

A Somali refugee seeks medical care in a small clinic in the capital Sanaa, Yemen.

EXIT خروج

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International Protection

UNHCR's primary objective is to help States fulfil their obligation to protect asylum-seekers, refugees, stateless people, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees. To this end, it cooperates with governments, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society—besides its people of concern. Today, the institution of asylum is under threat from a combination of

factors: political instability and concerns about national security in many countries, the global economic crisis, an increase in climate-related displacement and high levels of migration. UNHCR and its partners are employing innovative strategies to overcome these challenges, particularly with regard to refugees in protracted situations.

To revitalize the 1951 Refugee Convention, in 2002 UNHCR's Agenda for Protection laid out an internationally

agreed set of global protection priorities. A review, started in 2008, of States' implementation of the Agenda revealed continuing strong commitment to its goals and activities. The review also confirmed the importance of Executive Committee Conclusions on International Protection. Furthermore, it indicated that UNHCR's approaches to age, gender and diversity, community-based action and participatory assessments, were widely accepted.

Ensuring protection for all persons of concern to UNHCR

SECURING ACCESS TO ASYLUM AND PROTECTION AGAINST REFOULEMENT

UNHCR WORKS CLOSELY WITH STATES to ensure that their asylum and legal systems respect international protection standards. In 2008, the Office intervened frequently to uphold the principle of *non-refoulement* on behalf of asylum-seekers and refugees threatened with deportation. Border police and immigration officials in numerous countries were given training in how to identify those in need of international protection, and to understand their States' *non-refoulement* obligations. In cooperation with government authorities and NGO partners, UNHCR monitored borders and airports to prevent *refoulement* and provide access to territory for people of concern.

In 2008, UNHCR made submissions to nine higher national and regional courts in Europe on issues such as the cessation and exclusion of refugee status,

developments in human rights law related to the principle of *non-refoulement* and emphasized that exceptions to the principle needed to be restricted.

PROTECTING AGAINST VIOLENCE, ABUSE, INTIMIDATION AND EXPLOITATION

UNHCR'S WORK TO ELIMINATE SEXUAL and gender-based violence is an integral part of its protection mandate. The Office's approach to the issue falls within the wider framework of its age, gender and diversity mainstreaming strategy. Through advocacy, awareness raising and community education it tries to moderate beliefs and attitudes that discriminate against women and girls.

However, the inadequacy of data on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) presents a continuing challenge, as sexual violence is often under-reported and the data paints an incomplete picture.

with this in the Central African Republic, and the arrangement of visits to homes in Bangladesh to raise awareness. In Panama, Uganda and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, sports, theatre and music projects were used to draw attention to the problem.

Other related projects included capacity-building workshops for women in Panama, psychological counselling in Turkey and Venezuela and the distribution of sanitary materials in India and Thailand. Persons of concern in India also benefited from improved access to health facilities and income-generation activities, while subsistence allowances were provided to unaccompanied children in Egypt. Language classes were held in Malta, vocational training was provided in Bosnia and Herzegovina and safe houses established in Turkey and Yemen.

UNHCR promoted the involvement of men and boys in addressing SGBV. At a regional workshop co-sponsored with

TODAY, THE INSTITUTION OF ASYLUM IS UNDER THREAT FROM A COMBINATION OF FACTORS: POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND CONCERNS ABOUT NATIONAL SECURITY IN MANY COUNTRIES, THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS, AN INCREASE IN CLIMATE-RELATED DISPLACEMENT, AND HIGH LEVELS OF MIGRATION

non-penalization for illegal entry, *non-refoulement* and complementary protection. UNHCR presented its positions in the first two refugee law cases before the European Court of Justice (ECJ). In its first decision on complementary protection, the ECJ broadly endorsed UNHCR's views.

UNHCR also commented on refugee legislation in a number of countries, including Austria, Chad, Denmark, Iraq, Ireland, the Netherlands, Panama, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. These comments focused on the interpretation of various aspects of the 1951 Refugee Convention. The Office drew on current

The Office collaborated with UNFPA to develop an Information Management System (GBVIMS) to improve data collection and information sharing on sexual violence. In 2008, the two agencies jointly conducted three technical support missions to Uganda and two to Kenya, focusing on IDP situations. The missions introduced the GBVIMS to senior management, trained primary service providers to use the system and facilitated discussions on confidentiality, data analysis and information-sharing protocols.

UNHCR's activities targeting SGBV also included the recruitment of staff with exclusive responsibility for dealing

the Sonke Gender Justice Network and the Women's Refugee Commission in South Africa in 2008, participants from several regions of Africa developed plans to combat the problem. Follow-up action included three training sessions for men and boys and workshops for the police in Kenya.

According to UNHCR's targets, at least 10 per cent of the organization's staff and those of its partners, as well as persons of concern, should be trained to deal with SGBV each year. In 2007, 77 per cent of UNHCR's camp-based operations reported having met this standard, while in 2008 only 61 per cent reported the same achievement. In

urban locations, 55 per cent met the standard, down from 67 per cent in 2007. Improved and increased reporting may partially account for the decreases.

In 2008, 97 per cent of victims of SGBV in 70 camps (up from 90 per cent in 2007) received support from UNHCR or its implementing partners, either in the form of medical, psycho-social, legal or security assistance. Urban locations reported an increase from 70 to 76 per cent.

To coordinate response services more efficiently, UNHCR promoted the use in all field operations of standard operating procedures (SOPs) to deal with sexual violence. The SOPs outline the responsibilities of all stakeholders, including refugees. They clarify roles, ensure accountability, identify gaps and strengthen the referral system for individual cases. In 2008, 87 per cent of camps and 65 per cent of urban locations reported developing such procedures, up from 81 and 71 per cent respectively in 2007.

AT THE POLICY LEVEL, UNHCR was one of nine UN agencies that signed the inter-agency statement on Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation, issued in March 2008. Together with UNHCR's Policy on Harmful Traditional Practices (1997), the statement provides updated and targeted guidance to address the problem. UNHCR also began developing guidelines on the classification of female genital mutilation as a form of persecution that is ground for refugee status in accordance with the 1951 Refugee Convention.

In 2008, an independent evaluation of the organization's efforts to prevent and respond to SGBV was completed. The evaluation included missions to Georgia, Nepal and Yemen. Based on the findings of the evaluation, a three-year plan for addressing SGBV will be developed.

UNHCR also developed a Strategic Plan on reproductive health for 2008-2012. The plan calls for access to early diagnosis, care and treatment for

rape victims; reproductive health policies and programmes for IDPs; the active participation of people of concern in assessments; and projects to increase awareness of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The Office participated regularly in the UN Action on Sexual Violence against Women in Conflict initiative. It also provided input for the UN Comprehensive Strategy on Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). As leader of the protection cluster in the DRC, UNHCR will be responsible for efforts to prevent and respond to SGBV among persons of concern in that country.

STRENGTHENING THE PROTECTION OF REFUGEES WITHIN BROADER MIGRATION MOVEMENTS

ASSISTING STATES IN THE DEVELOPMENT of protection-sensitive migration policies continued to be a key priority for UNHCR in 2008. The 2007 High Commissioner's Protection Dialogue resulted in a better understanding by governments and other stakeholders of UNHCR's mandated role in the context of mixed migration. Governments have increasingly accepted recommendations made by the Office that refugee protection concerns be included in

national migration strategies. This could be seen in the Declaration adopted by the Ministerial Conference of the Euro-African Process on Migration and Development, which acknowledged that refugees and asylum-seekers form part of mixed movements and that their protection needs must be adequately addressed.

UNHCR's 10-Point Plan of Action on Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration was developed in 2006 to provide governments, UNHCR offices and other stakeholders with suggestions on how they could work together to develop protection-sensitive responses to mixed migration. The plan has become an important strategic tool for protection, and is also used by UNHCR offices for advocacy and liaison work with governments and other partners.

The Office has begun implementing a two-year project relating to the 10-Point Plan in Central America, West Africa, East Africa, and southern Asia. This two-year project consists of two interrelated components: the development of 10-Point Plan implementation strategies in the four different regions through regional stakeholder conferences, and the further development and elaboration of the 10-Point Plan through expert

● Kenya: Increasing awareness of FGM through sports

In 2008 UNHCR, in partnership with the International Olympic Committee and Her Royal Highness Princess Haya of Jordan, allocated USD 150,000 to raise awareness of female genital mutilation (FGM) through sports activities in the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya. It is estimated that 97 per cent of girls below eight years of age in Dadaab are victims of the practice.

The aim of the project is to improve the community's understanding of the harmful consequences of genital mutilation by sensitizing teachers, sports coaches and victims of the practice to the issue, using the safe environment of sports for this purpose. The project included outreach to primary schools and collaboration with the local radio station to broadcast key messages about genital mutilation. □



UNHCR has tents but no more land for new arrivals in Dadaab, Kenya so Somali refugees build makeshift housing on the edge of the camp.

roundtables and a Good Practice Handbook.

The first of the four regional conferences was held in Yemen in May 2008, and focused on the situation in the Gulf of Aden. Though the conference did not resolve the problems of refugee movements across the Gulf, it brought together some 180 representatives from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Yemen and countries in the Arabian Gulf area, besides regional organizations and donors. Focusing on immediately implementable outcomes, the conference established new partnerships and identified the core elements of a regional strategy to strengthen responses to mixed migration.

THE SECOND REGIONAL conference focused on mixed migration in West Africa and took place in Senegal in November 2008. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the International Organization for

Migration (IOM) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) joined UNHCR as co-organizers. Among the 200 participants at the conference were representatives from all 15 ECOWAS Member States, donor countries, international and regional organizations and civil society, as well as refugees.

The conference focused principally on the implementation of the ECOWAS free-movement protocols in furtherance of the local integration of refugees in the region; the enhancement of government capacities to identify and protect refugees; and improvements in the regional response to human trafficking.

The first expert roundtable was held in November 2008 on the topic of protection-sensitive entry systems. Some 40 experts from different regions helped to clarify terminology and to identify the core functions and main actors of protection-sensitive entry systems.

UNHCR continued its efforts to protect refugees at sea. The Office has intervened in a number of rescue-at-sea cases in the Mediterranean and elsewhere to facilitate disembarkation and find appropriate solutions. A note with conclusions and recommendations from recent meetings on the topic was presented to the ninth meeting of the United Nations Open-Ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea in June 2008, in which UNHCR participated. UNHCR also provided inputs for the International Maritime Organization's recommendations on procedures for disembarking people rescued at sea.

The Office continued to raise awareness that some victims of trafficking may need international protection. An evaluation of UNHCR's work in the area of human trafficking identified good practices as well as gaps in knowledge and resource limitations. UNHCR and IOM are also developing standard procedures for addressing human trafficking. ■

Affirming and developing an international protection regime

PRESERVING ASYLUM SPACE

UNHCR WORKED IN 2008 TO BE A reliable partner and leading authority on legal matters in the area of forced displacement by providing governments, international organizations and the legal community with guidance on protection issues and policies. The Office performed its core function of ensuring proper interpretation of the 1951 Refugee Convention and other legal instruments by providing policy and legal guidance on a wide variety of issues. These covered the extra-territorial application of the *non-refoulement* obligation, diplomatic assurances, extradition and refugee protection—including a Guidance Note on Extradition and International Refugee Protection—and the need to preserve the right to asylum in the context of counter-terrorism activities.

UNHCR provided States with updated information to enhance the quality of refugee status determination (RSD). In this regard, it responded to individual queries, continued its Quality Initiative with various States, and issued position papers on international protection needs, including one on Refugee Claims Relating to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

Initiatives to help States establish functioning national asylum procedures included providing advice on draft legislation; visiting reception and detention facilities; and counseling asylum-seekers on their rights. In addition, border guards, immigration officials, police, adjudicators and judges were trained to understand their obligations under international refugee and human rights law.

UNHCR collaborated closely with partners in the UN system to ensure that efforts to fight terrorism did not undermine refugee protection and the right to seek asylum. The Office strengthened its cooperation with the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), assisting it to make country visits and sharing expertise on asylum standards and practices in various States. Cooperation with INTERPOL was also strengthened.

The Office participated in the follow-up meeting of the 5th Special Meeting of the CTC on Terrorist Mobility. It also attended the EU Slovenian Presidency meeting on Terrorism, provided comments for the ASEAN Convention on Counter-terrorism, and gave inputs for the Model Law on Terrorism of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Cooperation with UNODC and the Organization

non-citizens, including refugees, of their human rights was examined with regard to several countries. UNHCR also continued to strengthen its collaboration with OHCHR; the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights served as a theme for the 2008 Annual NGO Consultations, the third edition of the Refugee Survey Quarterly, the 2008 Note on International Protection (A/AC.96/1053) and other activities and

GOVERNMENTS HAVE INCREASINGLY ACCEPTED RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE OFFICE THAT REFUGEE PROTECTION CONCERNS BE INCLUDED IN NATIONAL MIGRATION STRATEGIES

for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) aimed to ensure that legislation to address security concerns did not curtail the right to seek and enjoy asylum.

UNHCR's work with the UN Human Rights bodies in the context of counter-terrorism continued, and the Office provided comments for a draft resolution by the Human Rights Council on Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights.

UNHCR MAINTAINS a human rights liaison function that works to integrate human rights into all areas of its work. This is done through a two-pronged approach: on the one hand, it seeks to integrate issues of concern to it with international human rights instruments and mechanisms; on the other, it uses these instruments and mechanisms to strengthen its efforts to protect and find solutions for persons of concern.

UNHCR maintained close links with the UN human rights treaty monitoring bodies and followed closely the Human Rights Council's first Universal Periodic Review of 48 countries, where the enjoyment by

programmes. A Special Feature on the UN human rights system was established in *Refworld* to facilitate UNHCR and its partners' use of the UN human rights instruments and mechanisms.

REGISTRATION AND IDP PROFILING

UNHCR CONTINUED TO IMPROVE refugee registration in operations where it helps governments fulfil their responsibilities in this area. The Office promoted the mainstreaming of the registration standards established by Executive Committee Conclusion No. 91 on the Registration of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers.

In November 2008 an improved version of UNHCR's standard registration software, *proGres*, was deployed in Ghana. The new release of *proGres* introduces performance enhancements and features such as safer and faster data exchange, greater data security, a more coherent and user-friendly interface, advanced search features, an appointment scheduling tool and new ration card management features.

At the end of 2008, 72 UNHCR country operations and 137 offices were

using *proGres*. More than 1,500 staff members were trained in registration standards, tools and procedures, and a total of approximately 2.85 million refugees and asylum-seekers had active records in *proGres*, 80 per cent with photographs. The software facilitates the day-to-day management of refugee data. All offices with *proGres* are now printing attestations and protection letters directly from the data, while 15 offices are printing plastic identity cards. Five governments and three implementing partners are also using *proGres*.

FIELD SUPPORT ON registration was strengthened through 74 missions supporting 46 country operations. These missions streamlined registration procedures and promoted more effective ways of using existing data for decision making.

mandate RSD work is concentrated in 15 countries: Algeria, Cameroon, Egypt, Hong Kong SAR China, India, Kenya, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey and Yemen.

UNHCR's objective is to enhance the capacity of its mandate operations, as well as those of governments, to ensure the quality, integrity, efficiency and fairness of procedures and decision making. In 2008, the Office deployed 24 RSD consultants and United Nations Volunteers to 14 mandate operations. The deployments helped reduce backlogs, strengthen RSD procedures and provide on-the-job training.

Ensuring that there are enough protection staff in the Field remains a challenge. In 2008, 159 staff members were working full-time on mandate RSD. While contractual flexibility is

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The Office continued to support inter-agency efforts to create profiles of internal displacement situations. The objective is to obtain common baseline population data on IDPs through an inter-agency process to ensure coherence in programme delivery. The inter-agency Guide on Profiling of Internally Displaced Persons, which details profiling methodologies, including registration, was launched in June 2008. UNHCR provided profiling support to inter-agency efforts in the Central African Republic, Chad, the DRC, Pakistan, Somalia and Uganda.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF ASYLUM LEGISLATION, POLICY AND PRACTICE

IN 2008, UNHCR CONDUCTED RSD under its mandate in some 70 countries. In most, this provided the basis for subsequent protection interventions, such as the prevention of *refoulement*, the provision of material assistance and the implementation of durable solutions such as resettlement. Almost 90 per cent of UNHCR's

required to match human resources with operational needs, in some of the largest UNHCR operations more than 90 per cent of those conducting RSD were employed under temporary arrangements. This has a negative impact on the quality of decision making.

In 2008, UNHCR extended partnership agreements with the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) and the *Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides* (OFPRA) to strengthen cooperation with governments with recognized expertise in RSD. Between 2006 and 2008, RSD experts from the IRB and OFPRA were deployed to UNHCR operations in Cameroon, India, Kenya, Malaysia, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine and Yemen to provide advice or assist in case processing. UNHCR continued its cooperation with the International Association of Refugee Law Judges which assists the Office in building the capacity of judicial institutions. ■



A man with a small child crosses under a barbed wire fence on the Zimbabwe-South Africa border.

Realizing the social and economic rights of people of concern

SPECIAL INITIATIVES to strengthen the delivery of quality health services, nutrition, water and sanitation programmes were continued in 16 country operations. Additional resources were made available to support field initiatives and fill gaps identified by partners and refugees.

At the end of 2008, concrete results from these projects included a reduction in the infant mortality rates in three large protracted refugee operations: Kenya, Sudan and Uganda. Targeted interventions in Bangladesh and Kenya reduced global acute malnutrition in these countries. Refugee health workers benefited from nursing training. Health facilities, water supplies, hygiene and bio-security were also improved, as was access to essential drugs.

REDUCING MALNUTRITION AND MAJOR RISKS TO THE HEALTH OF POPULATIONS OF CONCERN, NOTABLY MALARIA, HIV AND AIDS AND INADEQUATE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES

UNHCR SUPPORTED THE DEVELOPMENT of comprehensive and integrated programmes focused on safe motherhood, family planning, the care and prevention of sexually transmitted infections, SGBV and adolescent reproductive health.

Investments in health facilities emphasizing safe delivery care, in conjunction with the training of skilled health workers, achieved a reduction in the number of babies born underweight and in maternal mortality. Access to clinical case management for cases of sexual violence was also improved. Services available to survivors of rape at refugee sites included post-exposure prophylaxis to reduce the risk of HIV transmission after a sexual assault, emergency contraception and

prophylactic treatment against sexually transmitted infections.

The majority of refugees live in regions in which malaria is endemic or occurs in seasonal epidemics. UNHCR and its collaborators engaged in effective control and prevention activities in complex emergency settings, achieving a reduction in malaria in most UNHCR operations. The Office's Malaria Strategic Plan for 2008-12 aims to consolidate the gains achieved. Furthermore, UNHCR is working with donors and implementing partners to provide long-lasting insecticide-treated nets for refugees in countries affected by malaria.

Acute malnutrition rates were below 5 per cent in only 17 per cent of the refugee operations receiving food aid in 2008. This was similar to, or better than,

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that of surrounding host populations in nearly all cases. Bangladesh, Cameroon, Kenya and Tanzania showed improvements in acute malnutrition rates during the course of 2008, but much remains to be done.

**REDUCING THE PREVALENCE AND
IMPACT OF HIV AND AIDS**

Significant improvements were made to the quality of public health programmes by involving local authorities and people of concern. The Office focused on developing national capacity and that of the people of concern to make these programmes sustainable. UNHCR's implementing and operational partners carried out training programmes in primary health care, including reproductive and child health.

UNHCR strove to ensure universal access to HIV prevention, care, treatment and support programmes. By the end of 2008 more than 90 per cent of UNHCR's refugee operations had access to culturally and linguistically appropriate education and information on HIV and AIDS. The Office focused on developing prevention materials targeting young people and reducing discrimination against those with the disease.

The Office continued to advocate for the inclusion of refugees and IDPs in national HIV plans and policies. At the end of 2008, refugees had equal access to antiretroviral treatment where it was available to surrounding host communities in 85 per cent of UNHCR operations. UNHCR also expanded its programmes in Africa to prevent mother-to-child transmission.

**PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH AND
PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT**

TO PUT INTER-AGENCY GUIDELINES ON Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings into practice, UNHCR and its partners began developing a training module which will be field-tested in Africa and Asia in 2009. This will address the needs of people of concern who have undergone harassment, violence and torture while fleeing war or political turmoil in their country or place of origin.

**ADDRESSING WATER AND
SANITATION NEEDS**

BASED ON AN ASSESSMENT OF WATER and sanitation services in selected

● Strengthening

In Colombia, a group of displaced women formed *La Liga de Mujeres Desplazadas* (League of Displaced Women), an organization of 300 Afro-Colombian and indigenous women who sought restitution for violations of human rights in the ongoing conflict in Colombia. These women have been victims of sexual violence or have been forced into displacement, slavery, prostitution, recruitment or sterilization.

Overcoming enormous obstacles, the group negotiated for land on which to construct new dwellings. The group has now grown and established a 'City of Women,' a neighbourhood in which they have built schools and other social amenities. The women conduct a variety of economic activities to support themselves and their children. They have also founded an NGO, now a UNHCR implementing partner, composed of and run entirely by IDP women. Despite many pressures and threats, the women remain steadfast in their resolve to succeed.

In Liberia, women from all the country's districts and counties, including returnees and former combatants, joined NGOs and civil society groups to organize a national conference on the theme 'Advancing women's rights in peacebuilding, recovery

UNHCR programmes, additional resources were allocated to improving these services in 16 operations. Field support missions visited Cameroon and Kenya, while experts under standby arrangements or UNVs provided technical support in Algeria, Bangladesh, Chad, Ethiopia, Iraq, Malawi, Myanmar, Nepal, Sudan, Tanzania and Yemen. Surveys in Malawi, Nepal and eastern Sudan identified critical gaps and highlighted the burden on refugees in the absence of minimum services.

**ADDRESSING GENDER EQUALITY AND
ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

Gender equality has been addressed both from the perspective of leadership and that of livelihoods. Women have been encouraged to participate in camp committees and food and non-food item distribution. They have also been assisted to organize women's groups and communicate with UNHCR, other organizations and the relevant authorities. In some operations, displaced women's groups established positive contacts with local women's organizations that supported their work and sometimes their local integration.

Women's Rights

and development in Liberia.' They drafted a comprehensive plan of action to promote women's rights, thereby establishing their right to participate in the political debate of their country.

In Nepal, elections were held in seven refugee camps. Although only two voting rights were allocated to each household, it was accepted that this right would go to one male and one female voter. The participation of women, at 91 per cent, was higher than that of men, which stood at 80 per cent. Almost half the members of the elected Camp Management Committees (CMCs) were women. Furthermore, women refugees gained a majority in all sub-committees.

Combined with the fact that 50 per cent of all sub-sector heads and assistant sub-sector heads are now women, women are expected to play a bigger role in the distribution of food and non-food items. More young women are represented in the CMCs than males. The age demography is interesting: more than 89 per cent of successful female candidates were between 21 and 40 years old, while among males only 50 per cent of successful candidates were in this age group. □

In all operations UNHCR continued striving to reach the targets for the participation of refugee women in refugee management and leadership committees, as set out in the High Commissioner's Five Commitments to Refugee Women. Data from 110 refugee camps in 2008 showed the participation of women in refugee camp committees stood at 39 per cent. Compared with the data for the period between 2005 and 2007, there has been no change in the number of women involved in decision-making bodies. In addition, extra resources were made available in 2008 to increase provision of sanitary materials to women of concern.

UNHCR is committed to women's economic self-reliance, promoting livelihood strategies that include gender analysis and design. This includes targeting training and vocational capacity building to the specific needs of women and men. An important initiative in this area is the Women Leading for Livelihoods (WLL) project which aims for the economic self-sufficiency of displaced women through a range of activities, including computer literacy, language and vocational training, innovative farming

and market access, micro-credit and small business centres.

At the beginning of 2008, the UNHCR Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls was published and distributed widely within and outside the Office. The Handbook was translated into Russian, Spanish, Arabic and French in 2008, and feedback from the Field was positive. Furthermore, the Handbook was one of the most consulted documents in the UNHCR website for most of 2008.

UNHCR strengthened its work on gender mainstreaming and combating SGBV through the Surge Project. In 2008, six gender experts were deployed in the DRC, Ethiopia, Liberia, Malta, Namibia, and Yemen. UNHCR participated in the IASC Sub-Working Group on Gender in Humanitarian Settings, which produced the Inter-Agency Gender Policy in 2008. More than 30 officers were trained through the IASC Gender Capacity Project (GENCAP), of which UNHCR is a part, and 23 of them were deployed to 18 countries. UNHCR hosted one GENCAP officer in Namibia.

ADDRESSING THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF CHILDREN

DESPITE THE FACT THAT CHILDREN make up almost half of UNHCR's population of concern, providing adequate protection and care remains a challenge. In accordance with the 2007 Executive Committee Conclusion on Children at Risk, which calls for children's non-discriminatory access to child protection systems, UNHCR started drafting guidelines on effective child protection systems, recommending improvements in the identification of children at risk; improved monitoring, reporting and referral mechanisms; greater attention to prevention, family support and early interventions; and the strengthening of strategic partnerships. The testing of this approach began in five operations in late 2008.

UNHCR finalized its Guidelines on Determining the Best Interests of the Child in May 2008. These recommend that a best interest determination (BID) be conducted under strict procedural safeguards for particularly important decisions affecting a child such as durable solutions for unaccompanied and separated children; temporary care arrangements for unaccompanied or separated children in exceptional

● Toda Tierra es Tu Tierra...

All land is your land

A part of a community-based approach in Costa Rica, UNHCR supported a variety of age and gender groups. The *Parceros*, a youth group (from 10 to 18 years of age) of some 55 refugees meets once a month and organizes a yearly summer camp. In 2007, several *Parceros* were inspired by a summer theatre workshop. They expressed the wish to include other youngsters, both Colombians and Costa Ricans, in sports and artistic activities.

A project was initiated bringing together UNHCR, ACAI (an NGO partner), the Ministry of Culture and Youth and teachers and students of the *Conservatorio Castilla*, a state-run school renowned for excellence in the arts. This resulted in the creation of a street play entitled *Toda Tierra es Tu Tierra* (All land is your land) exploring the theme of exile and displacement. Some 45 refugees, migrants and local adolescents participated in the project.

Toda Tierra es Tu Tierra portrays the issues that refugees face, ranging from their reasons to flee to the discrimination and hostility they face in an asylum country. It highlights the resilience, strengths and capacities refugees bring with them into their new country. For young refugees, the experience of hostility and abuse based solely on nationality and lack of understanding of the suffering they have gone through is often difficult to bear. The play ends with a message of peace and hope, conveyed through music and dance.

The play raised awareness about the plight of refugees in a creative way through the participation of both refugee and host community youth. The rehearsal sessions became a safe space to vent the anguish and the pain refugee children suffer and to find comfort and support. The play boosted the self-confidence of participants, taught them to resolve conflicts and overcome mistrust with a message of hope. □

situations; and the involuntary separation of a child from his or her parents.

The implementation of the Guidelines - 34 UNHCR operations reported that they are using BID – has improved the protection of those children for whom a BID exercise has been conducted, but challenges remain. The BID is often used as a tool for resettlement rather than as a child protection tool. Furthermore, the protection and care of unaccompanied and separated children are often inadequate. Problems also persist in the areas of pre-BID identification, registration, documentation, tracing and the monitoring of care arrangements. UNHCR is working with partners to develop BID tools and provide users with training in interview techniques and analysis.

The partnership with Save the Children Norway and Sweden for the deployment of their standby roster members as community services and child protection officers was maintained in 2008. This partnership supported UNHCR operations with six Community Services Officers and six Child Protection Officers. The officers were deployed in Cameroon, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nepal, Sudan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Yemen and Zambia.

EDUCATION

EDUCATION OPENS DOORS TO THE FUTURE for refugees, whether they remain in exile, return home or resettle elsewhere. In 2008 UNHCR reviewed minimum standards for education in emergencies, chronic crises and early recovery, and aligned its Education Field Guidelines with other policies and standards.

A comprehensive report analysing UNHCR's progress in education highlighted that 67 per cent of refugee children aged 6-17 are enrolled in primary and secondary schooling. Reports from 39 operations indicate an average primary enrolment of 83 per cent. There was near gender parity in primary enrolment. The rates for the secondary level, however, are disturbing: overall enrolment in secondary school is only 30 per cent, with gender disparity increasing by grade.

UNHCR gave special attention to education programmes in eastern

Chad, Jordan and Syria. Education officers were seconded to the three country operations to manage and implement programmes. In eastern Chad, the provision of additional resources has improved access to post-primary education there.

Indeed, promoting post-primary education was a particular focus in 2008. Funds raised through the ninemillion.org campaign supported post-primary education and girls' education in five countries. The campaign's overall objective is to support boys and girls' education and sports programmes through partnerships with corporations, foundations, private individuals and

EDUCATION OPENS DOORS TO THE FUTURE FOR REFUGEES, WHETHER THEY REMAIN IN EXILE, RETURN HOME OR RESETTLE ELSEWHERE

the public. In 2008, it focused on the more active participation of girls in both primary and secondary school as well as in sports activities.

Five pilot projects—in Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda—provided for additional tuition and sports aimed specifically at girls and women, child rights awareness and sensitization programmes, capacity building, and training specifically designed for girls. In southern Chad, a girls' hygiene-awareness programme was launched and will continue in 2009. Activities included the creation of female volleyball teams and dancing lessons.

UNHCR gave particular attention to the Community Technology Access (CTA) Project, which aims to provide education and livelihood programmes to displaced communities, and in particular to youth, through access to technology and connectivity. The main outcomes so far have been the preparation and roll-out of the first two CTAs in Rwanda and Bangladesh.

The Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI)

provides scholarships for qualified refugees to study at universities and colleges in their host country, and more recently, in their country of return. In 2008, the DAFI programme assisted nearly 1,800 students in 34 countries, mostly in Africa, but also in Asia, eastern Europe and Latin America. Since 2007 the programme has also allowed for the transfer of students from Chad to Cameroon. The first enrolments in post-graduate studies under the programme showed promising results.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION

RECENT YEARS HAVE SEEN GREATER implementation of sound environmental practices in field operations, not least because of concerns about the possible impact of climate change on displaced populations and as a cause for displacement. UNHCR implemented its environmental policies based on four principles: prevention of environmental destruction, an integrated approach, local participation and cost effectiveness.

In 2008, environmental concerns were factored into the earliest stages of operations, with the aim of limiting environmental damage, reducing the need for costly rehabilitation and forestalling conflict between refugee and host communities. UNHCR initiated and supported a range of tailored activities focused on environmental best practices and new techniques in field operations in Africa and Asia. These included the development of community environmental action plans at the camp and village levels and the development of post-repatriation rehabilitation strategies in the East and Horn of Africa and in Guinea.

Environmental awareness-raising activities were strengthened in Chad, the DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nepal, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia. Land-use designs and intensive small-scale agricultural techniques were promoted in Chad, Ethiopia and Rwanda, while community-based agro-forestry approaches and the use of renewable energy sources were demonstrated in Bangladesh, Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nepal, Thailand and Uganda. ■

Guaranteeing age, gender and diversity perspective in operations

UNHCR COMPLETED the introduction of the age, gender and diversity mainstreaming (AGDM) strategy to all operations and developed the AGDM Action Plan in 2008. This Plan establishes responsibility for supporting field operations in implementing the AGDM strategy across the organization in a corporate manner.

In 2008, the Office undertook an analysis of the AGDM Accountability Framework, which provides field operations with a mechanism to measure progress in implementing policies specifically related to the protection of women and children, as well as a community-based approach to operations' management. The Framework places accountability on senior management and aims to identify

involvement in planning, monitoring and evaluation of programmes.

WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND OLDER REFUGEES

WITH THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS of Persons with Disabilities entering into force in May 2008, UNHCR initiated a number of activities to enable the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and freedoms for all persons with disabilities in its operations. These efforts focused on building the capacity of UNHCR and partner staff. Handicap International provided a disability specialist to the IDP Protection Cluster Working Group who provided training and advice to field operations, notably in the Central African Republic and Sri Lanka.

UNHCR INITIATED A NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES TO ENABLE THE FULL AND EQUAL ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS FOR ALL PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN ITS OPERATIONS

gaps in compliance with relevant policies and standards.

The analysis revealed that progress in compliance varied by region. Operations in Africa reported the highest rates of compliance with SGBV prevention, response actions, and AGDM activities. Operations in Asia reported the highest levels of compliance on activities targeting the enhanced protection of children, women and girls. The analysis also revealed constraints related to staffing, socio-cultural obstacles and the engagement of partners. In 2008, the Framework was expanded to countries in Europe, North America and Asia, where the main focus of UNHCR's work is advocacy.

A review of country plans in 18 operations showed that participatory assessments have become standard practice, however, gaps remain in sustaining regular dialogue with persons of concern and in their

UNHCR is also a member of the UN Working Group on Disabilities and in 2008 participated in Joint UNDG/IASC Task Team meetings on the rights of persons with disabilities. In the same vein, an expert from Help Age International was seconded to the IDP Protection Cluster Working Group and undertook three missions, to Georgia, Indonesia and Uganda, to provide technical support and training at the field level.

USING A COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH

FOLLOWING THE LAUNCH OF THE community-based approach (CBA) manual, UNHCR facilitated three regional training of trainers workshops, involving 59 UNHCR and partner staff worldwide, to improve their understanding and use of CBA. The manual has been translated into French and Spanish, and a workshop facilitator's guide is under review. ■



UN High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres, listens to the problems of returnees in Nangarhar province, Afghanistan

Ensuring the physical security of people of concern

ENSURING PROTECTION AND physical security in often highly insecure environments posed many difficulties in 2008.

Humanitarian access was often hampered, and the monitoring and delivery of protection and assistance frequently restricted. Refugees and IDPs, including children, were placed at great physical risk, including of forced military recruitment, while facing serious threats from landmines and unexploded ordnance.

To meet these challenges, UNHCR worked with governments, other UN agencies and partners to negotiate access to displaced populations at risk, to persuade States to fulfil their responsibilities towards those on their territory and to enhance security for the displaced.

The question of landmines and cluster munitions was an issue of particular importance to refugees and IDPs in conflict and post-conflict zones. UNHCR cooperated with partners such as the UN Mine Action

Service working on mine action, including mine awareness, demining activities and victim assistance in countries such as Afghanistan, Angola,

ENSURING PROTECTION AND PHYSICAL SECURITY IN OFTEN HIGHLY INSECURE ENVIRONMENTS POSED MANY DIFFICULTIES IN 2008

Cambodia, Chad, Colombia and Lebanon. UNHCR also advocated for agreement on a Cluster Munitions Treaty, opened for signature in October 2008.

In countries of asylum where asylum-seekers and refugees faced discrimination and abuse, UNHCR reminded States of their responsibility to provide protection to foster

understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations, as well as racial and religious groups. In Ukraine, for instance, UNHCR, civil society groups and IOM cooperated to respond to an increase in xenophobic attacks with a Diversity Initiative, monitoring incidents and coordinating responses, including with the authorities.

In November 2008, UNHCR organized a workshop on detention for field staff and partners which provided a forum to discuss challenges, solutions and good practices. Several themes were addressed, including identification of detained persons in need of international protection, detention monitoring, detention visits, provision of material assistance to detainees, negotiating access to detention facilities, ensuring detainees' access to international protection, negotiating release and alternatives to detention. Materials on detention monitoring were shared with the Field and a special feature on detention was created on *Refworld*. ■

Strengthening UNHCR's operational protection capacity

PROTECTION LEARNING

UNHCR CONTINUED TO DEVELOP AND offer protection learning opportunities for staff at all levels. These included two protection learning programmes in West Africa and Asia, six RSD learning programmes in Africa and Asia, five workshops on resettlement and one learning programme on statelessness piloted in Arabic-speaking operations. Some 400 UNHCR staff benefited from these programmes.

For UNHCR to deliver on its enhanced responsibilities to protect the internally displaced, a learning programme on internal displacement was developed and delivered to 25 senior managers involved in IDP operations in late 2008. The programme brought together eminent persons such as the Representative of the Secretary-General

to UNHCR's new performance appraisal system, which will come into effect in 2009.

The review of additional protection workforce arrangements (the Surge, Resettlement, RSD and Community Services deployment schemes) progressed in 2008 with a view to building linkages between the various schemes and emphasizing their added value in specific contexts. This process is part of a broader initiative to streamline all protection and non-protection additional workforce arrangements in UNHCR.

In 2008, UNHCR also chaired the Task Force on Protection Staffing and Response Capacity of the IDP Protection Cluster Working Group. This taskforce provides guidance, standard job profiles and tools to field operations to facilitate

others, UNHCR and the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo organised five refugee law courses which were attended by 203 participants, mostly senior government officials, from 91 different countries.

In addition, UNHCR supported protection workshops for external partners in Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia. These included the UNITAR summer course in the Netherlands, a UNESCO Workshop in Benin and the Sixth Regional Course on Refugee Law in Latin America.

PROTECTION INFORMATION

IN 2008, THE CONTENT AND structure of *Refworld*, the state-of-the-art tool for those making decisions on refugee status, were improved with the inclusion of UNHCR's most recent

IN 2008, UNHCR DEVELOPED A COMPREHENSIVE PROTECTION STAFFING STRATEGY TO ENSURE THAT THE RECRUITMENT, POSTING AND CAREER MANAGEMENT OF PROTECTION-RELATED STAFF CATERS TO ITS NEEDS AND MANDATE

for the Human Rights of IDPs to debate key policy and coordination issues confronting managers in the Field. UNHCR also began to develop an electronic induction programme on IDP protection which will be mandatory for all staff in 2009.

PROTECTION WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

IN 2008, UNHCR DEVELOPED A comprehensive protection staffing strategy to ensure that the recruitment, posting and career management of protection-related staff caters to its needs and mandate. The project entailed a review of all protection-related job descriptions and functional competencies; the development of a methodology and benchmarks to determine the appropriate number, level and profile of protection staff in a given operation; and the review of protection-related additional workforce schemes. The review was closely linked

appropriate staffing arrangements and establish structures among agencies to help them better respond to complex emergencies.

Twenty-eight new Surge roster members were deployed to various UNHCR field operations in 2008. Of these, 21 deployments were processed for refugee/returnee operations and seven for those involving IDPs. The inter-agency deployment schemes, ProCap and GenCap, also saw deployments to Afghanistan, Chad, the DRC, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iraq, Kenya, Serbia, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste. Senior protection staff were sent to the DRC, Egypt and Israel operations in 2008 to provide additional support.

PROTECTION AWARENESS AND CAPACITY BUILDING

TO PROMOTE THE PRINCIPLES OF international refugee protection among NGOs, immigration and border officials, judges, lawyers, academics and

thematic and country-related positions and international protection considerations, as well as relevant national legislation, jurisprudence and legal theory and practice. The number of country information sources was considerably expanded and new user-friendly services such as personalization features, the protection starter kit and links to external information providers were added.

In 2008, the RSD learning programme component on country research and information was delivered in Egypt, Syria and Turkey. Two blended learning programmes on country research for UNHCR staff were organized in Kenya and Thailand. Similar programmes were delivered for officials in Austria and the Netherlands. UNHCR also contributed to the work of the United Kingdom Advisory Panel on Country of Origin Information and several EU-related projects. ■