Working with the internally displaced

UNHCR has an extensive history of providing protection and assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs). UNHCR's mandate in this respect is based on Article 9 of its Statute and a series of UN General Assembly Resolutions dating from the 1970s onwards, which have acknowledged UNHCR's particular humanitarian expertise and encouraged its involvement in situations of internal displacement. General Assembly Resolution 53/125 of 9 December 1998, stipulates that such involvement should be based on requests by the Secretary-General or the competent principal organs of the United Nations and with the consent of the State concerned; that it should take into account the complementarities of the mandates and expertise of other organizations, and that it must not undermine the institution of asylum.

In the absence of a single agency in the UN system with a comprehensive mandate for the protection and assistance of IDPs, a consensus emerged in the 1990s within the context of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) that a "collaborative approach" to internal displacement situations was the most appropriate and only feasible response mechanism. This approach called for all available agencies to contribute, within their means and according to their mandates and expertise, to the resolution of internal displacement situations under the coordination of the Emergency Relief Coordinator at the headquarters level, and at the field level by the Humanitarian Coordinator.

The collaborative approach was later assessed as part of a broader humanitarian response review process commissioned by the Emergency Relief Coordinator in late 2004. The review resulted in a set of humanitarian reform initiatives aimed at ensuring a more predictable, effective and accountable inter-agency humanitarian action by improving the response, funding and leadership mechanisms. As a result, in December 2005 the IASC agreed to establish the "cluster leadership approach", or "cluster approach", which organized nine critical areas of the humanitarian response into "clusters" composed of a broad range of actors (including NGOs and non-UN intergovernmental organizations) and led by a designated "cluster lead" for each cluster. Within this system, UNHCR accepted a leadership role for the Protection, Emergency Shelter, and Camp Coordination and Camp Management clusters in situations of conflict-induced internal displacement. Through the new approach, UNHCR aims to be a reliable and predictable partner within an inter-agency collaborative effort.

The IASC agreed to initially launch the "cluster approach" in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Liberia, Uganda and Somalia. Nearly four million IDPs, out of an estimated global total of 24 million, are in these four countries. The "cluster approach" has also been applied to major new emergencies such as Lebanon, where UNHCR led the Protection and Emergency Shelter clusters, and other ongoing emergencies such as Côte d'Ivoire, where UNHCR leads the Protection Cluster, to bridge gaps in the humanitarian response. While the "cluster approach" has not been formally adopted in all situations of internal displacement, a number of country teams are organizing themselves in a cluster-like manner nonetheless.

Progress achieved and plans for 2007

The "cluster leadership approach" has resulted in a number of achievements at both global level and field levels. At the global level, the clusters have clarified areas of responsibility and complementarity, and reviewed standards and existing capacities. They are now in the process of strengthening capacity and preparedness in key gap areas by planning for the expansion of technical expertise, developing guidelines and handbooks, and creating standby rosters, joint training and stockpiles. Throughout 2007, UNHCR cluster leads for Protection, Camp Coordination and Camp Management, and Emergency Shelter will continue to refine and develop their tools and services.

UNHCR has also been an active participant in the Early Recovery and Logistics Clusters, led by UNDP and WFP respectively. Not only does UNHCR have extensive expertise in these areas, but the activities of these clusters are integral to finding durable solutions to internal displacement and to providing assistance to IDPs in the fastest, most cost-effective manner.

Throughout the reform process, the Office has been building, and will continue to build, its own operational capacity to ensure that its staff have the skills, resources and information needed to undertake its leadership role effectively. For example, a roster of qualified staff will be available in 2007, and learning activities to increase staff capacity to carry out UNHCR cluster responsibilities are planned. The Office is also revisiting and strengthening partnerships with other UN agencies, NGOs, and

Many children fled with their families to the hills around Hera, Timor-Leste, to escape the violence that erupted in June 2006.
UNHCR / N. Ng

intergovernmental organizations in an effort to improve collaboration.

To assess its performance more systematically, the Office is developing measurable performance indicators for use at the global and country levels. A review of lessons learned on UNHCR's expanded role in situations of internal displacement took place in mid-October 2006. This review resulted in good practices and lessons learned that will be incorporated into UNHCR's strategic vision and operational plans for 2007.

Websites for all clusters were being developed at the time of publication and should be available by the beginning of 2007, complementing other websites on internal displacement. In addition to hosting information about cluster activities, these websites will be a central repository for operational guidelines, tools, and standard operating procedures. A CD-ROM containing key resources for IDP operations in protection, camp coordination and camp management, and emergency shelter was produced in the second half of 2006.

Protection Cluster

The protection of internally displaced people involves addressing a number of very challenging human rights issues, including discrimination; threats to physical security; sexual and gender-based violence; restrictions on freedom of movement and forced movement; violations of land, housing and property rights; impunity and access to justice; lack of basic services; and the loss of personal documentation. In addition, IDPs often face the risks posed by the presence of land mines. Problems related to insecurity and humanitarian access can hinder possibilities for direct intervention and prevent initial needs assessments. As a result, it may be difficult to gather information regarding the number of IDPs, their needs, and their protection risks.

The Protection Cluster is emerging as one of the main clusters and, recognizing the need for coordinated protection activities and strategies, even country teams not using the "cluster approach" have formed similar structures.

At the global level, the Protection Cluster Working Group has proved to be a valuable forum for information exchange, policy discussion, and the development and harmonization of protection tools. A tool for profiling IDP populations is currently being developed and tested by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and OCHA's Internal Displacement Division. To support the development of skills and knowledge, and provide the Field with key protection tools, an inter-agency handbook on IDP protection was being finalized in late 2006. The handbook is expected to be piloted in early 2007, with training workshops organized.

The global Protection Cluster Working Group has supported country teams in the pilot countries in the formulation of strategies and with staff deployments to field operations, through the Protection Standby Capacity (ProCap) scheme, the Surge deployment scheme (managed by the International Rescue Committee),

emergency missions and other staffing arrangements. While the "ProCap" staffing mechanism provides some measure of support, there are still difficulties in identifying and financing adequate levels of protection staffing for emergencies, which managers in the Field have identified as the most critical and urgent need. The issue of flexible staffing mechanisms to appoint appropriate staff rapidly is becoming a crucial component of success in field operations. The Working Group has also provided advice on the formulation of protection strategies

The "cluster approach" in practice

As cluster lead at the country level, UNHCR has sought to ensure that the clusters represent a diverse group of humanitarian actors, particularly NGOs, to undertake joint and participatory assessments, develop strategies, and coordinate the necessary response. UNHCR also actively participates and even co-chairs other clusters, such as those specifically created to address return and reintegration.

In **Liberia**, clusters led by UNHCR (emergency shelter and non-food items, camp management and coordination, and protection), in collaboration with its operational partners, have been instrumental in facilitating the reintegration of more than 300,000 returned IDPs. Following a restructuring of an existing Protection Core Group, the Protection Cluster, composed of representatives of a number of UN and NGO actors, has developed and adopted a common protection monitoring mechanism; begun the carrying out of joint assessments; and developed strategic plans. The Camp Management Cluster is implementing an inter-agency camp closure strategy, which UNHCR had spearheaded. This strategy focuses on activities to ensure that legal, environmental and other issues resulting from the long-term presence of IDP camps are addressed. UNHCR is also an active member of the Return and Resettlement sub-Cluster, which has helped improve conditions in areas of return through community-based reintegration projects and the restoration of basic services. Close collaboration exists with UNICEF and WHO (lead agencies for water and sanitation, education and health) as well as with line ministries and local authorities to help ensure that the Government and other developmental actors take over the provision of basic services.

In **Uganda**, the principle of freedom of movement underpins the protection strategy developed by the Protection Cluster. Joint advocacy efforts on freedom of movement by the cluster members with the Government have helped to initiate the voluntary return of IDPs in some areas. To date some 300,000 people have returned, and another 200,000 are expected to return before the end of 2006. The Cluster has also undertaken joint assessment and strategic planning exercises. The Camp Management sub-Cluster under the Protection Cluster is presently refining a camp coordination and management strategy. UNHCR also works closely with UNDP within the Return and Recovery Cluster, which has conducted a series of joint early-recovery assessments and identified key programmes and projects.

In the **DRC**, as Protection Cluster lead with the UN Observer mission, MONUC, UNHCR has established ten provincial protection working groups throughout the country. Despite initial challenges to coordinate the diverse group of protection actors, the Protection Cluster is now gaining credibility and momentum and its action has already had a positive impact on IDP communities. One successful Protection Cluster intervention resulted in the National Congolese Army agreeing to remove a brigade in Katanga Province due to allegations of serious human rights violations against IDPs. UNHCR co-chairs with UNDP the Return, Reintegration and Early Recovery Cluster. So far, UNHCR has contributed by collecting data; making assessments on key return areas; developing a joint programming plan within the cluster; drafting a national framework for solutions to displacement; and providing initial reintegration assistance to returnee IDPs and refugees in selected provinces.

In **Somalia**, within the Protection Cluster, UNHCR and other humanitarian partners have completed the first phase of IDP profiling exercises to better understand the needs of IDPs and their prospects for durable solutions. Based on information provided by a network of primarily national actors, UNHCR has also developed maps to track population movements to assist with the Cluster's early warning and strategic planning exercises. In Bossaso ("Puntland"), the "cluster approach" has ensured rapid delivery of relief items to needy communities, and constructed sanitation facilities for IDP settlements.

Details of UNHCR's work with internally displaced people in 2007 can be found in the relevant country chapters in the attached CD-ROM.

and organized consultations with the country teams in Liberia, the DRC, Uganda and Lebanon.

During 2006, UNHCR has worked very closely with OCHA, other UN agencies, the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement and key NGOs engaged in protection work to support the field operations and has strengthened its partnership with several agencies. In addition, the Office has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, to improve collaboration on internal displacement issues.

UNHCR is also studying the eventual effects of its expanded engagement with IDPs on the protection of refugees in ongoing operations and on the institution of asylum. The potential impact of this engagement on refugee protection will need to be assessed over a certain period of time to detect trends and identify links between the two areas of responsibility, as well as to enable effective responses to any negative effects and the development of risk mitigation strategies. It is encouraging to note that a number of benefits for asylum and refugee operations have already arisen from UNHCR's involvement in IDP operations in several countries, such as Lebanon, where closer relations with the Government allowed UNHCR to address long-standing refugee concerns.

Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster

The Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster is co-led at the global level by UNHCR and IOM. At the field level, UNHCR is responsible for IDPs in conflict-generated emergencies, and IOM in natural disasters. At the onset of cluster work there was no established network of agencies and few agreed concepts and standards in camp coordination and management existed. Therefore, a major task has been to clarify these concepts, and to define and distribute related responsibilities within and between clusters.

The Cluster's goals and objectives revolve around setting standards, disseminating the camp coordination and camp management concepts and expanding the capacities of cluster leads and members to put it in practice.

In order to develop and strengthen the capacity of humanitarian staff to coordinate and manage operations in camps, the Cluster has organized a series of training sessions for UN and NGO staff members. Three work-shops have already been organized in 2006. Run with the help of NRC, these training events will produce more than 50 trainers within UN and other international agencies, and NGOs. The Cluster has also disseminated

the *Camp Management Toolkit,* which includes key guidelines and resources consolidated in a CD-ROM to assist agencies at the field level.

Camp coordination and camp management also require information technology support. UNHCR will continue to work on the digital mapping of camps, and is currently developing a simple software tool that can store and present camp residents' protection and welfare data. This information can be fed into the information systems run by OCHA's Humanitarian Information Centres. At the field level, UNHCR has been facilitating operational information management workshops for agencies work-ing in IDP camps in northern Uganda, and developing a population tracking system in Somalia.

In 2007, the global Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster will continue to focus its activities on training and information management support.

Emergency Shelter Cluster

The Emergency Shelter Cluster has integrated a number of NGOs in its activities and has secured pledges for staff secondments from NRC, the Swiss Development Cooperation and RedR Australia. The Cluster has also compiled a list of assessment tools, worked on standard-setting and obtained the collaboration of UNOSAT to assist the cluster with maps and satellite imagery when needed. Since June 2006 the Emergency Shelter Cluster Working Group has worked on developing a number of new guidance documents and tools. These include the *Guidelines for Assessment in Emergencies*, which were tested in the Lebanon crisis; a comprehensive document entitled *Lessons Learned from the Pakistan Earthquake;* and a *Monitoring and Reporting Tools* document which was being finalized at the time of writing.

In 2007 the Working Group plans to finalize intervention criteria and a "best response" matrix for different climatic and geographical conditions; agree on standards for emergency shelter and non-food items; support field operations through the deployment of technical staff; strengthen its cooperation with NGOs seconding technical staff; implement training and capacity-building activities; and establish a list of non-food items for emergency stockpiling with a view to reaching an agreement on sharing resources and stockpiles for rapid response.

Finally, UNHCR is in the process of strengthening its response capacity as cluster lead by deploying technical officers to operations in Africa, who will also cover issues of direct relevance to the Emergency Shelter Cluster and can be deployed to other operations when required.

Early Recovery Cluster

In addition to its leadership responsibilities in the three clusters described previously, UNHCR is actively contributing to the establishment and development of the Early Recovery Cluster, with particular emphasis on the Post-conflict Recovery sub-Cluster. For UNHCR, this cluster represents a key opportunity to work with other UN agencies to reduce the gap between relief and development; support the consolidation of the return and reintegration of displaced populations; engage development actors in the response to issues related to communities affected by conflict; and, in general, raise the profile and contribution of displaced populations to peace building and transition activities. UNHCR's active participation also helps to ensure that strategic plans and interventions in the three UNHCR-led clusters are consistent with activities planned for the early recovery phase and that protection and cross-cutting issues are included in early recovery planning.

The Early Recovery Cluster has identified community-based recovery as a priority focus for interventions, and identified resources and expertise to develop this sector. The Cluster has also drafted an inventory of tools for early recovery activities, and hosted meetings to explore the potential application of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach to early recovery contexts. In particular, UNHCR is working on conflict and displacement-related analysis; development of a programming framework for early recovery; development of information management systems for recovery; support for the development of an inventory of tools related to early-recovery and transition; and specific UNHCR programme contributions to support the reintegration of returned IDPs and refugees in pilot countries.

In addition to participating in cluster processes, UNHCR has also taken steps to develop its operational relationship with partners such as UNDP, ILO, and FAO to help facilitate the transition from relief to recovery and development.

Logistics Cluster

Since its inception, UNHCR has actively participated and contributed to the development of the WFP-led Logistics Cluster. The primary objectives of the Logistics Cluster have been to develop emergency personnel standby capacity; identify areas for improvement; strengthen logistics preparedness and response; and facilitate improved inter-agency coordination and pooling of resources where feasible. The Logistics Cluster developed its work plan on the assumption that members of the other clusters will manage their own logistics as part of an integrated supply chain approach. The Logistics Cluster lead provides inter-agency logistics services as a "last resort", when the size and magnitude of the logistics challenges require more robust inter-agency standby personnel capacity, coordination, and action. Ongoing efforts to clarify the roles of the Logistics Cluster and the UN Joint Logistics Centre, which had hitherto been the logistics coordination facility in complex emergencies, are expected to be completed by the end of 2006.

UNHCR plans to be an active, engaged member of the Logistics Cluster in 2007. As cluster lead, WFP has created an inter-agency logistics response team staffed with personnel from the different agencies, and to which UNHCR will second one staff member. In addition, the Office intends to make available two additional staff members on standby deployment to the Logistics Cluster.

Given its ongoing responsibilities for refugees, its new cluster leadership responsibilities for IDPs, and based on lessons learned from the Lebanon operations, UNHCR plans to strengthen its logistics capacity to be a more dependable partner in the delivery of shelter, non-food items, and other relief items.