

UPDATE ON COORDINATION ISSUES

Introduction

1. This Note represents the main developments in the area of inter-agency coordination since the last update for the March 2002 Standing Committee. Sections of the note focus on the Chief Executives Board (CEB) and its subsidiary mechanisms; the General Assembly Special Session on children; the ECOSOC 2002 Substantive Session; other inter-agency coordinating mechanisms, including bilateral coordination; and some new partnership initiatives undertaken by UNHCR in recent months.

I. CHIEF EXECUTIVES BOARD (CEB)

2. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board (CEB) met at FAO Headquarters in Rome on 10-11 April 2002 for its first regular session. Its agenda covered the treatment and prevention of diseases, including HIV/AIDS and malaria, as a follow-up to the Millennium Summit, as well as system-wide support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the functioning of the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP). At a retreat held during this CEB session, Executive Heads discussed the way forward in the campaign for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

3. In the course of his participation in the CEB session, the High Commissioner urged that programmes for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS should include refugees and internally displaced persons, who are among the most vulnerable of the disease's victims, within their primary focus.

4. Concerning support for NEPAD, Executive Heads noted that the resolution of internal and inter-State conflicts, and the associated problems of refugees and displaced persons, was a key to creating the right environment for investment and sustainable development in Africa. This point will again be a focus of the CEB at its second regular session in New York in November, when the follow-up by the United Nations system to the Secretary-General's report on "Preventing Armed Conflict" will be discussed.

High Level Committee on Management (HLCM)

5. The HLCM held its third regular session at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 4 and 5 March 2002. Staff security was an agenda item of key importance for UNHCR, and discussion on this topic included UNSECOORD's progress in recruiting field security officers and the work by the Inter-Agency Security Management Network to develop minimum standards on air safety and security. The reform of the United Nations pay and benefits system, also discussed, has the potential to create the most wide-ranging transformation of human-resources practice in the history of the United Nations system, aimed at improved organizational performance.

High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP)

6. The HLCP held its third session at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 7 and 8 March 2002. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) prepared a note on NEPAD which would be brought to the attention of the CEB, outlining NEPAD's strategic direction and the role the United Nations can play in support of efforts by African governments.

7. Another topic was the functioning of HLCP itself, on which the Committee concluded that the relationship between HLCP and the UN Development Group (UNDG) was complementary, providing a sound basis for enhanced cooperation between the two bodies.

II. GENERAL ASSEMBLY SPECIAL SESSION ON CHILDREN

8. The United Nations General Assembly held a Special Session (UNSSC) to review achievements since the 1990 World Summit on Children (WSC) and in particular to discuss progress on the World Declaration and Plan of Action which emanated from the WSC. UNHCR commented on several drafts of the Outcome Document and submitted, for inclusion in the Session record, a ten-year review identifying the policies and milestones adopted by UNHCR and the activities undertaken by it in relation to the WSC Plan of Action.

9. A side-panel - which included UNHCR, the International Rescue Committee, the Women's Commission on Refugee Women and Children, a senior advisor to the Canadian Government, and a refugee adolescent - highlighted the issues of separation, exploitation and education, as well as the specific risks and strengths of adolescents, the security context and the search for durable solutions. The Special Session's Outcome Document underlined the need to provide protection and assistance to refugees in accordance with international law.

III. ECOSOC 2002 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION

10. This year's Session of ECOSOC was held in New York from 1-26 July. A Ministerial Declaration was issued including, in particular, a call to support the goals and commitments of the Millennium Declaration and other conferences such as Monterrey, Doha and the Conference on HIV/AIDS. ECOSOC recognized the difficulty of providing a coordinated follow-up to the vast array of conferences and summits, involving a wide variety of partners or subsidiary bodies. The Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals were frequently alluded to during the session as providing a new framework for this task.

11. Exchanges in the Humanitarian Segment, leading to the consensus resolution on *Strengthening of the Coordination of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance of the United Nations*, touched on the need to provide more consistent and predictable financing. There were signs of an increasing willingness on the part of many countries to consider the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) as strategic planning tools as well as resource mobilization tools. The consensus resolution also made particular reference to the protection of civilians in armed conflict and the separation of armed elements in camps.

12. The High Commissioner addressed the Plenary Session of the Humanitarian Segment and participated in a panel discussion on "The Transition from Relief to Development in the Context of Complex Humanitarian Emergencies and Natural Disasters", moderated by OCHA. During these interventions, he called attention to the "4 Rs" and "DLI" concepts (see under Section VI below) and the importance of coordination within the United Nations family, not only in development programmes but also in relation to peace-building and the security of staff and beneficiaries.

13. During the General Segment, on 24 July, UNHCR introduced the Report of the High Commissioner on the Activities of his Office during 2001, as well as an oral report on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa. On 25 July, the Council adopted a resolution recommending that the General Assembly vote to enlarge UNHCR's Executive Committee from 61 to 64 members.

14. Throughout the 2002 Session, there were a number of expressions of support for policies consistent with UNHCR's efforts to implement solutions for the most vulnerable groups and promote the transition from relief to development. On other issues, much support was expressed for NEPAD and the new Office for Least Developed Countries (OLCD), tasked with promoting the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010. UNHCR will be closely following developments with respect to these programmes and will play its part in ensuring the necessary level of networking and coordination.

IV. INTER-AGENCY COORDINATING MECHANISMS

Humanitarian Coordination - general

15. The High Commissioner has frequently stressed the importance of humanitarian coordination, especially at the field level. Regular engagement in the work of the Executive Committees on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) and Peace and Security (ECPS) has provided UNHCR with important opportunities to enlist the support of other humanitarian and political actors on issues relevant to the Office's mandate. UNHCR has contributed its views and suggestions to the discussion initiated by the Deputy Secretary-General on strengthening ECPS and ECHA.

16. Cooperation with United Nations Secretariat in New York has been paralleled by good examples of partnership in the field, such as: the UNAMSIL logistic support to the repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees from Guinea in the pre-elections phase, and the disarmament and separation of armed elements from refugees in Zongo in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

17. UNHCR has also taken an active part in the OCHA-led initiative to review the Terms of Reference of the Humanitarian Coordinator, which will be discussed during the September meeting of the IASC Working Group.

IASC Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises

18. At its meeting in Rome on 13-14 March, the IASC Working Group established a Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation, tasked with developing a set of preventive and responsive measures applicable in humanitarian crises. An initial Plan of Action and a Policy Statement were prepared by the IASC Task Force and approved by the IASC Plenary at the Principals' level on 9 April 2002 in Rome.

19. The work of the Task Force, which continued with great intensity during the months of April, May and June, led to the preparation of a comprehensive Plan of Action, touching upon several issues including agency Codes of Conduct, protection mechanisms and the delivery of material assistance. The final Plan of Action was endorsed by the IASC Working Group meeting in Geneva on 19-20 June and was further approved by Principals/Heads of IASC member organizations at the end of July. UNHCR participated in all meetings of the Task Force and in all sub-groups established under it, chairing the Sub-Group on Protection.

20. In the current implementation phase of the Task Force Plan of Action, UNHCR is concentrating on activities related to accountability, including the Code of Conduct, and the reinforcement of protection through, *inter alia*, staffing benchmarks and training. UNHCR has also given indications to the Task Force concerning the resources that UNHCR can offer from its budget or seek from its donors for implementation of the Plan of Action.

Protection, Peace-Keeping and Durable Solutions

21. UNHCR has contributed to a number of initiatives undertaken by the United Nations Secretariat and its Departments. These include the OCHA-led initiative on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, and the Executive Committee on Peace and Security (ECPS) Task Force for the Development of Comprehensive Rule of Law Strategies for Peace Operations. The Task Force is responsible for formulating guidelines covering the rule of law in the context of peace operations and for creating arrangements for specialists in the subject to be deployed in future peace-keeping operations.

22. In addition to the partnership initiatives taken by the High Commissioner with UNDP and the World Bank on transition and durable solutions (see under Section VI below), UNHCR, through its Liaison Office in New York, is engaged in informal consultations with New York-based humanitarian and development actors on the issue of post-conflict recovery and protracted relief emergencies.

V. BILATERAL COOPERATION

ICRC

23. The annual high level meeting between ICRC and UNHCR took place in Evian-les-Bains on 30 and 31 May. The meeting was attended by the two agency Heads and a small group of senior advisors and took place in an informal atmosphere, which served to focus the discussions and build upon the fruitful relations between ICRC and UNHCR.

24. While there was no main theme designated for the meeting this year, agenda items included: Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), mainly in the context of Afghanistan; the need to uphold international law systems in the aftermath of the events of 11 September 2001; Prisoners of War (POWs) who refuse to be repatriated and apply for asylum; and the general partnership and coordination between ICRC and UNHCR.

25. In addition to the agenda topics, discussion also focussed on the challenges for both agencies with respect to addressing the gap between relief and development, ensuring staff safety and security and preventing sexual exploitation in conflict and refugee situations, as well as continuing the broad cooperation which has existed between the two agencies over the years.

WFP

26. A fourth revision to the original 1985 Memorandum of Understanding between WFP and UNHCR was signed on 9 July, on the sidelines of the inaugural session of the African Union (AU). The High Commissioner and the Executive Director of WFP, Mr. James Morris, signed the revised MOU in the presence of the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan.

27. Consistent with the ultimate goal of the partnership between the two organizations, the revision aims to ensure "food security and related non-food needs of refugees." At the same time, it places more emphasis on refugee self-reliance, stressing the need for both organizations to minimize refugees' dependence on food aid. Important commitments to the welfare of refugee women and children, and the need to address the impact of HIV/AIDS on the populations of mutual concern, are also included in the revised text.

28. A key element in the revised MOU includes the introduction of a pilot programme in five countries, over a period of one year, in which WFP will be responsible for the final distribution of basic

food commodities to refugees. The five country programmes to be selected will be jointly evaluated upon completion of the programme.

29. The revised MOU makes more explicit reference to UNHCR's engagement in the mobilization of non-food items and services. It also stresses the crucial activities of distribution and post-distribution monitoring, to be carried out on a joint basis by the two organizations wherever joint operations are undertaken.

30. The High Commissioner and the WFP Executive Director jointly sent a letter to all Directors and field Representatives of the two agencies, highlighting the most significant elements for enhanced cooperation contained in the updated MOU. Joint regional workshops have already been organized with WFP to train field staff on issues related to food security, nutrition, registration and the promotion of self-reliance.

VI. NEW PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES

31. A number of new partnership efforts have taken place since the last Coordination note in March. As a follow-up to the report of the Task Force on Partnerships, collaboration has advanced with several key partners, in addition to WFP and ICRC as mentioned above.

32. A high level meeting is planned with UNICEF in September for the purpose of reviewing the existing MOU signed in 1996. With ILO, a number of specific actions have been undertaken, including the finalization of the UNHCR-ILO Training Manual for Micro-Finance in Conflict-Affected Communities, as well as coordination of field missions to Afghanistan and Angola, and the fielding of a joint UNDP/ILO/UNHCR mission to Sri Lanka. Focal points have been identified in each agency to encourage further collaboration in the field. A resumption of the annual high level meetings with IOM is expected to take place, with the next one scheduled for early November, to be hosted by IOM.

33. The High Commissioner held meetings and exchanged correspondence with the Administrator of UNDP and the President of the World Bank on the "4Rs" (Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction) and "DLI" (Development through Local Integration) concepts. The High Commissioner proposed ways for the three agencies to collaborate in supporting the transition from relief to development, and suggested joint ventures for the transitional phase in post-conflict situations and in countries experiencing protracted refugee situations. A number of flagship countries were identified where the concept of the "4Rs" and "DLI" could be applied, including Eritrea, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and Angola at a later stage. In September, a meeting took place between the focal points of UNDP, World Bank and UNHCR to further develop partnerships in this area.

34. Internal consultations on relief-to-development, and specifically on the "4Rs" and "DLI", continue through a core group on durable solutions chaired by the High Commissioner. In the follow-up to the Task Force on Partnerships, another internal working group was established to review UNHCR's role in the Common Country Assessment (CCA)/United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). A more active participation by UNHCR in CCA/UNDAF could help ensure that the social and economic dimensions of protracted refugee situations and voluntary repatriations are adequately addressed within the United Nations and government development programme agendas.

35. The Working Group on CCA/UNDAF was also tasked with examining whether UNHCR's membership in the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) could assist in this transition process and allow for better coordination within the United Nations system, in line with the Secretary-General's reforms. Extensive consultation on this subject has taken place with UNHCR field offices and United Nations sister agencies. Final recommendations on the results of this working group are due shortly.

36. During the last meeting of the Standing Committee in June, a paper was issued which presented a report on partnerships with bilateral development agencies. This collaboration is also continuing, through contacts with the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the German Ministry for

Economic Cooperation (BMZ), the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), the Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD), The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the French Development Corporation, among others. The partnerships are part of UNHCR's approach to promote sustainable solutions for refugees, including the promotion of the "4Rs" and "DLI" approaches.