

**35<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee**  
**7-9 March 2006**

**Agenda Item 5(i)**

**Outline for the Oral update on implementation of the Agenda for Protection**

*Presented by the Acting Director, Division of International Protection Services*

1. The Agenda for Protection (AfP) has shaped the way UNHCR is confronting contemporary protection challenges. It remains an important platform for joint action, and is now an integral part of UNHCR's Global Priorities. The mainstreaming of the AfP into all facets of UNHCR's work has progressed significantly over the past years, but must still be viewed as "work in progress". This presentation will focus on general directions and trends while the Note on International Protection, to be presented to the June Standing Committee meeting, will provide an overview of field implementation.

2. The Office reports on implementation of the AfP in a number of ways: the Note on International Protection; the strategic presentations of regional activities and Global Programmes in March; issue-specific papers to the Standing Committee throughout the year; and, henceforth, presentations by the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection in June and October, and the Director of the recently created Division of International Protection Services (DIPS) in March.

Goal 6 – Meeting the Protection Needs of Refugee Women

3. The AfP requires UNHCR to undertake action to empower refugee communities through dialogue and participation and, more specifically, to enable women and children to voice their protection needs and to participate meaningfully in determining and contributing to solutions. The age, gender and diversity mainstreaming strategy is pinpointing protection problems while actively promoting a multifunctional team approach in order to create synergies among partners and staff, particularly those serving in community services, field monitoring, protection and programme delivery. Participatory assessments covering some 40 countries in 2005 have confirmed the need for host governments, donors, partners and UNHCR to redouble efforts to provide protection to those most in need. It is of concern to note that the current funding situation means that country offices are being obliged to put on hold actions foreseen to address some of the protection problems raised.

Goal 1 – Strengthening implementation of the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol

4. An important role of DIPS will be to improve how protection is delivered and managed in the Field, as a means to contribute to better implementation of the Convention and Protocol. The Acting Director will provide information on the techniques used to do so, including staff deployments, oversight and assessment missions, provision of protection advice, and three staff deployment schemes. A separate report will be provided on UNHCR's invigorated focus on statelessness. The AfP has also served as the agenda for ExCom's work on Conclusions. Two Conclusions were adopted in 2005: one on complementary forms of protection and one on local

integration. In 2006, consideration will begin on updating past ExCom guidance on the recommended framework for asylum procedures. Also pursuant to the AfP, UNHCR has issued guidelines on exclusion in situations of mass influx.

#### Goal 2 – Protecting refugees within broader migration movements

5. Work pursued on irregular secondary movements, under the auspices of Convention Plus, provides additional context for activities identified in Objective 4 of Goal 2. UNHCR is participating actively in preparations for the September 2006 General Assembly High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development. UNHCR's priorities are to preserve asylum in complex population flows and to make clear that refugees and others of concern can become agents of development when empowered to do so. UNHCR is concerned at a tendency to see refugee issues viewed as essentially immigration issues, divorced from the rights at stake. UNHCR is seeking to reinforce protection capacity in North African States. The High Commissioner and other Geneva Migration Group members have presented a proposal to the Secretary-General for changing the group's membership and terms of reference. DIPS chairs a new UNHCR coordination mechanism on migration, aimed at encouraging cooperation and coherence. Delegations will receive information on the Madrid Meeting on Rescue at Sea (23-24 May 2006) which UNHCR is organizing in cooperation with the International Maritime Organization as a follow-up to the Athens meeting of experts in 2005.

#### Goal 3 – Sharing burdens and responsibilities more equitably and building capacities to receive and protect refugees

6. The Quito Resettlement Meeting in February, organized to pursue the Solidarity Resettlement component of the 2004 Mexico Plan of Action, made progress in reinforcing cooperation to increase resettlement capacity in Latin America and increase the number of States offering resettlement. The 21 March meeting of the Working Group on Resettlement will provide an opportunity for follow-up and further development of the strategic use of resettlement. In the four countries where the Strengthening Protection Capacities Project (SPCP) was piloted in 2005, all now have a comprehensive plan of action agreed upon by the government, UNHCR, and partners. Concrete project submissions have been drafted as part of these plans and several are being implemented. Based on the success of the methodology to date, DIPS intends to work with the Regional Bureaux over the next year, identifying other countries and regions where the SPCP methodology has real potential of making a positive contribution to strengthening the protection capacities of hosting States. This will include work with the Bureau for Europe on support to capacity-building efforts in the Southern Caucasus and with the Bureau for Asia and the Pacific to support and assist the work of the Bureau and the country offices in strengthening the capacity of host countries in the region faced with protracted refugee situations and from where significant onward movements occur.

#### Goal 4 – Addressing security-related concerns more effectively

7. UNHCR has placed considerable emphasis on programmes in the area of transitional justice and reconciliation of communities. UNHCR plans to work closely with the Peacebuilding Commission as a means to address more effectively the root causes of forced displacement. The Acting Director will provide examples of activities aimed at preventing and addressing sexual and gender-based violence.

## Goal 5 – Redoubling the search for durable solutions

8. DIPS will remain the home for the new Resettlement Service and will also absorb the reintegration functions of the Division of Operational Support (DOS), enabling a sharper and more comprehensive focus on durable solutions. In October 2005 the High Commissioner committed UNHCR to doing an annual review of protracted refugee situations. Work on the Mexico Plan of Action, the Somali Comprehensive Plan of Action and other durable solutions arrangements will be pursued.

## Information on newly created Division of International Protection Services

9. The restructuring of DIP into a Division of International Protection Services (DIPS) on 1 March 2006 will further strengthen the close, in-house links maintained between its predecessor, DIP, and other parts of Headquarters. The section for community development, gender equality and children is now part of the Division, in a move to “mainstream” relevant competencies into the delivery of protection services. Representatives of the Regional Bureaux, DOS and DIPS participated in a joint planning retreat in late February to clarify expectations of the new Division, particularly its protection services orientation; identify opportunities for joint planning and priority setting; and seek inputs regarding the Division’s new mission statement. In 2006, DIPS, DOS and the Regional Bureaux will be placing particular emphasis on further developing and consolidating the multifunctional team approach at both Headquarters and in the Field, within the context of the broad structural and management change review.

DIPS

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