



Agreement with UNHCR/Myanmar Signed

Manila, 14 February--- CFSI and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have agreed to cooperate throughout 2002 to the benefit of the people of Rahkine State in Myanmar (Burma). Executive Director Steven Muncy signed the Project Agreement in Manila on behalf of CFSI whilst Chief of Mission Rajiv Kapur signed for UNHCR in Yangon.

CFSI and UNHCR have cooperated in Myanmar since early 1998 in the context of facilitating the return from Bangladesh and reintegration in Rahkine State, Myanmar of approximately 250,000 Muslim refugees. These people fled Myanmar in 1992 and began returning to their homeland--with UNHCR assistance--in late 1994.

The overall aim of cooperation between CFSI and UNHCR in 2002 is to promote protection and reduce the socio-economic vulnerability of 8,500 persons through the reinforcement and enhancement of human resource capacities.

“...promote protection and reduce socio-economic vulnerability...”

The specific objectives are to: (a) prepare 2,500 eight to thirteen year old, out-of-school children to enter the public school system by developing basic Myanmar language and numerical skills; (b) prepare 4,000 youth and adults to function more effectively in their local socio-economic environments by developing basic literacy and numerical skills; and (c) promote the stabilization of the community by reinforcing and enhancing the socio-linguistic skills of 2,000 women and men who completed earlier literacy training initiatives.

CFSI will also be responsible for the management, maintenance, and security of twenty-three (23) Community Services Centers constructed under earlier project agreements. This will include promoting the utilization of the libraries in the four largest centers.

The CFSI/Myanmar Team is led by Project Coordinator Gary Autencio who serves concurrently as UNHCR Community Services Consultant.

Conflict to Peace and Development

CFSI is assisting the World Bank, Philippine Government (national, regional, and local), civil society, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and others to prepare the Mindanao Social Fund Project (Phase II). The overall aim of this five year initiative is to promote sustainable peace and reduce widespread poverty in conflict-affected areas of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). It envisages a community-driven approach with a strong emphasis on promoting reconciliation and building social cohesion. The well-being of internally displaced persons is a special concern of the project. The film produced by CFSI last year —“Women Displaced by War”— has proven beneficial to this effort.

Outlook March 2002

- 04-08 Louie Ongsiapco’s Mission to Geneva
- 06 CFSI Operations Team (OT) Meeting
- 06-17 Sheila Platt’s Mission to the Philippines
- 08-10 Steven Muncy’s Mission to Cotabato City, Mindanao
- 12 Board of Trustees Meeting Richmonde Hotel, Ortigas Centre
- 13 Senior Management Team Meeting (SMT) - CFSI HX
- 18 CFSI Cotabato Staff Meeting
- 19 Gender Workshop with Ageno Ochola, CFSI-HX General Staff Meeting (CFSI-HX)
- 27 Senior Management Team Meeting (SMT) - CFSI HX

*the internal
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IDPs in Mindanao. . . Rebuilding Lives

Cotabato City, Philippines-- Efforts to promote the return of thousands of Filipinos displaced by war in Mindanao, Philippines continue to be one of the highest priorities at CFSI. With funding from the World Bank's Post Conflict Fund, CFSI is helping displaced communities organize, mobilize resources for the re-construction of their homes and schools, initiate livelihood projects, address psychosocial needs, promote peace and reconciliation at the community level, and conduct participatory action research. CFSI activity is focused on 7,000 families (35,000 persons) in five municipalities. Most of these families are residents of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

CFSI recently received funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to undertake community profiling efforts amongst

the IDPs. The overall IDP sex ratio was 105 males for every 100 females. Just over 50% of the females fell within the reproductive age group. 48% of the IDPs were children and the youth sector (ages 15 to 24) represented 19% of the population. 86% were Muslim and most had been displaced for 15 to 18 months. 85% of the IDPs indicated that they wished to return to their place of origin. More than 30% reported the death of a family member owing to armed conflict in Mindanao.

CFSI's work in Mindanao is led by Project Coordinator Celia Santos. Institutional partners include the Mindanao State University, Notre Dame University, La Trobe University, Mindanao Network for Disaster Response, and Kadtuntaya Foundation. CFSI is also the convenor of the Philippine Network for Internally Displaced Communities.

CFSI assists urban refugees in the Philippines

Manila, 21 February 2002--- Community and Family Services International (CFSI) will continue, throughout 2002, to provide assistance and promote durable solutions for urban refugees in the Philippines through a cooperative agreement with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The agreement was recently signed in Manila by CFSI Director for Humanitarian Assistance Louie Ongsiapco and UNHCR Head of Office Thamrongsak Meechubot.

CFSI has been assisting urban refugees in the Philippines since 1997. At present, the caseload includes 148 refugees (plus family members) from ten countries: Ethiopia, Somalia, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iran, Iraq, Sri Lanka, and Viet Nam. The majority of the refugees live in Metro Manila, but others live in various parts of the Philippines.

Working in close consultation with UNHCR,

CFSI will undertake activities and provide services leading to material assistance for newly recognized refugees and asylum seekers. Counselling and other social services will help ensure psychosocial well-being. CFSI will also provide legal and technical services aimed at ensuring that the refugees and asylum seekers are able to exercise their rights and achieve durable solutions in a timely manner. Voluntary repatriation to the country of origin and naturalization in the Philippines are the most likely solutions. Those refugees eligible for naturalization will be assisted by CFSI to integrate into the Philippine economy through the organization of language and skills training activities that will enhance their prospects for employment and self-reliance.

Attorney Rico Salcedo, a citizen of the Philippines, serves as Project Coordinator for the CFSI Urban Refugee Project (URP).

News Bits

Ofelia Mendoza, CFSI Programme Officer for the Child and Family Welfare Programme (CFWP), was elected to the Board of Trustees of the Pasay Network for the Protection of Children along with local government officials and 10 NGO and business sector representatives.

Human Resource Officer Vincent Leyson recently participated in the Modular Learning Programme of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). This is the first step in comprehensive learning programme aimed at

promoting effective management. The workshop was participated in by Bureau and Regional Directors of DSWD, Municipal and Provincial Social Welfare Officers, and NGO representatives.

Executive Assistant Vladimir Hernandez participated in a seminar-workshop entitled "Information Management for Media Effectiveness" last 26 to 27 February. The seminar was designed for NGO Information Officers to gain a better understanding of the current media realities resulting in media space/time for advocacy efforts.

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suggestions, and
comments are
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