

Working in partnership

UNHCR collaborates with a broad range of organizations and individuals in order to provide international protection, material assistance and durable solutions for displaced people. Indeed, without these partners, which include governments, the UN system, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the Office would find it difficult or impossible to conduct many of its activities. UNHCR also works with universities and research institutes, parliamentarians, experts, the private sector and displaced people.

In 2009, UNHCR will strengthen existing partnerships and initiate new ones. This chapter provides a snapshot of UNHCR's collaboration with some of its key partners.

Coordination within the UN system and with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

UNHCR supports the UN's efforts to improve the effectiveness of international humanitarian action. In this regard, it participates in key UN coordination bodies

such as the Chief Executives' Board for Coordination and its high-level committees—particularly those dealing with management and programme issues—and the United Nations Development Group. It also engages with the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and the Executive Committee on Peace and Security. Furthermore, it fulfils its statutory obligations to report in a timely manner to the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other entities.

The relevance of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), which is the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance, has been reinforced by the global food crisis and the humanitarian consequences of climate change. UNHCR aims to play a leading role in defining the mechanisms and methods that the IASC establishes to deal with emerging challenges.

As part of the IASC, UNHCR is also committed to the cluster approach, in which stakeholders work together to leverage the particular strengths of each agency. In this context, the Office supports the strengthening of the humanitarian coordinator and the resident coordinator system.

UNHCR is also part of other inter-agency coordination mechanisms, such as the Consolidated Appeals



Refugees in Thailand use facilities that have been sponsored by the Right to Play project.

UNHCR/R. Arnold

Process (CAP) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which help to respond more effectively to the needs of displaced people within an increasingly complex and challenging environment.

The Office continues to collaborate with the Peace Building Commission in the areas of recovery and transition, return and repatriation, rule of law, the safety and security of returnees, and the funding of reintegration projects. UNHCR also participates in integrated mission planning to ensure that the concerns of displaced people are adequately addressed in peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions.

UNHCR is active in five countries where the UN's Delivering as One initiative is being piloted: Albania, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania. The Office participates in both policy development and implementation at the country level.

The Delivering as One initiative provides a unique opportunity for UNHCR to engage with host governments, development organizations and NGOs. Such collaboration leads to an integrated and coordinated approach to assistance and the transition from relief to development. The initiative allows the Office to engage with the UN system in sharing the burden of refugee-hosting and returnee areas, building asylum capacity, setting up contingency plans and disaster-preparedness mechanisms, and finding durable solutions for the displaced.

UNHCR is also committed to cooperating in a strategic manner with development partners in local integration and reintegration. This will be done through the early recovery cluster and the UN Development Group, in particular the latter's Transition Working Group.

UNHCR co-chairs the IASC Task Force on Safe Access to Alternative Fuel and Firewood with the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children and the World Food Programme (WFP). The primary purpose of the task force is to improve the protection of women and children in relation to the procurement of fuel and firewood. For instance, by improving measures to prevent assaults against women and girls searching for firewood outside their encampments.

To further the aims of Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, and sexual violence, UNHCR works with various multi-agency programmes, such as the UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict initiative, the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and the IASC Sub-Working Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action.

Bilateral collaboration with UN agencies and international organizations

UNHCR nurtures its bilateral partnerships with other UN organizations, such as WFP, WHO and UNICEF, on a range of issues. The Office links up with development organizations, such as UNDP, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, FAO, ILO and the World Bank, to address livelihood and reintegration issues for displaced people. It also collaborates with bilateral donor agencies in local integration and reintegration programmes.

UNHCR's Women Leading for Livelihoods initiative aims to connect women leaders with refugee and displaced women worldwide to support the development of skills and encourage entrepreneurship. The initiative has links to the International Trade Centre in Geneva, Manpower, the Gender-Entrepreneurship-Markets of the International Finance Corporation, and the Gender and Development Group of the World Bank.

In light of the complementarities between refugee law and international human rights law, UNHCR cooperates with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the seven treaty monitoring bodies, besides contributing to the work of the Human Rights Council and the new human rights mechanism of the Universal Periodic Review.

UNHCR works with UNODC, OHCHR, UNICEF, IOM, the The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and relevant NGOs to ensure that legal standards of protection for people of concern to the Office are adhered to in counter-terrorism and national security measures, operations to counter trafficking and smuggling, and migration control.

While UNHCR has been mandated to prevent and reduce statelessness and protect the rights of stateless people, a number of other international organizations too have mandates and expertise on statelessness. To obtain an effective international response to statelessness, it is imperative that the Office works with a broad range of actors. In this regard, the 2006 Executive Committee Conclusion on statelessness and the 2008 General Conclusion on International Protection call for UNHCR to strengthen its cooperation with UN organizations such as OHCHR, UNICEF and UNFPA.

The Office will engage in advocacy efforts in conjunction with regional organizations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. It will also cooperate with UNRWA to support and protect Palestinian refugees. Finally, in recognition of the contributions of volunteers to its work, in 2009 UNHCR will expand its collaboration with the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Programme.

Working with the World Food Programme

The ongoing food crisis poses a complex challenge to both UNHCR and WFP in providing food to more than two million refugees and six million IDPs. Many refugee children and women in protracted refugee situations suffer from serious malnutrition and anaemia due to a monotonous diet lacking in key micronutrients, as well as restrictions on their ability to grow their own food.



Syrian Arab Red Crescent volunteers loading up trucks with WFP food for Iraqi refugees in Damascus

UNHCR will strengthen its collaboration with WFP in line with their Memorandum of Understanding and Plan of Action. Areas of collaboration will include joint assessments, training, fundraising and advocacy as well as food security, particularly in relation to the current food crisis. Both organizations will mainstream age, gender and diversity considerations into planning, needs assessment and monitoring in order to improve food assistance to people of concern to UNHCR.

UNHCR and WFP will work together in the context of the UN Comprehensive Framework for Action on the global food crisis to ensure that the needs of refugees and IDPs are taken into account. In March 2008, WFP agreed to give priority to providing food to the most vulnerable people, including refugees and IDPs. For its part, UNHCR is working to persuade the international community to increase support for WFP.

Working with the International Organization for Migration

In 2008, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) assisted UNHCR by transporting almost 50,000 refugees (mainly Iraqis and refugees from Thailand and Nepal) to third countries for resettlement, which is some 70 per cent more than in the previous year. IOM also helps UNHCR provide pre-departure services to refugees who will be resettled.

In 2009, the UNHCR-IOM partnership will seek to speed up the resettlement of women and girls at risk and people with health problems. An equally important task will be the organizing of referrals for victims of trafficking who may be in a refugee-like situation. Furthermore, IOM and UNHCR will collaborate on a project to evacuate refugees with acute protection problems to the resettlement transit centres in Romania and the Philippines prior to their resettlement in third countries.

IOM is one of UNHCR's key partners in addressing the challenges of mixed migration, particularly in areas such as the return of migrants who have become stranded in a country of transit or who have been caught up in anti-trafficking activities.

Examples of cooperation between the two agencies include the Mixed Migration Task Force in Somalia; the screening and assistance programme for new arrivals on the Italian island of Lampedusa; and the organizing of conferences on migration for the Caribbean and West Africa regions. In 2009, IOM will play a more active role in UNHCR's 10-Point Plan of action on refugee protection and mixed migration. UNHCR and IOM also aim to develop joint standard operating procedures to improve the protection of victims of trafficking.

Cooperation with regional organizations

UNHCR is supporting the African Union as it prepares for a special summit of heads of State on the subject of forced displacement. The summit may adopt a Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons.

UNHCR's partnership with the Economic Council of West African States (ECOWAS) has yielded good results in local integration (please see the chapter on durable solutions) and the management of the asylum-migration nexus. It has also aided early warning and emergency preparedness efforts. Several workshops in early warning systems for conflict prevention, emergency preparedness and response have been organized for ECOWAS Emergency Response Team members.

In East Africa, UNHCR is working with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, an organization of six States in the region, on its early warning system. The Office is discussing a partnership agreement with the East African Community on mixed migration movements and human trafficking among other things.

UNHCR's long-standing cooperation with the League of Arab States led to a joint workshop on asylum and migration issues for Arab Parliamentarians in October 2008. A study on asylum in Islam and international law was launched at the workshop. In the framework of UNHCR's cooperation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference, a ministerial conference on refugees in the Muslim World is planned for the first quarter of 2009. UNHCR is also strengthening ties to the Gulf Cooperation Council.

In Europe, UNHCR has strategic partnerships with civil society and regional institutions such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe; the Council of Europe; the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders; the European Council on Refugees and Exiles; the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees; and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development.

In the Americas, UNHCR's cooperation with the Organization of American States (OAS) has been bolstered by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. The OAS has adopted a resolution

on refugees and the internally displaced that gives due weight to UNHCR's concerns.

UNHCR participates in the main fora in the Americas region on migration and human rights to make sure that they deal with the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers. Two of the Office's main concerns are that people in need of international protection within mixed migratory flows are identified, and that protection safeguards are adopted to prevent the indiscriminate application of migration control measures.

In Latin America, the Regional Conference on Migration recently held a seminar on refugee protection and migratory flows. UNHCR has also increased its cooperation with the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and its Specialized Forum on Migration. In this context, workshops were held in March and October 2008 on security, human rights and refugee protection and the implementation of the Mexico Plan of Action.

The Office also cooperates with the Ibero-American Summit and the South American Conference on Migration. The first met in October 2008, and the latter is to meet in Uruguay at the end of 2008 to discuss issues related to youth. Similar activities will continue in 2009.

In Asia and the Pacific, UNHCR promotes migration- and refugee-sensitive governmental policies by participating in regional forums such as the Bali Process; the Asia-Pacific Consultations on Refugees, Displaced Persons and Migrants; and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization. Statelessness and citizenship are among the main issues that UNHCR seeks to address in the region.

The Office has also teamed up with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation's Disaster Management Centre in New Delhi. In 2009, it expects



Somali asylum-seekers are checked by a Médecins sans Frontières doctor at the Ahwar reception centre in Yemen.

to conduct workshops on emergency and disaster management.

The Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference brings together immigration services of 23 countries of the Pacific Region and territories to discuss issues of mutual interest and to foster multilateral cooperation. Heads of immigration agencies meet annually to discuss issues such as immigration policy and legislation, people smuggling and capacity building. UNHCR attends the meetings as an observer and shares its perspectives on protecting refugees and stateless people in migratory movements.

Working with NGOs

UNHCR has partnership agreements with some 640 NGOs from all parts of the world. NGOs provide a key element in the transition from relief operations to development.

Around 75 per cent of these NGO partners are local organizations. They bring a depth of local knowledge as well as an unmatched presence on the ground and the ability to become operational quickly in emergency situations. For their part, international NGOs bring a wealth of experience as well as human and material resources. More recently, UNHCR has turned to NGOs to address growing needs in legal assistance and protection.

In addition to the NGOs with whom UNHCR has formal partnership agreements, the Office works with many others on an operational basis. These operational partners support UNHCR's work in such areas as emergency relief, resettlement, research and advocacy. In 2009, UNHCR will help local NGO partners improve management, including of issues related to overheads and salaries.

UNHCR will continue to promote the Global Humanitarian Platform as a forum for NGOs, the UN and the Red Cross/ Red Crescent Movement to discuss strategic issues at the highest level.

The annual UNHCR-NGO consultations in Geneva bring together NGOs from all over the world for discussions among those on the front lines of operations. In 2008, more than 340 participants attended the Consultations. They represented 206 NGOs, of which 93 were national. There was also an increase in the number of refugees attending the consultations, who enriched meetings with their experience and knowledge of situations back home. The Office will continue to

organize this event and explore ways in which it may be replicated at the regional level.

Corporate partnerships

In 2008, UNHCR's partnerships with the private sector led to many concrete results: PricewaterhouseCoopers' employee giving campaign raised USD 4 million for education programs in Chad; the revenue generated through Nike's Human Race will also benefit education and sport programmes for refugees in Chad; the Giving is Winning campaign of the International Olympic Committee and UNHCR collected sport clothing for some 82,000 refugees; the UN Foundation contributed USD 2 million for malaria prevention in Africa; at the Clinton Global Initiative, President Bill Clinton announced that UNHCR will benefit from the UN Foundation's Nothing But Nets campaign whereby more than 630,000 refugees in Sudan, Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda will receive mosquito nets; and WPP committed to improve UNHCR's branding and communications strategies through pro bono work worth USD 10 million. Furthermore, the Community Technology Access project, developed in close cooperation with Microsoft, has made significant progress and will soon be launched in Rwanda and Bangladesh.

In 2009, the Office will build on the successes achieved in 2008. It will strengthen its partnerships with the members of the Council of Business Leaders (Manpower, Merck, Microsoft, Nike, PricewaterhouseCoopers and WPP) by developing programmes that are linked to the partners' core business competencies, new employee giving programmes and employee engagement opportunities. UNHCR also envisages developing partnerships with the private sector in order to foster self-employment opportunities, particularly in repatriation operations and protracted refugee situations.

The Office will develop new cause-related marketing campaigns, benefiting from the reach of sports clubs like FC Barcelona and its corporate partners. UNHCR will also work with other UN agencies in creating partnerships with the private sector.

The Office will strengthen its partnership with key foundations such as the UN Foundation and the Nike Foundation. UNHCR will work closely with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in implementing projects in support of the repatriation of refugees to Southern Sudan. The Office will also actively explore cooperation opportunities with other promising foundations.