

Update on UNHCR's Regional Operations and Global Programmes Executive Committee 2007

Part A: Introduction

- This note gives an overview of developments in global programmes and partnership initiatives pursued in 2007, focusing in particular on identifying and addressing gaps, and the opportunities for UNHCR to achieve its objectives in collaboration with its main partners.

Part B: Progress on Global Strategic Objectives

Emergency preparedness and response

- With its strengthened emergency response capacity, UNHCR has supported inter-agency humanitarian emergency response efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, Kenya, Mauritania, Senegal, Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic.
- The goal of a global standing capacity to respond to emergencies with up to 500,000 people has been almost achieved, with the exception of lightweight tents. UNHCR hopes to obtain additional stocks of lightweight tents by early 2008.
- Further training has enhanced the pool of qualified and trained staff to be deployed to emergencies within 72 hours. The eCentre programme, a joint endeavour by Japan and UNHCR, designed to foster emergency response capacity amongst organizations in the Asia-Pacific region, has been expanded through workshops and a complementary new field training programme (Terakoya) which places trainees in UNHCR field locations.

Safety of staff and of people of concern to the Office

- The implementation of UNHCR's security policy is an ongoing process. A mid-term compliance survey of Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS) in all office locations (302) was completed to identify gaps and to target support better. A number of country operations in high-risk areas have been provided with additional resources to achieve MOSS-compliance levels, while others received additional resources to maintain their MOSS status. These efforts have been supported by training measures, and specific adjustments to field guidance in situations with internally displaced persons (IDPs), as staff safety in those situations is often a cause of concern. DOS has worked together with the Policy Development and Evaluation Service on a review of 'remote management' of high risk operations.

Standards and indicators (Global Strategic Objective 6.5)

- An in-depth review of the standards and indicators system is envisaged for 2008. Standards and indicators in IDP situations, which were piloted in 2006 and cover UNHCR's cluster-lead responsibilities, were adjusted recently, and will be shared with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

Increasing and improving the level and quality of registration of persons of concern
(Global Strategic Objective 1.5)

- The use of the registration tool *proGres* (now in 130 offices in 55 countries) was reviewed in a global field-user conference in June 2007, and software enhancements were launched to respond to critical needs. The biometric capability added to the *proGres* application in 2006 is also being reviewed following a pilot phase.
- The use of population data for protection purposes needs to be further refined, and requires additional trained resources. In 2006, more than 150,000 refugees and others of concern were registered worldwide. However, the registration of over 121,000 Iraqis in seven months in the five surrounding countries has strained systems in the Middle East.

Preventing malnutrition and reducing the prevalence and impact of HIV and Aids
(Global Strategic Objective 1.2)

Priority Projects 2007-2008

- To help address gaps in health and nutrition standards, the High Commissioner allocated USD 15 million to health, nutrition and sexual gender-based violence (SGBV) projects in 13 countries with the greatest needs. Projects include the provision of supplemental food and micronutrients; malaria prevention and treatment; reproductive health; child survival water and sanitation; improved infrastructure; and the provision of medicines.
- Pursuit of these projects in 2008 will be essential to consolidate the results achieved in the first year. UNHCR plans to continue capacity-building activities for its staff and partners. This will include deployment of experts; strengthening of working relations at headquarters and field levels with other United Nations agencies, Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and others; and provision of essential drugs, material, and equipment.

Avian and Human Influenza

- With the generous support of the Governments of Japan and Canada, in 2007 the Office has launched a global programme to establish basic prevention measures and pandemic mitigation in all refugee camps with a population of more than 5,000. The project is UNHCR's contribution to the United Nations System Consolidated Action Plan for Avian and Human Influenza (AHI).
- In recent months, five Epidemic Preparedness and Response Officers have been deployed in the Middle East and Africa to promote the inclusion of refugees and others of concern in host countries' national AHI plans; to support NGOs in refugee camps to prepare AHI plans; to set up a general epidemic preparedness and response; to train UNHCR staff and partners; and to raise awareness on the modes of transmission and prevention of the AHI.

Malaria

- Tackling malaria remains a priority 2007 health intervention for refugee populations. Long-lasting treated mosquito nets for vulnerable individuals (notably children below the age of five and pregnant women) have been provided

in the majority of the selected countries. Unfortunately, treatments and checks for pregnant women or generalized special testing of suspected malaria cases before providing anti-malaria drugs have still not yet been widely adopted. Progress was made in Zambia and Eastern Sudan with special donor support, but the strategic plan needs to be improved. A new Malaria Control Plan for 2008-2010 (currently under elaboration) will expand the number of countries covered.

Reproductive Health

- Despite considerable progress, critical shortfalls still exist in the quality and comprehensiveness of services. The upgrading of health structures and capacity of staff through the special projects mentioned above has dramatically improved the quality of services rendered to pregnant women. UNHCR is developing a Reproductive Health Strategic Plan for 2008-2010 to progress towards the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (3, 4, 5 & 6).

HIV and AIDS

- While there has been a reduction in new infection levels, UNHCR and its partners continue to concentrate on HIV-prevention activities and advocacy for equal access to treatment. Under the UNAIDS division of labour and the Office's role as lead organization for dealing with HIV issues among displaced populations, UNHCR organized a global technical reference group meeting for HIV and IDPs. In collaboration with the World Health Organization, UNHCR has finalized tools to assess HIV and substance abuse among displaced populations. Multi-sectoral, inter-agency HIV and IDP assessments are planned for Sri Lanka and Uganda.

Nutrition

- Significant progress was made through the aforementioned special projects focusing on nutrition and public health. UNHCR has been working actively with the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN), with WFP and with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and is developing a nutrition strategic plan for 2008-2010 with emphasis on an integrated approach towards improving nutrition.

Ensuring the right to education (Global Strategic Objective 1.4)

- UNHCR prioritized 14 countries to address gaps in terms of access, safety and quality of education, as well as post-primary education. Together with partners, guidelines on safe learning environment were issued and UNHCR's Education Strategy for 2007–2009 has been finalized and launched.
- Regional priorities included field support for Latin America and the Middle East. Efforts to boost national capacity in Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic to absorb Iraqi refugees in their respective education systems have resulted in an additional programme submission by UNHCR, UNICEF and other partners.
- Funding collected through the Ninemillion campaign allowed UNHCR to start seven country projects to increase girls' enrolment; provide refugee children with access to modern technology; develop life skills, including on HIV and AIDS;

and promote sports activities. The Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI), currently sponsoring 1,000 post-primary scholarships, received additional funding allowing expansion in the coming academic year.

Age, Gender and Diversity mainstreaming, community based approaches (Global Strategic Objectives 1.3, 1.1, 6)

- UNHCR rolled out an age, gender and diversity mainstreaming (AGDM) accountability framework, requiring managers to indicate annually actions to implement UNHCR's related policies and ExCom conclusions. A three-year AGDM action plan is currently being finalized for six action areas: i) attitudes and leadership; ii) coordination and partnership; iii) targeted action for empowerment; iv) integration of AGDM into all UNHCR's work; v) organizational capacity building; and vi) resources.
- A provisional manual on using a community-based approach in UNHCR's operations was released in June 2007, and three regional follow-up workshops are under way. UNHCR has also supported the issuance of the IASC Guidelines on Mental Health. The ExCom Conclusion on Women and Girls at Risk¹ has been incorporated in the Handbook on the Protection of Women and Girls to be printed this year. The Women at Risk Assessment tool was further tested with partners and will be linked with *proGres*.
- Standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the prevention of and the response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) are in place in 77 per cent of the camps and in 55 per cent of the urban programmes. SGBV inter-agency SOPs have also been initiated. An independent evaluation of UNHCR's work to prevent and respond to SGBV is currently under way.

Environmental issues

- In 2007, UNHCR is supporting a major environmental programme by planting and caring for more than 9 million trees in areas of displacement. Furthermore, a number of operations have embarked upon energy conservation initiatives. Solar power is now being used by UNHCR in many places for lighting and telecommunications, as well as for cooking. This has opened new opportunities to give the displaced populations access to clean energy, thus protecting limited natural resources in hosting areas. UNHCR is pursuing an initiative on sustainable energy management in refugee settlements and host regions. This has resulted in enhanced technical partnerships and in additional public and private sector funding for innovative and environmentally safe solutions.
- Partners include the World Conservation Union (IUCN) on restoration and rehabilitation strategies; Care International on assessment, monitoring and evaluation tools; Southern Alliance for Indigenous Resources (SAFIRE) on sustainable agriculture; and UNESCO on environmental education and awareness. Furthermore, UNHCR strengthened its collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), OCHA, UN-Energy and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on climate change issues and other global initiatives.

¹ Executive Committee Conclusion on Women and Girls at Risk, No.105 (LVII), October 2006

Strategic partnerships for durable solutions (GSO 3, 4)

- In a changing environment, UNHCR has reassessed its role in post-conflict and transition situations and will release new guidelines towards the end of the year.
- In an effort to strengthen transition partnerships, UNHCR concluded Memoranda of Understanding with the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) focusing on the promotion of post-conflict recovery, peace building and reconciliation between refugees and host communities. The cooperation with the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ), have been reviewed and adjusted.
- With the private sector, UNHCR has launched the “Women Leading for Livelihood” initiative establishing a direct link between prominent business women, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and women beneficiaries of targeted livelihood interventions.
- Further joint training and policy alignments on livelihoods, together with a review of tools for early recovery were held with the International Labour Organization. The latter has deployed experts in Angola, Liberia, Mozambique Thailand and Zambia. UNHCR also joined support missions under the UNDP-led ART GOLD Initiative. A partnership workshop was organized for staff from the United Nations and NGOs.

Delivering as One

- UNHCR has provided guidance to field operations participating in the United Nations reform process through the Delivering as One Initiative. As the pilot projects establish Delivering-as-One programmes, budget frameworks and coherence funds, field experience is being gathered and fed into the consultations. While maintaining the necessary flexibility with regard to its specific mandate, UNHCR is involved in most joint programmes. The Office is seeking active dialogue to achieve complementarity between this development-oriented reform initiative, the established mechanisms of humanitarian coordination, and the cluster approach to internal displacement.

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