipients. Actually, much more people than the number of recipients have profited by the rations, since any visitors or neighbors entering the house or the village is traditionally fed.

This fact had a huge influence on the quantities of food available for the households, and a frequent complaints (though it is not mentioned in this inquiry) expressed the insufficiency of the quantities, either because of the too numerous members in the family, or the too numerous families in the village.

Indeed, food rations distributions have been limited to 5 members per family, whereas families of 20 to 30 members are frequently met on the field. The average for the families of our operation region is 7,2 members per family. It is not the reference number for the WFP, which calculates the food quantities to be distributed on the basis of 5,2 members per family. It seems however that some second divisions and distributions of rations have been made within the communities and the villages, and out of any action from Première Urgence. It seems as well that these redistribution have been fair, according to villagers. Whatever, this spontaneous action is rather due to social constraints than real solidarity.

To conclude with this chapter, we have to talk about diets diversification. Indeed, recipients were not used to consume so many leguminous, nor this kind of oil (they call it vegetal oil), and they consider that most of the improvements in their health, work capacity, ... are due to the consumption of these new foodstuffs. As a consequence, farmers request the introduction of these crops (leguminous crops) within their farming system. We know the importance of these crops in terms of nutrition, and we highlight their importance in terms of environment protection and of durability for the agricultural systems.

Nevertheless, the case of the garden peas distributed with the first food rations alarmed us on the fact that consumption of unknown foodstuffs can be problematic : most of the recipients were unable to cook the peas in a correct way. Unfortunately, specific information phases regarding the use of the foodstuffs were not planned, and it was impossible to inform all the recipients.

A specific phase should have been planned, previously to the food distributions, to train the distribution agents about the use and the characteristics of the foodstuffs, so that recipients can be informed as soon as they receive their kit.

Question 10 : What did the rations change for you and your family ?

➤ **Goal of the question :**

To assess the impact of food rations on the recipients living conditions

➤ **Results :** Cf. annex 6

The most often expressed result concerns the good health of the family, and more particularly of the children (56% of the answers).

- frequency of the meals has increased (14,5%) ;
- familial economy is improved (13,7%)
- workers have more strength (13,3%).

➤ **Comments and conclusions :**

The impact of the food rations distributions is clearly positive.

Health of the family and more particularly health of the children is a major worry for the recipients. Its improvement is mainly linked to the increasing of the number of meals : from one sole meal per day, they are gone up to two or three now. Impact on the health is clear

and immediate. The sudden awareness of recipients about nutrition, as we can see in this inquiry, and more particularly about the children nutrition, is both worrying and encouraging : worrying because it makes obvious the gaps in this matter; encouraging because it proves that information and follow-up on the field give efficient and quick results.

Malnutrition is a recurrent problem in the targeted area, and despite of the success of the program, which can not touch everybody. Children mortality is still high, often due directly to malnutrition (sometimes under-nutrition), or because of the bad balance of the diet that entails the medical treatments inefficiency.

Première Urgence has carried out a specific assessment regarding this problem, and drawn up a relative project, based on the experiences gained during this program.

Improvement of the familial economy concerns salt and oil, that are not to be purchased thanks to the rations distributions. This advantage is particularly important when we consider the families purchasing power (which is almost null). Beneficiary families were thus able to spend the few money they owned for other essential expenditures : school fees, medical cares, ...

Conclusions regarding food rations distributions

Distributions of food rations have therefore been successful and have had positive and various impact. Failures are linked to differences between community groups in terms of diet customs, what may result in a wrong use of the foodstuffs received (cooking of the garden peas, processing of the corn).

We insist once more on the fact that malnutrition is still present in the region. Although food crops seem to be potentially sufficient (in terms of feeding and of income generation), this can not be said for the fruits and the vegetables, which still are marginal in the diet and in the farming system. An unbalanced diet entails very bad consequences on the health of pregnant women and on the health, the growth and the education of young children.

We have seen that many people was expected to return in Equateur, when agricultural productions are barely with excess for the current inhabitants.

Whatever it is, the production potential is huge, and this program has proved that solutions are simple and easy to carry out.

4. Appreciation of the activities carried out by Première Urgence and prospects

Question 11 : Are you satisfied with the action of Première Urgence ?
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➤ **Goal of the question :**

To identify problems that occurred during the carrying out of the program; to identify possible gaps, errors or misunderstandings within the methodology and the approach.

➤ **Results :**

The majority of questioned recipients (93%) are satisfied with the operation carried out by Première Urgence. No negative answer has been registered.

➤ **Comments and conclusions**

Main difficulties met during the carrying out of the activities are due to the fact that no action of this kind had been achieved before in this region (no humanitarian program carried out by

a non-profit-making international NGO). Regular questionings from the local representatives have clearly proved how perplexed and suspicious they were, what put them in the uncomfortable position : between a NGO which had to take into account a strict timetable, and villagers who requested to know and to understand the ins and the outs of what was happening. Despite the numerous information meeting with the representatives or with the whole population, their confidence has been conquered only after the second distribution and follow-up phases. Dialogues have then been constructive and resulted in actually participative activities.

Question 12 : Are you satisfied with the selection method ?

➤ **Goal of the question :**

To identify problems that occurred during the carrying out of the program and more particularly during the selection phases.

➤ **Results :**

Results that have been registered are similar to the results of the previous question.

➤ **Comments and conclusions**

Problems that occurred during the selection are evident and quite classical for such a kind of program : selected people are happy, non selected people are not.

As we explained previously, selection of the recipients has been achieved through the intervention of the Head of localities. Those last ones, though they respected the instructions we gave us, and particularly the instructions regarding vulnerability criteria, have suffered many pressure from the villagers, who considered them as responsible of the selections. We had therefore to organize additional meetings to inform again the population about our method. Nevertheless, some Head of village have been dismissed, how ever was their work. We notice however that all these events have occurred with a lot of calm, without any tension or hitch.

Question 13 : Are you satisfied with the distribution method ?

➤ **Goal of the question :**

To identify problems that occurred during the carrying out of the program and more particularly during the distribution phases.

➤ **Results :**

88,3% are satisfied

11,3% did not answer

One recipient expressed his dissatisfaction

➤ **Comments and conclusions :**

Distribution methods have been explained previously. No major incident occurred. The dissatisfaction came from the fact that food rations have been abated at the second turn.

Question 14 : Are you satisfied with the follow-up ? How many times have you been visited ?

➤ **Goal of the question :**

To identify problems that occurred during the carrying out of the program and more particularly during the follow-up phases.

➤ **Results :**

69,8% are satisfied
17,7% are not satisfied
12,5% did not answer

Most of the recipients were not able to say how many times they were visited.
9,3% of the recipients say that they have never been visited
48,8% have been visited between 1 and 3 times
6% have been visited more than 3 times

➤ **Comments and conclusions**

This phase has obviously given the most of difficulties. Indeed, recipients were firstly surprised with the follow-up, initiated directly after the distributions. They have been even more surprised of the method, since the follow-up has been achieved in a participative way, through constructive dialogues. Presence of the monitors has then been very often requested. We already have talked about the solution of specially trained recipients (those who have been visited more than three times) and about their insufficiency. Nevertheless, possible following program should be essentially based on this participative method, all the more since the confidence of the communities is gained.

Question 15 : What would you like to change in the method ?

➤ **Goal of the question :**

To identify gaps, errors and misunderstanding in the method or in the approach.

➤ **Results**

Most of the recipients did not answer this question.

14,9% think that nothing is to be changed
6,8% request more efforts towards the follow-up
3,6% request more recipients

➤ **Comments and conclusions**

Those results confirm exactly the previous ones.
Now, recipients have no reliable references regarding such a humanitarian aid program.

Question 16 : What would you need now, in general ?

➤ **Goal of the question**

To identify current needs of the communities, and after this operation.

➤ **Results**

Answers the most often registered regard :

- access to drinkable water (31%);
- rehabilitation or building of schools (20,5%) ;
- rehabilitation of roads and bridges (16,5%) ;
- access to health center (13,7%) ;
- presence of commercial dealers (12,1%)
- acquisition of cooking items (10,9%)
- acquisition of durable building materials (10,5%)
- acquisition of mosquito nets (8,9%)

➤ **Comments and conclusions :**

We can group this requests in four categories :

Health, and particularly the drinkable water, which currently represents the major problem in Equateur.

Many death are directly linked to the access of drinkable water (diarrhea). A specific assessment has been achieved by Première Urgence regarding this purpose, and a project has been drawn up.

Requests regarding children education have been express till the beginning of the program, since we met the problem of applicant teachers (which are not real farmers, nor fishermen, though they farm their land). It is clear that the situation is disastrous : schools are usually build by the parents, with local materials, and are therefore completely destroyed within 6 months (mainly because of the termites). Anyhow, the schools have no equipment at all, and the children have often to stand up during the lessons, since they have nothing to sit down. Blackboards and schoolbooks are almost non-existent.

We underline the fact that all communities still talk about children education as a priority, despite living conditions are generally very precarious.

The problem of economic infrastructures, commercial axes and dealers, ... has already been discussed. If we consider that fluvial commercial axes are open again, the only obstacle for selling will be the bad state of the roads, which isolates considerably the localities. Now, farmers still have to gather and organized themselves.

Improvement of living conditions in general, including the building of the houses with durable materials, the acquisition of various items, ... would be a logic and automatic result when previous problems are solved, and particularly the economic obstacles.

Question 17 : What would you need now to improve your farming activities ?

➤ **Goal of the question :**

To identify the remaining needs regarding farming activities; to identify the most relevant actions to be carried out in order to complement and to optimize the program impacts.

➤ **Results :**

Needs the most frequently expressed are :

- technical supervision (37,5% of the answers)
- acquisition of improved quality seeds (32,2%)
- acquisition of additional tools (29,4%)
- selling of the products (12,5%)

➤ **Comments and conclusions :**

Most of these requests have been mentioned above.

Technical supervision expresses the satisfaction of the recipients towards the follow-up method, as well as their motivation regarding the development of their activities.

Acquisition of improved quality seeds shows how recipients are realistic as for the relative good quality of the seeds distributed, but also expresses the will to diversify the productions, with the support of the agronomists.

Acquisition of additional tools concern the machetes (2 machetes have been distributed per family, whereas these families can count more than 10 active farmers), spades (as a complement of the hoes), rakes and wheelbarrows, for the specific market gardening works.

Selling of the products is a recurrent requests.

Conclusions of the follow-up inquiry

It seems, according to all these results, that the program has effectively reached its objectives. Indeed, the achieved distributions contributed to improve the global food security, directly, in one hand, with the food rations distributions, which have had an immediate and obvious effect on the families members health; at a long term, in the other hand, with the seeds and tools distributions, which entail the resumption of agricultural activities, and despite the disappointing quality of the seeds.

As far as commercial activities are concerned, we have seen that the solutions to be implemented could not be done in the frame of this program. Nevertheless, the example of Dongo is encouraging, since numerous commercial private barge have followed the humanitarian ones.

Finally, another result is to be underlined : thanks to the food rations and the gardening seeds, recipients and their family (as well as their neighbors) have had access to new foodstuffs that they were not used to consume before, and which are particularly important for the balance of the diet. The farmers have now expressed the wish to produce those stuffs by themselves, and to diversify their crops. This diversification could result in a clear improvement of the nutrition state of the region, as well as in an increasing of the selling future opportunities.

Technical supervisions and steady presence on the field are therefore necessary.

5. Distribution of food crops FAO kits

Recipients who received these FAO kits, received effectively less tools than the others (neither axe nor file), and we expected complaints. Very few complaints have been registered, even tough the distributions of the different kits occurred in the same localities. Actually, recipients and other villagers share their tools quite readily, files are not used very often and axes regard specific works, at a specific period and they require people gathering.

Nevertheless, distribution of leguminous seeds has been unanimously welcomed, all the more because FAO seeds were of an obvious better quality.

Soybean seeds have been rather distributed in Libenge, where the SNV (National Awareness Service) formerly introduced and teach it. More than 60% of the recipients have effectively sown soybean, and are clearly satisfied. We do not have reliable data regarding harvesting (some talk about 2 kg harvested against 1 kg sown).

As far as maize is concerned, and despite the relatively better quality of the seeds, results are similar to those obtained with the other kits, that is to say very few sowing for the B season, but some very encouraging results : production of 10 sacks (800 kg) with the 5 kg distributed.

Cowpea has not been sown in B season, but all recipients had achieved the sowings at the end of the inquiry (March).

6. Distributions in Dongo

Recipients of Dongo complained particularly on the fact that no spade was distributed; some communities are not used to work with the hoe, and this inexperience can lead to injuries ! This note regards mainly the localities located in the south of Dongo, close to Imese, where Lobala ethnic group is in majority.

In the same area, recipients encounter difficulties as for the use of the foodstuffs distributed : insufficiently cooked garden peas entail some diarrhea cases; villagers are not used to consume maize and were sometimes unable to process it into flour (they usually crop maize as a cash crop).

Finally, this region, close to the front line, totals the worst results towards sowings. The reason generally puts forward is the presence of numerous soldiers, who eat at the expense of the villagers.

On the contrary, the north region of Dongo presented much better results, particularly regarding maize cropping : absolutely all recipients did sow the seeds as soon as distribution were achieved, and harvesting reach 1000 kg/ha and up to 2000 kg/ha. Indeed, inhabitants of this area are used to consume big quantities of maize, and are moreover located close to Dongo's commercial port.

7. Distributions for the market gardening associations

As we said previously, distributions for the associations have been relatively belatedly, since an extra effort has been necessary for the selection and the preliminary training. Results regarding sowings and harvesting were therefore not available for this inquiry.

Main dissatisfactions expressed by the associations concern the amount of tools distributed compared with the number of members. Indeed, before the conflict, these associations gathered a considerable number of people (some counted about 300 members) and the program was unable to answer to such an expectation. Anyhow, the action aimed at the resumption of the associative activities, and this objective has been clearly attained.

Moreover, many farmers suggested the continuation of our activities trough associations, with a wider impact, and the surrender of individual approaches. This phase has indeed been particularly followed by the different communities, mainly thanks to the local radio.

Reasons for the satisfaction regard particularly the food rations which have been the object of a surprising behavior from the beneficiary members : our distribution method imposes to give the kits directly to the beneficiary family, after a monitoring phase and this was done so

for the associations, as far as food rations were concerned (the relatively smaller amounts of tools and seeds have been given to the managing committees). Now, members have gathered spontaneously the rations, in order to cook community meals, for all interveners, before and after the common works. It seems that members are now more active, motivated and assiduous.

Associations also gladly welcomed the acquisition of diversified seeds, and particularly the discovering of the long eggplant species.

Expressed needs and expectations further to the program are quite similar to those discussed above, plus some more requests regarding rural development matters :

- Implementation of micro-credits systems,
- technical training about farming products processing,
- additional support for the diversification of the activities,
- access to documentation, training and educational means.

Currently, the main obstacles to the development of the association activities are linked to the lack of recent farming techniques knowledge, and to the projects drawing up (assessment and contacts with donors).

8. Notes about Pygmies communities

As we said previously, the first success of the program is that Pygmies communities effectively kept their kits, although we still don't know if this results from a real wish or from the fear of the Première Urgence monitors.

As far as agricultural results are concerned, it is clear that the monitors follow-up has been deciding. Indeed, the recipients have exactly repeated the gestures we showed to them. Therefore, impact is huge for the villages the most accessible, which have been often visited, and particularly for the village of Kambe, located at 5 km from Libenge, where we have seen associated crops of maize-cowpea or maize-peanut. This Pygmy village is particular since the population is totally settled, with houses in hard local materials, and a real wish of development.

This is not the case for the other villages :

- firstly, it is very difficult to know exactly the own wishes of the communities, probably because these last ones did not think about it either;
- secondly, it is unconceivable to impose any models of development, for ethical reasons, in one hand, and in the other hand because of efficiency and impact, since a program won't be completely successful if real needs are not correctly assessed.
- finally, we experienced the fact that it was very difficult to carry out a correct follow-up : villages are not fixed, at the least a part of the population leaves the village seasonally (for the hunting season as an example); some families can as well travel far away through the region because of any events that occurred within the clan. It is therefore quite impossible to meet all the recipients at the same time in a village. Moreover, fields are generally located far away of the houses, hidden in the forest.

An attempt has nevertheless been done, by integrating into the Première Urgence national team an inhabitant of the village of Kambe, in so far as an intermediary monitor. This method gave the results that we explained above, for the village of Kambe (associated crops). But a more complete training would have been necessary for this new monitor, particularly to teach him participative follow-up and assessment methods, as well as a complete phase in the program with specific logistical means.

To sum up, we now know that pygmies communities have clearly understood that the tools belonged to them and only to them, that they can easily vary their diet (they particularly

appreciated garden peas and beans) and that they can produce by themselves the food they need or want. These facts only regard basic needs of the Pygmy populations, and have nothing but a small impact (although necessary) on their traditional way of living.

The gaps, as for them, regard the durability of the actions, and particularly for the production and the conservation of the seeds for the following seasons (recipients rather consume absolutely everything). It is clear, now, that access to commercial opportunities will be very difficult, or impossible, without any external support.

Finally, we underline the fact that Pygmy communities have access to the only land that others accept to lend them (generally in return of something). It will be difficult for them to carry out a profitable activity in the agricultural field.

Big efforts are made for them to have access to health cares and to schools, but they are not really efficient, up to now : either Pygmy peoples feel ashamed to present themselves to hospitals or health centers (mainly because of the bad state of their clothes), or they refuse on purpose to mix with other communities.

9. Results of the inquiry for the fishing activities

Two kinds of fishing were distinguished within the program : net fishing and hook fishing.

Results, as for them, are marked only when necessary.

Distributions for the associations are discussed here after.

Question 1 : How many tools do you own now ?

➤ Results :

94% of the nets recipients have nothing but the tools distributed by Première Urgence, **3%** own one to two more nets (that they purchased), and **3%** have nothing anymore (nets have been stolen). Regarding the hooks, **100%** of the recipients have nothing but the kit distributed by Première Urgence (2 hooks boxes and 2 reels).

➤ Comments and conclusions :

Fishermen had lost all their tools and equipment, as a consequence of the conflict. The very few nets that remained in the villages were in a too bad state to be efficiently usable. Some of the fishermen were able to buy some additional nets; it was impossible for us to check the origin of these new nets, and it is possible that some other nets recipients sold them. Moreover, recipient talking about stealing of nets are quite doubtful.

We encountered difficulties from the beginning of the distributions, when fishermen (and particularly fishermen from Imese area) declared that it was impossible to work with so few nets (5 nets for two recipients). Although we encouraged recipients to work in an associative way, at least to make binomial, we now know that many of them did not use the nets and are still waiting for further external aids. Nevertheless, it seems that very few of them have sold or lost their tools.

Question 2 : Are you satisfied with the received tools ? Why ?

➤ Results :

100% of the hooks recipients are satisfied :

- **60%** are satisfied because of the resumption of their fishing activities
- **50%** because they are now able to have food
- **10%** appreciate the fact that it is a free gift

93% of the nets recipients are satisfied :

- **47,1%** are satisfied because of the resumption of their fishing activities
- **27%** notice an improvement of their living conditions (notably in terms of food)
- **10%** appreciate the fact that it is a free gift

Dissatisfied recipients criticize the size of the nets meshes, which seemed to be too big (10 cm).

➤ Comments and conclusions :

The large majority of the recipients are satisfied, and this satisfaction is directly linked to food security.

It is not surprising that nets recipients did not express their dissatisfaction with the number of nets distributed (as we said previously). Indeed, several riverside localities, and particularly in the Lua River area, managed to quickly resume their activities by gathering spontaneously their production means, in the way we advised the others. With such an example of success, it was impossible to have any doubt about the relevance of the kits distributed.

As far as meshes size is concerned, the choice was made on standard and sufficiently large ones, so that to allow the capture of saleable sized fishes. Several fishermen and other specialists confirmed the relevance of this choice, which offers a valuable compromise between food production, economic and environmental matters.

Question 3 : What kind of works did you achieve with the received tools ?

➤ Results :

11,4% of the fishermen had not yet resumed their activities at the inquiry time;
All net recipients, as for them, did resume their activities. Some of them use the material to hunt small games.

➤ Comments and conclusions :

As we said above, net fishermen lasted before resuming their activities, giving as a pretext that material was insufficient (not enough nets, and no strand to join the nets), contrary to the hook fishermen, who were able to carry out the activities as soon as distributions were achieved.

Moreover, net fishing is strongly linked to seasons (maximum of production from December to February or March), what is not the case for hook fishing, which can occur in rivers or forest lakes and whatever the season is.

Question 4 : How much did you produce ?

➤ Results :

For the hook fishermen :

- 50% of the recipients say that they capture enough so that to feed their family
- 30% say that they capture enough for their family, plus a few surplus for selling
- 14% say that they capture 12 kg (per going out)
- 10% say that they capture 20 kg

The most dynamic hook fishermen agree to say that in one night, with 100 hooks, it is possible to capture 5 to 6 batches (one batch is made of 10 to 12 medium size fishes) and to sell those ones for 200 to 250 FCFA each.

For the net fishing

- 21,4% of the recipients say that they capture enough for their family, plus a few surplus for selling
- 15,7% say that they capture 3 kg (per going out)
- 14,3% between 10 and 15 kg
- 12,9% capture several big fishes
- 12,8% capture more than 20 kg
- 7,1% capture only 1 fish

➤ Comments and conclusions :

These results are very satisfying, with regards to the food security objectives. As far as sale is concerned, difficulties are mainly linked to the bad state of the roads, which isolate considerably the fishermen villages. Usually, they are not able to do the selling by themselves and have to do it through intermediary dealers, who transport the fishes by bicycle, to the main market places. Anyhow, trade of fresh fishes is unconceivable.

We have seen that hook fishermen were able to start their activities earlier. Selling have consequently resumed earlier as well, and first results are encouraging.

Season for net fishing occurs later and is shorter. Moreover, maximum of production happened in a troubled period for the region, notably with the events in Bangui, where selling are possible.

Question 5 : Is it more than usually ?

➤ Results :

50% of the hook fishermen consider that they capture more than before; only 13% of the net fishermen do so.

➤ Comments and conclusions :

These results are not surprising, in regard with those presented above. Nevertheless, hook fishermen think that this current season is quite bad, and that results will be better next year.

Question 6 : Are you satisfied with the action of Première Urgence ?

➤ Results :

100% of the hook fishermen are satisfied; 66% have been visited by monitors one time, 34% have had two visits.

93% of the net fishermen are satisfied; 7,1% have never been visited; 20% have been monitored one time; 12,9% have had two visits; 12,9% had three visits.

➤ Comments and conclusions :

Comments are similar to those presented for farmers.

Differences among visits frequencies are due to the specificity of the activities : hook fishermen are generally present in their living place and easy to meet. Moreover, they did not

give any problems. On the contrary, net fishermen often leave the village for a long time, to live in remote fishing camp.

Question 7 : What would you need now ?

➤ Results

Results are quite similar for both net and hook fishing

First worries regard schools rehabilitation and access to drinkable water (60%), building of houses in durable materials (14%) and technical supervision (13%). Beside this, fishermen wish to gain specific tools for their activities : machete, mosquito net, electric torch, ground sheet, blanket, ... Indeed, fishermen have to spend many time in the forest, in hasty camps, where they work during the night.

➤ Comments and conclusions :

We have already discussed about requests regarding rehabilitation, building and drinkable water.

Technical supervision would be useful for the processing and the trading of the products. An evaluation of the halieutic potential could be useful as well, notably in order to organize a more regular production (by coordinating different kind of fishing, and pisciculture).

As far as additional tools and items are concerned, we can fear that fishermen won't be able to purchase them by themselves before a quite long time (on contrary to the farmers).

Indeed, fish market is mainly local and is not able, as for its current form, to constitute a sufficient source of income, all the more because commercial axes are in a too bad state.

10. Notes about fishing associations

Fishing associations received the kits quite belatedly (late February), mainly because of the difficulties encountered for the gathering of the fishermen. Concerned localities are indeed located in remote areas, and fishermen were rarely present at this period.

This isolation of the fishermen, as well as the resulting individualism, forced us to spend many time for the awareness, information and monitoring, aiming to constitute functioning associations.

The only available result is the effective implementation of the associations and the effective starting of activities with the tools distributed, since it was even more difficult to meet any of the members.

B) Unforeseen circumstances effected overall program performance compared to original assumptions.

The main change in the initial program schedule is the delays taken by the barges to reach our bases. The original proposal was planning the arrival of the barge in Dongo between the 10th and the 15th of August. Due to technical problems (the pushing boat engine failed and the company TFCE was forced to replace it by an other), the barge took nearly one month to come in Dongo.

For this reason, the first distributions started the 30th of august, instead of the mid-august planed on the original schedule.

This delay forced our teams to work without any break during the complete month of September.

The main difficulty met during the first phase of the program is concerning the difference between the theoretical estimation for the number of person per household and the results obtained during this phase. The rations for the seeds protection were calculated on the basis of the total number of beneficiaries per agricultural households, but initially, the planned number of beneficiaries was around 22,786 (5.29 persons per agricultural household) and now, this number is around 37,848 (7.2 persons per household) for 5,200 agricultural households. So, we distributed more rations during the first turn than we planned. The first barge contained two months of rations, but this quantity now is not enough for the second turn of distributions. In the aim to adjust the next distributions as regarding as the quantities which will be brought by the WFP, we will fix the maximum of rations to be distributed to five (5) beneficiaries per household and for the households composed by less than 5 persons, the ration will be calculated on the basis of this precise number.

We also decided to keep some additional farming and fishing kits to distribute them to the families that weren't on the first list but which were corresponding to our criteria of selection. Theses families are :

- Families which were forgotten during the first monitoring phase
- Families which weren't present in the village in the time of monitoring
- Families which were refugee in Congo-Brazzaville or in Republique Centrafricaine and that returned to DRC after having heard about the program of Première Urgence.

An other important difficulty regards the distribution phase and more particularly the transport of foodstuffs to be distributed from the storehouses to the distribution spots, and because of the very bad state of the roads and tracks. We were forced to rent two additional trucks, at the beginning of the program, in order to manage efficient rotations. Moreover, discussions with the communities about this problem were regular, especially since it represents one of the main obstacle to the resumption of local economies. It was clear, therefore, that rehabilitation of the destroyed bridges and of the deteriorated roads should have been in charge of the concerned communities; what they knew well and put into practice during Salongo days (community works).

Some people accused Première Urgence of having contributed to the destruction of the roads with the passing of the distribution trucks. Maximal tolerated burden for the trucks were never exceeded, in one hand. In the other hand, our logistical means have been several times used on the occasion of special restoring of particularly critical roads portions. We note that both solitudes are not in commercial trucks worries.

Finally, the delay of the second barge arrival compelled us to change the distributions timetable. As a result of this adaptation, the third and last turn for Dongo have been achieved before the beginning of the second turn in Libenge. The delay for the Libenge recipients only regarded foodstuffs distributions, when the achieved first turn already allowed to constitute sufficient food stocks and to play therefore the role of seeds protection.

In order to conclude about the difficulties met during the program, we have to talk briefly about security troubles which occurred at the end of the program, whereas all on field phases were achieved.

Those problems happened subsequently to the offensive led by General Bozize's troops towards Bangui, on Saturday the 15th of March, which entailed a massive and uncoordinated return of MLC's soldiers in Zongo, at first, and then in Libenge, where injured soldiers were led. These movements entailed a relative insecurity situation, which forced us to evacuate

from the operational base of Libenge, on Sunday the 16th. Most of the material has been brought in the administrative base of Gemena.

The threat then moved along the roads, and notably to the crossroads of Mbari in order to reach Gemena. Rumors about organized plundering have been noticed and confirmed by several sources. Libenge base has indeed be forced, when no expatriated representatives of Première Urgence were present. Plundering has been avoided in Gemena, were expatriated staff took regular contact with all local and international intervening parties, so that to inform and to be informed about the ins and outs of the events.

This situation highlighted the crucial fact that the active presence of expatriated personnel (activity including a concrete collaboration and a steady dialogue with local people) contribute, in one hand, to the security and the good functioning of the international solidarity actions, and in the other hand, to the stability of the whole region, since this presence represents for the population (including militaries, who come from the same villages) the sole positive evolution opportunity.