

*Check against delivery*

**Statement on Policy Development and Evaluation  
59<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNHCR Executive Committee  
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**Jeff Crisp  
Head, Policy Development and Evaluation Service**

Thanks you Mr. Chairman,

When the High Commissioner spoke to the Executive Committee on Monday, he emphasized the need for us to take a critical look at UNHCR's activities, at the way the organization goes about its business and at the impact of its work on beneficiary populations. The Policy Development and Evaluation Service, or PDES, was established two years ago with exactly those objectives in mind.

Over the past year, PDES has worked closely with the High Commissioner and his Executive Office in an attempt to bring greater effectiveness and efficiency to UNHCR operations and to ensure that the organization's policies are coherent and consistent. In this respect, we regard policy development and evaluation as two sides of the same coin - functions which support and reinforce each other.

Before going any further, may I refer you to the background paper prepared for this agenda item. As the paper was drafted some time ago, I would like to provide you with an update on the work of the Service. For ease of reference, I will follow the same structure as the background paper. My presentation is available on the evaluation page of the UNHCR website, as is the current PDES work programme.

*1. Refugee protection and international migration*

With regard to this theme, I am pleased to report that our evaluation of UNHCR's role in relation to human trafficking, which was an outcome of the first meeting of the High Commissioner's Dialogue, has been completed. Following the preparation of a management response, the Steering Committee established for the evaluation will ensure the effective utilization of the review's findings and agreed recommendations.

With regard to the issue of displacement prompted by climate change and natural disasters, a position paper has been drafted and will be disseminated shortly. Follow-up action on this issue will be overseen by the Climate Change Task Force which PDES has established at the request of the High Commissioner.

*2. The return and reintegration of displaced populations*

We have recently completed evaluations of the UNHCR reintegration programmes in Angola and Southern Sudan and prepared a lessons-learned study on the use of cash grants in voluntary repatriation programmes. All three reviews can be accessed on the UNHCR website.

In his opening statement, the High Commissioner referred to some of the difficulties associated with UNHCR's role in the reintegration process, not least the well-known gap between relief and development. Our evaluations in Angola and Sudan have confirmed these difficulties and also revealed some shortcomings in UNHCR's efforts to address them. The lessons learned from these operations were fed directly into the preparation of UNHCR's revised reintegration policy, which was issued last month. We will continue to test and refine that policy by undertaking further evaluations of reintegration programmes and will also monitor the implementation of the country-specific recommendations made for Angola and Sudan.

### *3. Protection and solutions for persons of concern to UNHCR*

Our recent efforts in relation to this theme have focused on two issues: UNHCR's role in preventing and responding to Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and the challenge of addressing protracted refugee situations. Let me say a word about both.

Our SGBV evaluation was undertaken by an independent consultancy team, selected by a multistakeholder Steering Committee by means of a competitive bidding process. Despite the care taken to manage this project in a professional manner, the evaluation has proven to be a challenging one, involving a great deal of negotiation between PDES, the Evaluation Steering Committee and the consultancy team. A draft edition of the evaluation report has been posted on the UNHCR website. Our next priority is to publish the report in its final form, to ensure that a management response is issued, and to use the agreed recommendations of the review as the basis for a three-year SGBV strategy.

With regard to protracted refugee situations, the next task before us is to prepare a paper that will form the basis of our discussions at the next meeting of the High Commissioner's Dialogue. We would, of course, be pleased to hear from any Excom members and observers who wish to make an input into this process.

### *4. Humanitarian action and UN reform*

As you know, this theme is currently one of the High Commissioner's top priorities. In recent weeks, we have been working closely with him and the Executive Office to formulate UNHCR policies on a number of pertinent issues, including Humanitarian Reform, the Cluster Approach and Delivering as One. In the remaining months of this year, our attention will turn to the question of integrated UN missions and the protection of humanitarian space.

We have recently cooperated with other Headquarters sections in the preparation of reports on two other related issues. The first examines the role of UNHCR and the Cluster Approach in the emergency IDP operation in Kenya. The second provides an analysis of 'remote management' operations in Iraq and other countries where UNHCR has had little direct access to beneficiaries.

### *5. Strengthening UNHCR's policy development and evaluation function*

I will not repeat the information provided on this theme in the background paper. I would, however, like to mention that PDES has just become fully staffed and that all

members of the team have now received specialized training in evaluation objectives and methods. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the two Excom member states that are supporting our work through the establishment of JPO positions. This has increased our capacity significantly.

Our immediate priority in relation to this theme is to complete UNHCR's revised evaluation policy, which we had hoped to present at this meeting but which now awaits the outcome of the Headquarters review. The revised policy incorporates a firm commitment to the Norms and Standards for Evaluation agreed upon by the UN system as a whole. We consider this to be of particular importance in view of the new emphasis being placed on inter-agency evaluations.

#### *6. New projects*

To conclude this update, I would like to draw your attention to four new evaluation projects which are at various stages of planning and implementation. They are: first, an independent review of UNHCR's supply management function, which we have commissioned from an independent consultancy team; second, a participatory evaluation of Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming in UNHCR operations; third, a rapid appraisal of the impact of the High Commissioner's special projects on SGBV, and fourth, a planned review of the UNHCR programme for Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Syria.

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Ladies and gentlemen, let me end my presentation by making some brief comments on three questions we are often asked.

*First, how is your work programme established?* PDES tries to live up to its name by providing a service and by working in a demand-driven manner. Those demands come from a variety of stakeholders. Of the 23 projects on our work programme in September, six were requested or proposed by the High Commissioner; seven by the protection component of UNHCR, six by the operations component of Headquarters and one by a Regional Bureau. Three projects were requested or proposed by external entities: the IASC, the Global Forum on Migration and Development and the Executive Committee. We would welcome a more substantive Excom engagement in our work programme, and I therefore invite Committee members and observers to make specific proposals for projects that we might undertake in the year to come.

*Second, what are you doing to maximize the impact of your work?* This is an extremely important issue which we are trying to address by paying close attention to the way that our projects are identified, designed, implemented and utilized. We attach particular importance to the supervisory role of Evaluation Steering Committees, and would be pleased to hear from Excom members and observers who wish to participate in such committees. We must also do much more to ensure that the effective utilization of evaluation findings and recommendations is regarded as the collective responsibility of UNHCR management and its governance structure. It is not a task that can be accomplished by PDES alone.

*Third, who evaluates the evaluators?* This is a question we are often asked - and it is an entirely legitimate one. As the Service responsible for UNHCR's evaluation

function, we must be prepared to invite a close scrutiny of our own work. I am therefore pleased to inform you that prior to the 2009 Excom meeting, we will commission an independent review of the Service, the results of which will of course be shared with you. .

In this context, let me conclude by encouraging the Executive Committee to provide regular, critical and constructive feedback on the work of PDES. When the Service was established two years ago, we made a number of commitments to you. We said that the PDES work programme would be aligned with UNHCR's Global Strategic Objectives, and that it would contribute to both the attainment and assessment of those objectives. We stated that all PDES activities would be based on the principles of independence, transparency, integrity and consultation. We committed ourselves to the use of innovative approaches and methodologies. And last but not least, we promised to provide you with reports and papers that are presented in comprehensible and jargon-free language. These remain our objectives, and we invite you to hold us accountable to them.

Thank you very much.