Nicaragua
The parasitic infection known as Chagas disease is endemic in Nicaragua. Since mid-2002, MSF has been trying to reduce the incidence and morbidity of the illness in children under 15. Around 8,000 children benefit directly and at least 17,000 others at risk of acquiring the disease benefit indirectly from the MSF program in Esquipulas, Matagalpa department. MSF also runs an urban project in Ciudad Sandino, in northern Managua, where the focus is on improving the reproductive health of 41,082 men and women between 15 and 49 years of age. MSF lobbies the government to improve access to medical assistance as well as access to essential drugs. MSF also carries out active surveillance and monitoring to identify emergency threats in the region, often at risk from natural disasters.

Niger
MSF responds to chronic food problems and epidemics in Niger. In 2002, MSF’s therapeutic feeding center in Maradi took care of over 5,200 children at the end of July 2003. 240 children were under treatment. In March 2003, a double epidemic of measles and meningitis broke out in the Maradi and Zinder regions of eastern Nigeria; from March to May, MSF vaccinated more than 125,000 children against measles and 394,000 people against meningitis. MSF also provided 300,000 measles and 450,000 meningitis vaccines, and a total of 30,000 curative treatments, for use by the Ministry of Health for a massive rural vaccination campaign.

Nigeria
Malaria is the main cause of death among children under five years old in the Niger Delta area. Since January 2002, MSF has provided basic health care in three health centers in Bayelsa State and has introduced artemisinin-containing combination therapy (ACT) using arteether-artesunate as first-line treatment for malaria patients. A November 2002 study done by MSF showed resistance levels of approximately 40% for the current first-line therapy (chloroquine) and 45% for the second-line treatment (Fanbidol) in children aged 4-59 months. In April 2003, MSF began an HIV/AIDS care and support project at Lagos General Hospital and also maintains an emergency preparedness and response project in the capital Abuja.

North Caucasus
The vast reduction in the possibility of carrying out humanitarian work in the North Caucasus has not been echoed by a reduction in needs, which remain pressing. MSF activity in the region is now focused on two things: securing the release of MSF staff member Artan Kerkeli, kidnapped in Kabardino in August 2002 (and as this report was going to press still being held); and assistance to Chechens affected by the ongoing conflict in Chechnya. In the face of mounting official pressure for Chechens in Ingushetia to return to Chechnya, MSF continues to speak out about the distressing living conditions of the displaced and to advocate against pressuring them to return while conflict continues. Despite official obstruction, MSF continues to address the basic living conditions and sanitary situation of Chechens in Ingushetia, particularly through the provision and repair of shelter; targeted distribution of essential goods; and improvements in water and sanitation. MSF runs prenatal and gynecological, pediatric and general practitioner clinics in Ingushetia. MSF also donates medical material, equipment and medicine to most government health structures in Ingushetia. In Chechnya, MSF provides medicine, medical material and medical equipment to 30 charities and responds to emergencies stemming from the ongoing conflict. (See page 30 for more on MSF activity in the North Caucasus) 

North Korea
MSF continues to condemn China’s forced repatriation of North Koreans and its deprivation of humanitarian aid workers assisting them. It urges the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to demand access to North Koreans held by China and to examine their asylum requests. Achieve in North Korea from 1996 to 1998, MSF withdrew due to a lack of access to people in need, and no independence to carry out its programs. Nevertheless, MSF continues to assist North Koreans. In 2002, MSF provided food and medical aid to around 900 people: shelter, clothing and food for those hiding along the Chinese border; help with resettlement and medical care for some who made it to South Korea; medical care upon request in China and third countries; and assistance to several families and occasional aid supply in North Korea itself. MSF also collects refugees’ accounts to raise awareness of the situation in the media and with governments, UN agencies and human rights organizations.

Pakistan
MSF work in Pakistan has been largely focused on assistance to Afghans who have sought refuge there. MSF has worked in camps for refugees inside Pakistan, just across the border in Afghanistan, and in an area just inside the Pakistani border known as the "Waiting Area." MSF advocated consistently for the admission of people in the "Waiting Area" as refugees in Pakistan, and for an immediate improvement in the levels of assistance by other agencies. The "Waiting Area" was finally closed at the end of July 2003; about 32,000 Afghan refugees there chose to go to Mohammed Kheli camp inside Pakistan near Quetta and were granted refugee status; the others returned to Afghanistan, many to the Daskh camp near Kandahar. MSF continues to provide health care, nutritional support in the form of feeding programs, chlorination of water, and measles immunization to about 17,000 refugees in two of the five camps located inside Pakistan near Chaman; work is also beginning at Mohammed Kheli camp. MSF also works across the border in camps for the displaced near Spin Boldak, Afghanistan (and in many other locations in Afghanistan, see page 70); the future of the Spin Boldak camps is under discussion as people there begin to be relocated inside Afghanistan. In July 2003, MSF mobile clinics brought basic medical care to people affected by floods in Sindh province.

Palestinian territories
Since the beginning of the al-Aqsa intifada in 2000, MSF has been working to ease the emotional and physical suffering of Palestinian families who have little access to health care and great restriction of movement in Gaza, Hebron...