

## UPDATE ON COORDINATION ISSUES

### Introduction

1. The aftermath of the 11 September attacks witnessed a number of initiatives undertaken in New York under the umbrella of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Secretariat, to which UNHCR has made an active contribution. These initiatives inevitably figured very prominently on the agendas of various inter-agency bodies, as described in the paragraphs that follow. Subsequent sections of this Note concern the reformed ACC and its subsidiary mechanisms; other relevant coordinating bodies; developments with respect to bilateral coordination and lastly, some recent initiatives by UNHCR. In accordance with the wishes expressed by the Standing Committee, this Note also defines, where relevant, UNHCR's positions with respect to various coordination issues.

### I. UNITED NATIONS' RESPONSE TO TERRORISM

2. As emphasised by the High Commissioner on several occasions, there is a very real risk that the institution of asylum will be undermined through the heightened fear of terrorism. UNHCR has therefore been an active contributor to the work of United Nations bodies dealing with such questions. These have mainly included the Security Council's Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC), pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1373 and 1377 on terrorism. UNHCR's contribution to the work of the CTC has taken the form of a paper on "Ten refugee protection concerns in the aftermath of September 11", submitted in October 2001, followed one month later by UNHCR's perspective on addressing security concerns without undermining refugee protection. Both submissions were given the status of official documentation of the CTC. Through some delegations, UNHCR was also offered the opportunity of commenting on those paragraphs of Security Council resolution 1373 which appeared relevant to refugees and the institution of asylum.

3. UNHCR has also supported the efforts of the Strategic Planning Unit in the Secretariat and the Policy Working Group on the United Nations and Terrorism, established by the Secretary-General in October 2001. The latter has sought in particular to identify longer-term implications and policy dimensions of the issue of terrorism for the United Nations, and to formulate recommendations by June 2002, on steps that the UN system might take.

4. Another important initiative followed closely by UNHCR has been the drafting of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism by a Working Group of the General Assembly's Sixth Committee. At the request of the Belgian delegation on behalf of the European Union, UNHCR's comments on the draft were endorsed and circulated as official documentation. This active engagement aims to counter any ambiguity creating unwarranted linkages between refugees and terrorists. UNHCR will remain engaged in providing advice and expertise to Member States in support of their efforts to address security concerns, while safeguarding international standards of refugee protection.

## II. AFGHAN CRISIS

5. Several other initiatives concerning the immediate response to 11 September, with primary focus on the political and humanitarian consequences on Afghanistan and the surrounding region, saw the substantive engagement of UNHCR, both at the political and operational level. One example has been its regular participation at senior level in weekly meetings of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security (ECPS), nominated by the Secretary General in September 2001 as the UN system-wide focal point and clearing house on terrorism.

6. An Integrated Mission Task Force (IMTF) on Afghanistan was established by the ECPS in October 2001, the first mechanism of its kind following the Brahimi Report. The IMTF was intended to perform as an integrated body bringing together various departments and agencies to support the establishment of the Office of the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan. It was thus involved in developing the structure of a new United Nations Mission in Afghanistan. UNHCR rapidly seconded an experienced staff member with knowledge of the region to the IMTF on a full-time basis. His contribution to this important work has been greatly appreciated by the UN Secretariat.

7. UNHCR has also played an active role in the newly-established management group of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs/ United Nations Development Group (ECHA/UNDG). Throughout the first five months of the crisis in Afghanistan, this Group was tasked with developing an integrated UN strategy for the humanitarian response and post-conflict rehabilitation and development. In view of the close linkages between post-conflict rehabilitation and the search for durable solutions, UNHCR was also invited to attend the meetings of the UNDG Working Group on Afghanistan.

8. In parallel with the numerous consultative events under the ECHA/UNDG and ECPS umbrellas in New York, UNHCR has been widely present on the ground in Afghanistan and the surrounding region in the humanitarian co-ordination mechanisms, particularly the Humanitarian/Resident Coordinator and the system of Regional Coordination Offices.

9. UNHCR's engagement in inter-agency and departmental bodies dealing with Afghanistan has had positive results. It has provided UNHCR with a unique opportunity to place humanitarian, refugee and IDP issues high on the agenda of the military actors involved in the conflict, as well as of those United Nations bodies responsible for key political negotiations.

## III. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON COORDINATION (ACC)

10. The ACC, now renamed Chief Executives Board (CEB), held its second regular session in 2001 on 19-20 October, at the UN Headquarters. Its agenda covered system-wide support for Africa and the New African Initiative, as well as administrative issues. At a private meeting on 19 October, members were briefed on the latest developments in Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Kosovo (Yugoslavia) and East Timor. They also discussed the potential impact of the September 11 events on the targets of the Millennium Summit Declaration. In the context of the ACC retreat where the main issue considered was the "Follow-up by the UN system to the Millennium Summit Declaration", a paper produced by UNHCR was made available to participants, highlighting the need for a more integrated approach to refugees and development, in line with the High Commissioner's statement at the ACC's spring session in Nairobi.

11. In his presentation to the ACC, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) drew attention to the value of the New African Initiative (since renamed the New Partnership for Africa's Development – NEPAD) and outlined the challenges ahead. They include translating this new framework into national programmes, building national and regional capacities and reinforcing African ownership of the implementation process, while achieving quick results in a few areas to enhance credibility. The ACC concluded that Africa should remain a priority area for the political, development and humanitarian work of the UN system. The development process should shift from a donor-driven to an African-led mechanism, which requires adjustments in the focus of international support, based on priorities identified by African leaders.

12. While NEPAD is a development-oriented plan, UNHCR would like Africa's humanitarian concerns, including the issue of refugees and IDPs to be included in the NEPAD agenda. Other issues,

which form part of NEPAD are relevant to UNHCR's work. They include its promotion of a culture of human rights, peace and security and health issues such as the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa. In the context of the Global Consultations ministerial meeting in December 2001, UNHCR organised a one-day meeting with African ministers to discuss protracted refugee situations in Africa. The link between refugees and development was one of the issues stressed by participants at this meeting.

#### High Level Committee on Management (HLCM)

13. At its second regular session on 10-11 September 2001, in Geneva, the HLCM reviewed several items of direct relevance to UNHCR. They included a cost-sharing formula for the management of security in the biennium 2002-2003. In addition, the Committee requested that a Task Force be established, comprising UNHCR, the United Nations, UNICEF and WHO, which should review recommendations for a robust governance system for security management across the United Nations system. HLCM held a video conference on 23 January 2002, in which the Task Force chaired by UNHCR delivered a progress report and proposed terms of reference for an Inter-Agency Security Management Network to support HLCM. The HLCM agreed on establishing the network and adopted its terms of reference. The first meeting of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network will take place in late spring 2002.

#### High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP)

14. The HLCP held its second regular session of 2001 in Geneva on 25-26 September, and adopted a set of recommendations for submission to the ACC focussing mainly on efforts to ensure that Africa is given priority on the international agenda. The HLCP highlighted the importance of strengthening regional coordination mechanisms to support Africans' leadership and ownership of their programmes.

15. Other recommendations concerned the review of ACC's subsidiary bodies, several of which are of direct interest to UNHCR, such as the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, the ACC Sub-Committee on Nutrition and the Working Group on the Resident Coordinator System. This latter body has been particularly useful in providing an opportunity to discuss development issues related to refugees, and the HLCP concluded that a working group on operational activities and the functioning of the Resident Coordinator System should be established under the aegis of the ACC/HLCP. Final recommendations on other committees for consideration by the CEB would be made with by the HLCP at its spring session in 2002

### IV. NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN OTHER INTER-AGENCY COORDINATING MECHANISMS

#### Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC)

16. At its (postponed) meeting held on 21 and 22 November 2001, in Geneva, the IASC Working Group endorsed several initiatives, notably a plan to review and strengthen the Consolidated Appeal Process, (CAP) a review of the Military and Civil Defence Unit of OCHA (MCDU), and a review of the terms of reference for the function of Humanitarian Coordinator. The situation in Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo were also discussed.

17. For UNHCR, the main importance of the work of this Group concerns its standard-setting on humanitarian issues. In its efforts to develop a common emergency response capacity in situations of mass population displacement, UNHCR derives particular benefit from the discussions on the review of the MCDU and the Draft Guidelines for the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in complex emergencies. The CAP review initiative is also proving useful in reinvigorating the CAP as a coordinating and strategic planning tool.

#### IDPs

18. The Internal Displacement Unit established within OCHA became operational in January 2002, having filled all the staffing positions in the unit and obtained a good level of funding of the \$ 2.4 million requested. UNHCR has seconded a senior staff member to the Unit on a non-reimbursable basis and

remains engaged in the consultative Senior IDP Network which will continue to function in an advisory capacity.

#### Coordination with peace-keeping operations

19. Through its Liaison Office in New York, UNHCR has remained actively engaged in coordination mechanisms related to several specific operations. They have included the Task Force on West Africa, led by the department of Political Affairs, the Working Group on the Balkans and the Task Force on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Consultations on the DRC initiated by UNHCR with the United Nations Department of Peace-Keeping Operations (DPKO) and the United Nations Observer Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) led to an agreement concerning ex-military personnel who fled into the DRC from the Central African Republic and their separation from refugees and civilian populations in the area of Zongo. A letter of understanding has provided for the disarmament and encampment of such elements, as well as the destruction of weapons under the supervision of MONUC. The Zongo operation is a good example of how coordination with DPKO and peace-keeping operations in the field is important in addressing key protection concerns, such as the security of refugees and humanitarian workers, safe access to beneficiaries and upholding the civilian nature of refugee settlements and asylum as a whole.

#### Special Session of the General Assembly on Children

20. Preparations have resumed for the postponed United Nations Special Session on Children, which will now take place on 8-10 May 2002. The High Commissioner will attend and make a statement to the Plenary, as well as participate in discussions of heads of agencies and an informal panel focussing on refugee children.

### V. BILATERAL COOPERATION

#### WFP

21. The revision of the 1997 Memorandum of Understanding with WFP has reached its final stages, with the revised text currently under review at senior levels of both WFP and UNHCR. It is anticipated that the text will be ready shortly. This revision will serve to enhance cooperation and clarify the operational roles of each agency in providing food and food-related assistance to refugees.

#### IOM

22. Following discussions in the context of the Global Consultations under the item "Refugee Protection and Migration Control"<sup>1</sup>, a joint UNHCR-IOM Action Group on Asylum and Migration (AGAMI) has been created. It held its first meeting on 16 November 2001 at UNHCR, and agreed upon the following terms of reference:

- to further understanding of the nexus between migration and asylum;
- to review substantive policy issues in the management of asylum and migration, informed by field initiatives and lessons learned from operations at the field level;
- to explore ways in which cooperation between IOM and UNHCR can be enhanced in these matters;
- to enhance each organization's capacity to contribute to States' efforts to develop policies and programmes on migration and asylum.

The meeting also served to undertake an overview of available statistics and data, to identify gaps and develop strategies for effective data collection and dissemination. A follow-up meeting also took place on 22 January 2002 at IOM within the general framework of the AGAMI process in order to exchange views on the Regional Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime to be held in Bali on 27-28 February 2002

23. The next meeting, anticipated for first quarter of 2002, will focus on further examination of statistics and terminology and on the issue of interception. It is planned that meetings will take place on a quarterly basis or more frequently as needed. This forum should help improve dialogue on pertinent

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<sup>1</sup> EC/GC/01/15 paras. 20-21

issues between the two organizations, and build a better partnership in the areas of asylum and migration.

24. A separate area of cooperation between IOM and UNHCR concerns the preparation of a joint paper on "Asylum and Migration - the imperative of interaction and cooperation", in which the relationship between the two issues, the challenges to the institution of asylum, and the need for a comprehensive and cooperative approach, will be analysed. The paper will be published in the new edition of "The World Migration Report", to be issued by IOM in the autumn of 2002.

## VI. COORDINATION INITIATIVES BY UNHCR

### HIV/AIDS

25. The High Commissioner has determined that HIV/AIDS should be a high priority issue on the UNHCR agenda, and in that connection, a draft strategic plan (2002-2004) for strengthening HIV/AIDS prevention and care activities in refugee situations has been developed by the organization. The strategy elaborates the main challenges to be addressed as:

- mobilizing additional technical and financial resources to enable the implementation of HIV/AIDS programmes;
- strengthening existing and creating new partnerships with refugee communities, governments, NGOs and UN sister agencies, as keys to the success of the strategy.

26. The draft strategic plan was discussed at the first meeting of UNHCR's Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS, held on 19 February 2002. This Group, which brings together both refugee-hosting and donor countries, United Nations agencies and NGO's, considers the following as its primary roles:

- Advocacy;
- Promotion of partnerships and complementary collaboration;
- Provision of technical and financial support through an agreed plan of action to be developed to meet HIV/AIDS prevention and care of refugees;
- Identification of potential support for refugees from existing bilateral or multilateral aid.

A follow-up meeting of the Advisory Group is planned in the course of 2002, with the next one likely to take place before the Executive Committee's next session with an aim to finalise the draft strategic plan.

### Refocusing Partnerships

27. A draft report by an internal Task Force on Partnerships was submitted to the High Commissioner in late December 2001. The work had been divided into two sub-working groups, one examining partnerships with United Nations agencies and other international organizations, and the other looking at partnerships with non-governmental organizations. In parallel with this work, UNHCR's relationship with development agencies of donor governments was also examined. A number of key recommendations and a draft work plan have been presented in the report of the Task Force, which is now being reviewed by UNHCR's senior management.

28. The work of the sub-working groups focussed on a cross-section of key partners of UNHCR, including United Nations agencies, international organizations and NGO's. While many of the recommendations concern the specific relationships with these agencies, a number of cross-cutting issues are applicable to UNHCR's partnerships in a broader sense, and could serve to improve our relationships and strengthen our partnerships in general. A plan of action with a timetable will be prepared during the first quarter of 2002.