

**Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement
Geneva, 28-30 June 2007**

Agenda Item 3f

Information Note: Baseline Standard Operating Procedures on Resettlement

Baseline Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on Resettlement have been developed by the Resettlement Service to ensure a level of global standardisation, transparency, and predictability in resettlement delivery, and to reinforce procedural safeguards to mitigate the risk of fraud.

The baseline standard was developed by reviewing the SOPs of many resettlement operations worldwide, and by referring to relevant policy guidelines, as well as the resettlement events in *proGres*. A series of consultations were also held with field staff and external resettlement partners. Prior to developing the baseline standard, UNHCR field offices were required to independently develop and maintain resettlement SOPs. While many offices developed SOPs of a high standard, uniform and coherent global standards and procedures were lacking. This made difficult UNHCR's task of identifying gaps in service delivery.

As field operations vary in terms of size, staff composition and level of operational engagement with refugees and other partners (e.g. host governments and NGOs) it is not feasible to have a single, universal set of SOPs to be followed by all field offices. As a result, the baseline standard should be interpreted with a degree of flexibility. For instance, in some operations the staff responsible for a particular task may not match the baseline standard; e.g. a task performed by a Resettlement Officer in the baseline standard might be the responsibility of a Protection Officer in some offices. However, offices are encouraged to apply higher standards than the baseline standard, where possible, to further enhance the effective use of resettlement in specific operational contexts. This is particularly important for large or complex operations where the design of more elaborate or simplified procedures might be necessary.

Accordingly, the baseline SOPs document allows offices to indicate their compliance with the baseline standard by using a tick-box system. When applicable or necessary, it also enables offices to provide updates and amendments to field-specific procedures in narrative form. Hence, there are two important reference points in the baseline SOPs:

- (i) baseline standards -- the measure for all UNHCR operations in *assessing* and *submitting* individuals for resettlement; and,
- (ii) procedures specific to the office -- detailed throughout the baseline SOPs in relation to the baseline standard, whenever they deviate or otherwise supplement the baseline standard.

In view of the above, offices will be required to elaborate *within* the baseline SOPs their specific modus operandi. Each office's SOPs should therefore amount to a combination of (i) baseline standard; and (ii) office-specific procedures which differ from, or otherwise supplement, the baseline standard. It is against the baseline standard that country specific practices can be measured, gaps identified and remedial action taken, if necessary.

The Resettlement Service plans to roll-out the baseline SOPs in the last quarter of 2007.