

Chapter 6 REFUGEE EMERGENCIES

Chapter Overview

This chapter explains the various phases in a refugee emergency, from early warning to the normalization of the situation in seeking a durable solution. Early warning and contingency planning are essential to ensure a timely and effective response. The chapter provides an overview of UNHCR's capabilities in emergency preparedness, to give implementing partners an understanding of the ingredients which UNHCR considers key to a rapid emergency response: flexible arrangements for financial, human and material resources, available immediately. In conclusion, the chapter tracks an emergency, from the beginning to the hand-over of the programme, including management and coordination of the response.

Section 6.1 Emergency Management

- 1. The Emergency Continuum..... 127
- 2. Early Warning and Contingency Planning..... 127

Section 6.2 UNHCR Emergency Preparedness

- 1. UNHCR's Enhanced Capabilities..... 129
- 2. Emergency Funding..... 129
- 3. Emergency Staffing 130
- 4. Emergency Supplies and Logistical Support 130
- 5. Emergency Management Tools and Training..... 131

Section 6.3 Emergency Response

- 1. When a Refugee Emergency Occurs..... 132
- 2. Needs Assessment..... 133
- 3. Operations Planning..... 136
- 4. Implementing Partner Selection..... 137
- 5. Allocation of Responsibilities 137
- 6. Organization and Coordination..... 138
- 7. Doing It Right from the Start..... 139

Section 6.1 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

-
1. The Emergency Continuum
 2. Early Warning and Contingency Planning
-

Emergency: Any situation in which the life or well being of refugees will be threatened unless immediate and appropriate action is taken, and which demands an extraordinary response and exceptional measures.

1. THE EMERGENCY CONTINUUM

1.1 The majority of UNHCR's programmes begin as the result of a refugee emergency, and UNHCR has invested much effort in recent years in strengthening its capacity to respond; timely and appropriate assistance is essential if lives are to be saved and suffering minimized. This chapter provides an overview of the management of assistance in emergencies and highlights a number of principles, which should guide decision-making.

1.2 UNHCR has found it helpful to view emergency preparedness and response as a continuum. The Emergency Continuum (see below) is the conceptual framework to prepare for and respond to emergencies. Indeed, if one adds the Relief to Development Continuum, it provides a useful framework to identify the varying roles of UNHCR's operational partners, where some tend to focus on advocacy (often at the early warning stage), some on emergency relief, and some on development. Naturally, many cover all areas. In each stage, their relationship with UNHCR will be characterized in a different way.

1.3 The first two stages of the Emergency Continuum, Early Warning and Contingency Planning, fall into the realm of emergency preparedness (see below and Section 6.2), and the last two, Operations Planning and Durable Solutions, into emergency response (see Section 6.3). While the implementation of activities to achieve durable solutions is characteristic of established refugee programmes, emergency plans and activities should also be consistent with the desired durable solutions. Effective emergency response begins well ahead of an actual emergency situation, and includes planning for durable solutions from the beginning.

2. EARLY WARNING AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

2.1 Refugee emergencies usually present several, if not all, of the following characteristics:

- A sudden and rapid movement.
- Caused by acute danger or other threats to life and liberty.
- Of large numbers of people.
- With a high percentage of women and children.
- Across international borders.
- In to often remote and insecure areas with scarce resources and limited infrastructure.

2.2 Some of the main causes which force large numbers of people to flee are a breakdown of law and order, ethnic violence, civil war and widespread violations of human rights. In large-scale emergencies, the vast majority of refugees are seldom fleeing targeted acts of individual

persecution, but more often from armed conflicts, campaigns of repression, or other generalized violence that radically disrupt everyday life and jeopardize their safety. The danger is aggravated when the refugees must cross through areas with landmines or ongoing hostilities, or when warring parties attack combatants and civilians indiscriminately, in violation of international humanitarian law.

Four Stages in the Emergency Continuum

Early Warning
Contingency Planning
Operations Planning and Response
Durable Solutions

2.3 Early warning systems require UNHCR and all aid organizations to be alert to developing situations which may lead to destabilization of the population and the possibility of flight. Ideally, such situations should be resolved at the diplomatic or political level so that people never have to flee and can remain in safety in their homes. Potentially unstable situations, however, require assessment and the development of alternative scenarios to anticipate when, how, who and how many may flee, and if so, to where; in other words, contingency planning.

2.4 Contingency planning can save precious time in dealing with a sudden influx. It defines the objectives and assumptions that will form the basis of the emergency response, and allows for an assessment of the specific factors (political, geographic, cultural, ethnic, etc.) which are likely to affect a potential refugee population within the host country. Contingency planning should also lead to putting preparedness measures in place, including management and co-ordination mechanisms.

10 Essentials for Effective Response

1. Foresight and planning
2. Knowledge and experience
3. Resources
4. Systems and procedures
5. Flexibility
6. Creativity and imagination
7. Time management and priority setting
8. Dedication, stamina and idealism
9. Accountability
10. Management

2.5 As the lead UN agency for refugee emergencies, UNHCR, in partnership with other UN agencies and NGOs, is taking an increasingly active role in developing early warning systems and initiating and facilitating contingency planning. Aid organizations and other authorities in the field should notify UNHCR promptly as soon as they identify a potential refugee-producing situation. They should not wait until the situation becomes critical, flight begins and an emergency is triggered.

2.6 In the event of flight, a refugee emergency requires a rapid response. The key ingredients to being prepared are flexibility and resources: financial, human and material. Recognizing these essential requirements, UNHCR has taken a number of steps (described in Section 6.2) on UNHCR Emergency Preparedness. UNHCR's implementing partners with the potential to assist in a refugee emergency are well-advised to consider their own role in providing these key ingredients, and to upgrade their own emergency preparedness now to respond effectively, in a timely and appropriate manner, when an actual emergency occurs.

Section 6.2 UNHCR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

-
1. UNHCR's Enhanced Capabilities
 2. Emergency Funding
 3. Emergency Staffing
 4. Emergency Supplies and Logistical Support
 5. Emergency Management Tools and Training
-

1. UNHCR's ENHANCED CAPABILITIES

1.1 To strengthen its capacity for emergency preparedness and rapid response, UNHCR has, in recent years, implemented certain initiatives involving funding, emergency staffing, supplies, logistical support, and training. Understanding UNHCR's emergency preparedness measures may help implementing partners to assess their own state of readiness to work with UNHCR to respond to emergencies in a timely and effective manner.

1.2 The focal point for emergencies in UNHCR Headquarters is the Emergency Preparedness and Response Section (EPRS), comprised of staff members who are on stand-by to respond quickly to emergency situations. Staff support items and supplies are earmarked at Headquarters for rapid deployment with emergency personnel.

1.3 UNHCR has made arrangements to stockpile emergency relief goods at a Central Emergency Warehouse in Copenhagen. In addition, UNHCR has negotiated stand-by arrangements with a number of organisations that are capable of deploying staff and equipment to an emergency at short notice.

1.4 UNHCR has furthermore created a number of emergency management tools, and also provides training and/or training support in emergency management to both UNHCR and implementing partner staff members. (See the *Catalogue of Emergency Response Resources*, UNHCR, February 2002).

2. EMERGENCY FUNDING

2.1 The availability of funds is a necessary, but not always sufficient, pre-condition to assure an effective response to emergency situations. Three actions may be taken to secure funds for an emergency:

- (1) immediate reallocation of funds from the region;
- (2) emergency submission of a request for funds from the Operational Reserve;
- (3) the request for the emergency operation to be considered as a Supplementary Programme.

All requests must be channelled through the appropriate Bureaux.

2.2 The Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) managed by the United Nations Emergency Relief Co-ordinator (Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)) has been set up to provide funds within the UN system to respond rapidly to emergencies. CERF, which has a target level of US\$ 50 million, is financed from voluntary contributions and is used for cash advances to operational organizations and entities within the UN system. Generally, UNHCR would access funds from CERF by requesting an advance of around US\$ 5 million, which can be very useful in cases of cash shortages. These advances are to be reimbursed as a first charge against income subsequently received, usually as a result of a consolidated appeal (CAP). Only under very

exceptional circumstances do the rules allow for the non-reimbursement of allocations made from this Fund.

3. EMERGENCY STAFFING

3.1 UNHCR has appointed six Emergency Preparedness and Response Officers (EPROs), on stand-by in the EPRS. In an emergency where the UNHCR Field Office lacks adequate resources to respond or where UNHCR has no prior presence, an EPRO can be deployed on short notice to lead an emergency team or existing staff. The duration of the deployment depends upon the nature of the operation, but is limited to the critical emergency phase when the basic systems and structures for the operation are put in place.

3.2 The EPROs are also responsible for a number of emergency preparedness activities. They review procedures and prepare management tools, such as operational guidelines for essential tasks in emergencies. They monitor regional developments which may have implications for emergency response, and assist the Bureaux at Headquarters to facilitate contingency planning for emergency-prone countries. They also identify emergency training needs based on their deployment experiences.

3.3 EPRS also has available one Senior Emergency Administrator (SEA) and three Emergency Finance and Administrative Assistants (EFAAs). These staff have management and administrative skills in human resources management, finance and general administration.

3.4 An Emergency Roster consists of a centrally managed pool of internal UNHCR staff who have particular skills useful in the first stages of emergencies. All staff on this roster (ERTs) have participated in the Workshop for Emergency Managers (WEM) developed by EPRS. While these staff members continue in their assigned positions, they are on stand-by to participate as members of an Emergency Response Team (ERT) when required. These

staff members have received emergency training, and can be deployed on short notice to assist in the critical, initial stages of an emergency when existing staff are unavailable or unable to cope.

3.5 To complement UNHCR's internal staffing resources for emergencies, stand-by arrangements have been negotiated for the secondment of staff from several international NGOs and GO's. Staff who have been pre-identified, screened and trained can be deployed on short-term assignments with as little as 72 hours notice to UNHCR operations anywhere in the world. This has proven to be most effective in the secondment of telecommunications experts, logistics officers, field officers, engineers, community workers, health professionals, and support service staff and equipment.

Purpose of the Emergency Response Team (ERT)

1. Provide immediate response (protection and assistance).
2. Build systems and procedures.
3. Allow time for the mobilization of longer-term resources.
4. Assess needs for future activities.
5. Hand-over of operations.

4. EMERGENCY SUPPLIES AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT

4.1 UNHCR has assembled several kits for emergency response staff deployed to difficult locations during the very early phase of an operation where staff support arrangements have not yet been put in place:

- a. travel kit, the size of a carry-on bag, contains basic personal needs such as a pillow, towel and rain poncho; and

- b. field kit, in an aluminium trunk, contains a comprehensive range of survival items (including dry food ration packs), intended to provide staff with total self-sufficiency for three days.

4.2 An office kit, in two cardboard boxes, contains items of stationery, supplies, forms and some small non-expendable office items (e.g. stapler, scissors, pencil sharpener). It is designed as a start-up kit for new offices, after which normal procurement practices are instituted.

4.3 A stock of portable ITTS equipment (computers, printers, satellite phones vhf and hf radios) is maintained, with standard UNHCR software installed. Sufficient communications equipment is on hand at Headquarters to establish communications links for two emergency operations, even in the most remote areas. A number of vehicles can also be deployed rapidly from UNHCR emergency stocks.

4.4 Quantities of emergency relief supplies are positioned at the Central Emergency Stockpile warehouse in Copenhagen. These supplies include vehicles, tents, plastic sheeting, pre-fabricated warehouses, blankets, kitchen sets and jerry cans.

4.5 Arrangements are also in place to give UNHCR priority access to airlift capacity and a trucking fleet accompanied by a fuel tanker, mobile workshop, escort vehicles and personnel (drivers and co-ordinators).

5. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TOOLS AND TRAINING

5.1 The UNHCR *Handbook for Emergencies* is available in Arabic, English, French, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish. It is a manager's guide for setting up emergency operations for large-scale influxes. The Handbook provides advice in a non-technical manner on various aspects of an emergency preparedness and response.

5.2 A Refugee Registration Package consists of two elements. The Practical Guide provides ideas for undertaking refugee registration exercises, including equipment required, how to estimate populations, and maps of typical reception and registration areas. The Registration Kit is designed for 30,000 refugees (10,000 families), with appropriate supplies, forms and software.

5.3 Checklists for internal UNHCR use have been developed for:

- a. the Emergency Manager, emphasizing management of a 'classic' refugee emergency, from pre-departure for the field to hand-over and return; and
- b. the Emergency Administrator, focusing on administrative support activities related to premises, communications and transport, personnel, staff conditions and security, finance, equipment and supplies, filing and documentation.

5.4 The Situational Emergency Training Programme (SET) is offered regionally each year to staff members from UNHCR, NGOs, governments and other UN agencies. A limited number of participants are invited to attend. The Programme examines the purpose and goals of emergency management, illustrates the need for general management skills, and demonstrates specific applications of emergency management techniques in priority areas such as planning, logistics, health, shelter and nutrition.

5.5 Besides these formal workshops, EPRS provides support for *ad hoc* targeted emergency training of three general kinds, namely general or country specific training e.g. contingency planning; workshops for specific audiences e.g. external stand-by staff; and support for emergency courses organized locally by UNHCR Field Offices.

Section 6.3 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

-
1. When a Refugee Emergency Occurs
 2. Needs Assessment
 3. Operations Planning
 4. Implementing Partner Selection
 5. Allocation of Responsibilities
 6. Organisation and Coordination
 7. Doing it Right from the Start
-

1. WHEN A REFUGEE EMERGENCY OCCURS

1.1 An emergency requires immediate and appropriate action to save lives, ensure protection, and restore the well-being of refugees. The initial stages to manage the urgent situation comprise:

- a. initial needs assessment, to determine what must be done;
- b. planning, to establish priorities within a framework of action;
- c. allocation of the responsibilities for action; and
- d. confirmation/provision of the means of action, including funding, personnel and material.

**Implementing Partners
Emergency Response**

1. Liaise with other NGOs operating in the area and then meet with UNHCR as soon as possible, to catalogue available services and to request funding.
2. Provide own funds to get started fast. If necessary, negotiate a Letter of Intent with UNHCR, to define responsibilities and obtain initial funding.
3. Cooperate with UNHCR which, as lead agency, will coordinate emergency relief operations, including liaison with host government, military authorities and/or peace-keeping forces. UNHCR can also help define some operating standards (e.g.salaries for locally employed staff).
4. Respect the policies of the host government. Establish contact with national and local authorities at the general and sectoral level.
5. Buy/rent radio/communications equipment and vehicles (although UNHCR may supply).
6. Provide security measures – treat security as another sector for action. UNHCR's security arrangements usually only cover UN personnel.Appoint a security focal point for liaison with UNHCR's Field Security Advisor (FSA) and/or UNSECOORD Field Security Officer (FSO),if this is the case.

1.2 From the start, management of a refugee emergency must also include continuous co-ordination, monitoring, reporting and evaluation to ensure that plans are adjusted and actions remain appropriate as circumstances evolve.

2. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Effective emergency assistance is based on a sound assessment of the refugees' most immediate needs.

2.1 Needs and resources assessment is a continuous process in any effective programme of protection and assistance (see Section 3.2 of Emergency Handbook). Needs change, knowledge is gained, and new factors must be taken into account. A commitment to ongoing assessment is critical if assistance from the earliest stage of an emergency is going to have the desired impact.

2.2 An initial assessment of the situation serves as the basis for an initial response. It is followed by needs and resource assessments of a more technical nature. Each additional assessment should build on the foundation provided by earlier assessments, with ongoing assessment leading to better targeting of assistance of the appropriate quality, delivered on time, at a cost which provides good value for money. (UNHCR's Emergency Preparedness and Response Section (EPRS) has ***Guidelines for Initial Assessments***).

2.3 The initial response to a new emergency situation focuses on minimizing excess mortality and undue suffering. UNHCR conducts an initial assessment which is an information gathering, analysis and interpretation exercise resulting in a 'picture' of the emerging situation, i.e. the people involved (potential beneficiaries, government authorities and possible implementing

partners for protection and assistance), current conditions, the context and other factors which will influence the situation as it develops. An effective first assessment also includes an initial proposed course of action. Already at this stage, the crucial process of establishing standards appropriate for the specific emergency begins, and the longer-term durable solution is considered.

2.4 The initial assessment team gathers information from as many sources as possible. A trip to the site(s) of the emergency is essential to gain first-hand knowledge. The team should conduct as comprehensive an assessment as is possible under the circumstances. To the extent possible, the assessment must involve those who will be responsible for the response, including government organisations, potential implementing partners and the beneficiaries themselves.

Initial Assessment Report

An initial assessment aims to produce a "picture" of an emergency situation that describes:

- the people affected by the emergency;
- their condition and most urgent needs;
- the context or factors that will define an influence the ongoing operation;
- the capacities and resources of governments, humanitarian agencies, and beneficiaries to cope/respond to the situation; and
- the recommendation for immediate action on a strategic, managerial, and sectoral level.

2.5 Following analysis and interpretation of the information and the impressions of the team, a concise report is prepared which captures the essence of the situation and proposes an initial plan of action. A clear presentation of the facts contributes to a better understanding of the dynamics of the emergency and the factors expected to have an impact as the situation evolves.

2.6 The report must answer this question: Are the population's basic minimal requirements for a life in safety and dignity being satisfied? In addition to focusing on the protection and security of refugees in an emergency, UNHCR uses a series of standards in the crucial assistance sectors of Food, Water, Sanitation, Shelter and Health, which represent minimal essential needs. Clearly stated in the UNHCR *Handbook for Emergencies*, a summary of the most critical standards in the key assistance sectors is shown overleaf. In large emergencies in which various government authorities and operational and implementing partners are providing assistance and using a variety of sources of funding, there is great risk that significant disparities in the levels and quality of assistance will result. The adoption of common standards, therefore, is of particular importance. (See *The Sphere Project. Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response*, second, revised edition).

An effective and timely response to refugee emergencies have been, for many years, the focus of UNHCR's work.

While UNHCR's effort is primarily geared towards refugee related emergencies, the shifting nature of conflict in recent years (internal civil strife rather than the traditional inter-state wars) as meant that UNHCR has been increasingly called upon to respond also to internal large scale population movements in failed or dysfunctional states.

The speed and scale of refugee emergencies that have occurred in the past decade and the challenges these emergencies have posed in organizing a timely and credible protection and assistance effort, clearly demonstrate the need for UNHCR to work closely in partnership with other agencies.

This is particularly the case in responding to complex emergencies that transcend the capacity of any single agency.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT *

(Basic Information, Analysis, Interpretation and Trends)

Current Conditions

Are the refugees at risk in their current location?
Why have they left their homes?
Are there security problems?
How accessible is their current location?
Do they have access to sufficient quantities of safe water?
Do they have food? Is it sufficient? For how long?
Are there cases of malnutrition?
Do they have adequate shelter? Is there over-crowding?
Are adequate sanitary facilities available?
Do they have basic domestic items?
Is there sufficient fuel for cooking and/or heating?

Context

What are the local population's and local authorities' attitudes towards the refugees?
What action has the central government taken?
Has contingency planning for refugee emergencies been undertaken?
Are there NGOs present in the area where the refugees are located and, if so, what resources can they make available?
Are there existing or potential logistics networks available?
What logistical constraints are likely to exist?

Are other UN organizations responding to the emergency?

What environmental, geographic and climatic factors must be considered in planning a response?

Beneficiaries

Who are they? Ethnic and cultural background?
Ethnic tensions?
Where have they come from?
How many have arrived?
What is the rate of arrival? Is it likely to increase? Decrease?
What is the gender breakdown of the population? Percentage women/children?
Are families intact?
Are there unaccompanied minors?

Other Factors

Are they organized? Are there group or community leaders?
Are efforts underway to assist them? If yes, who is responsible? Is the assistance adequate? Sustainable? Can the assistance be increased/expanded to cope with additional arrivals?
Does the site where they are located present risks?
Can they stay where they are, or will they have to move?

* The initial assessment should answer these types of questions, which are for illustrative purposes only, and are not intended as an all-inclusive list. For more information see: *Initial Assessment in Emergency Situations – A Practical Guide for Field Staff*, UNHCR Geneva 1998.

3. OPERATIONS PLANNING

A comprehensive plan of action is essential, drawn up with the people who will implement it and taking into account the views of the refugees.

3.1 The response to the needs that have been identified, analyzed, and prioritized in the assessment report must be planned. The best management tool for this is a plan of action for each administrative level, usually called an Operations Plan. It should include a plan for each refugee site, drawn up by the organization with overall responsibility at the site level. The plan for the overall emergency and the site-level plans are interdependent, and should reflect the goal of achieving a durable solution. The Operations Plan must be available to all who need it.

3.2 It should be stressed that the Operations Plan is the product of an *ongoing* participatory planning process. The plan itself must not be a

static document, but must remain constantly under review as a result of ongoing needs and resource assessments.

3.3 At the start of an emergency, there is a tendency to postpone planning, because information may not be available and there are obvious urgent needs which can be met piecemeal without a plan. This tendency should be resisted; the more critical the situation, the more important it is to take stock, determine priorities and develop a plan for what needs to be done, when, by whom and how.

3.4 The most effective Operations Plans are those developed by or with the people who will need or implement them. Drawing up the plans should be a team effort; clear direction must, however, come from the government and/or UNHCR. Plans must be comprehensive, covering all needs whether they are being, or will be, met by UNHCR or by other organizations and sources of funds. Not only will the plan clarify issues of management and responsibility, it will also provide a head start for the more detailed programme planning which will necessarily follow as the emergency evolves into a more stable situation.

Sector	UNHCR Standard (Minimum Standards for Emergencies)
Food	2,100 kcal per person per day, with a balanced, culturally acceptable diet.
Water	10 litres of safe water per person per day, accessible within a few minutes walk of shelters.
Sanitation	One latrine for 20 persons.
Health	Gross mortality rate less than 2/10,000/day; under-five mortality rate less than 2/10,000/day; the five main killer diseases in emergencies (diarrhoea, malnutrition, respiratory infections, measles, malaria) under control.
Shelter Surface Area	3.5 sq. metres of space per person in shelters, overall site providing 30 sq. metres per person.

3.5 In drawing up the plan, the views of the beneficiaries must be taken into account. Needs of refugee women and vulnerable groups must be taken into consideration from the early stage of planning. The beneficiaries are the single most important resource in meeting their own needs. They will have definite ideas on how this may best be done. The plan must strengthen the beneficiaries' own resources and self-sufficiency, and avoid creating dependency through the well-intentioned provision of outside assistance that is either inappropriate or unnecessary.

4. IMPLEMENTING PARTNER SELECTION

From the start of an emergency, careful selection of implementing partners and establishment of operational procedures are essential. See Section 1.6 for criteria for the selection of implementing partners.

4.1 At the beginning of an emergency it is not unusual for potential implementing partners to be operating already in the area of the refugee crisis and new influx. Some may be implementing development projects or dealing with earlier refugee arrivals, and so their ability to relocate or redirect their activities is often quite straightforward.

4.2 In addition, many international aid organizations are able to mobilize their resources quite rapidly, particularly where their financial situation and decision-making structure are geared to emergency response. Some may arrive on the scene of an emergency within a matter of days. UNHCR is now able to take similar speedy response measures.

4.3 Soon after the emergency situation is evident, therefore, a number of organizations are operational, or quickly becoming operational.

However, these operational partners may have varying degrees of experience, be specialized in different sectors, have uneven capacities and wide ranging objectives. The net result is that not all sectors and needs of the refugees are covered, while some are over-resourced. This is a period of self-selection – the needs are great and whatever assistance is provided is usually welcomed.

4.4 As the emergency continues, more organizations arrive on the scene, some of their own volition, some invited by UNHCR as implementing partners. Where previously there were gaps in programme delivery, situations could now arise where there is overlap. All resulting scenarios – those characterised by serious programme delivery gaps, uneven coverage, or duplicated activities – are unacceptable, and coordination thus becomes crucial (see below).

5. ALLOCATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities must be clearly defined and understood.

5.1 The roles and tasks of all involved must be clearly stated. Delays in defining responsibilities usually mean that each party defines its own goals independently and sets its own limits of responsibility. This in turn can quickly result in confusion, gaps and duplication. Responsibilities should be defined for each administrative level, and for all organisations and individuals. Responsibility, delegated to the lowest possible level, must include the necessary authority to exercise the assigned responsibility.

5.2 Responsibilities for UNHCR's implementing partners are defined in the appropriate implementing agreement (see Section 4.1). If formal sub-agreements have not yet been drawn

up, and cooperation is based on a Letter of Mutual Intent to Conclude a Sub-Agreement (see Section 4.1), the definition of responsibilities in the Operations Plan is essential.

5.3 The responsibilities of organizations which are delivering assistance but are not UNHCR's implementing partners must also be defined. This may create problems, particularly where individual organisations wish to have responsibility for a specific sector. Final authority rests with the host government. To the extent possible, however, any conflicts of interest should be resolved within the framework of the coordination mechanism (see below).

5.4 A document setting out the assumptions, concepts and principles behind the emergency operation has proved a valuable complement to the plans and detailed definitions of responsibility, especially in large programmes. Such a document should include an explanation of the role and responsibilities of the government, UNHCR, other UN organizations, implementing partners, and any bilateral donors, together with standards for the various sectors and any specific guidelines necessary. Details of the coordination mechanism should also be given.

6. ORGANIZATION AND COORDINATION

A single coordinating authority is required.

6.1 Effective coordination results from sound management. All concerned must recognize the value of coordination, and encourage and support efforts to make coordination work. It requires commitment to information sharing, transparency, joint planning and problem-solving amongst all the participants responding to the refugee emergency. Coordination is a combination of formal and informal processes including meetings, periodic reviews and

ongoing communications at all levels and between levels.

6.2 Coordination mechanisms must be planned and established with clear objectives and assigned responsibilities and authorities. Coordination must be based on good information exchange, or it may be counter-productive. Decisions made must be properly implemented. Practical and political problems must be resolved quickly and effectively.

6.3 A coordinated framework is essential for the effective and efficient implementation of the emergency programme and for making management decisions. Coordination at central and site levels will involve frequent informal contacts between UNHCR, the government, other UN organizations directly involved, the implementing partners, the beneficiaries and other parties concerned.

6.4 These contacts should be complemented by more formal regular meetings where overall progress is reviewed and plans are adjusted. A general forum should be established which meets frequently in the initial stages, and less frequently as time progresses. In addition to the programme and management issues which will be considered as they arise, a coordinated media response is required to ensure that the message to the world is consistent and to harmonize public statements and the projected image of the emergency. The forum also provides a mechanism to set up and maintain relations with governmental and local authorities, and to facilitate relations between the government and all the aid organizations participating in the emergency.

6.5 Whatever the implementing arrangements, experience shows that there are major advantages when the host government establishes a single coordinating authority, representing all the ministries and departments involved in the emergency.

6.6 Effective coordination with and among non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is also

essential to the success of the emergency operation. Much will depend on the position of the government, which may wish to control and coordinate NGO activity itself. Where an NGO is an implementing partner of UNHCR, co-ordination should already be assured, but many NGOs may be implementing their own programme for the refugees with their own funds.

6.7 Some NGOs will have been active before the UNHCR programme started and many more will arrive in a major refugee emergency. For organizations which have not previously recognized the value of coordination, it may be difficult initially to convince them to participate and to pass information 'down' to the site level. Subject to the policy of the host government, where an NGO coordinating structure does not already exist, UNHCR normally takes the lead in encouraging the NGOs to set up their own coordinating committee and mechanism.

6.8 One urgent and important activity of the operational partners within the coordination mechanism is to draw up guidelines, standards and norms for operational behaviour. This will considerably assist all partners to understand what others expect of them and help to reinforce such expectations. These guidelines should cover issues such as non-political or non-partisan behaviour, security and communications, dealing with unaccompanied minors, and the authority of the coordination mechanism itself.

7. DOING IT RIGHT FROM THE START

While emergencies call for extraordinary measures, every effort is needed to organize assistance activities properly from the beginning.

Emergency measures must give way to normal practice as soon as possible.

7.1 In the earliest stages of an emergency, extraordinary measures will be needed. Levels of detail in project proposals and budgets are less detailed in the early phases of an emergency. Initial financial support for the mobilization of staff may be necessary. Compromises may be needed, in terms of the assignment of responsibilities for implementation. UNHCR understands that measures such as these may be necessary to ensure a rapid response, but such steps must be seen as extraordinary, and regular structures need to be put into place as soon as possible.

7.2 Assistance should be organized and systems established properly from the beginning. If practices that contravene normal policy are accepted initially, implementing partners need to remember that UNHCR expects emergency situations to normalize into relative stability. As soon as possible, UNHCR's standard assistance policies and practices will be applied. To avoid misunderstandings, UNHCR's implementing partners need to be aware of this, and plan accordingly.

Financial Considerations

7.3 The ability and willingness of UNHCR's implementing partners to participate in an emergency, especially in needs assessment and/or the provision of crucial assistance, should be less constrained by financial considerations, and should not depend initially on the results of their own fund raising. To ensure the participation of appropriate implementing partners, and to the extent that a particular partner is unable to assure complete or partial funding, UNHCR may consider meeting mobilization and support costs for an agreed period of time during which life-saving activities are implemented. Any extension of UNHCR funding beyond this period, however, is subject to review.

7.4 Emergency situations often provide aid organizations with a new opportunity to seek additional public and private sector funding. In determining the level and extent of any UNHCR

funding for implementing partners in emergencies, the following considerations apply:

- a. The need to ensure that emergency humanitarian relief is promptly and efficiently provided through the involvement of relevant implementing partners.
- b. The extent of the implementing partners' own financial resources for addressing emergencies.
- c. The possibility of the implementing partner contributing to the particular operation in a timely manner, according to their own fund raising initiatives, and material and financial resources.

Preparation of Budget Submissions in Emergencies

7.5 Any project submission and budget should be the result of a needs and resource assessment. In an emergency, given the urgent need for action, detailed budgeting in the early stages will often not be possible. Indicative lump sum amounts in a budget may be approved on an exceptional basis at the beginning of an emergency, in order to allow implementation to begin. To the extent possible, project submissions in an emergency, including budgets, should be submitted in the prescribed UNHCR format, to avoid delays in approval. UNHCR uses a bottom-up, line item approach which calls for the specification of individual objects of expenditure (see Section 3.4). Implementing partners should consult with their UNHCR counterparts on formats and required level of detail.

7.6 In an emergency, UNHCR may make an allocation (see Section 2.2) to enable initial assistance activities to begin without delay. When such an allocation is made, UNHCR Headquarters expects that there will be a budgeting process conducted by UNHCR field personnel and concerned implementing

partners, and that the quality of that process will improve over time.

Implementing Arrangements

7.7 UNHCR uses implementing instruments to delegate authority for project implementation and related expenditures (see Section 4.1). In emergencies, UNHCR uses an Emergency Letter of Instruction (ELOI) to delegate authority to a UNHCR Representative in a field location, to commit funds and enter into project (sub-) agreements. The ELOI contains a minimal amount of detail and includes a budget at the sector level. The objective of the ELOI is to allow assistance activities to begin without delay. As soon as possible in a refugee emergency, a proper UNHCR project submission is required by Headquarters so that a normal Letter of Instruction (LOI) can be issued.

7.8 In the same way that an ELOI facilitates delegation of authority from UNHCR Headquarters to a UNHCR field operation, a Letter of Mutual Intent to Conclude an Agreement (see Section 4.1) is used by the UNHCR Field Office as a preliminary agreement with each implementing partner to begin implementation of emergency assistance activities. Depending on the circumstances, an initial instalment can be paid to an implementing partner under a Letter of Mutual Intent. In the same way that an ELOI should eventually be superseded by an LOI, a Letter of Mutual Intent must be superseded as soon as possible by a proper (sub-) agreement.