

**Introductory Statement**  
**4 c) Staff Safety and Security Issues, including Refugee Security**  
**(EC/64/SC/CRP.15)**  
**57<sup>th</sup> meeting - Standing Committee**

*Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen;*

- As the reforms envisioned in the 2010 Security Management Plan have largely been brought to fruition, UNHCR's Field Safety Section has articulated a Plan of Action for Strengthening a Culture of Security through the years 2013 through 2015. This presentation will highlight key elements contained in the action plan, focusing on engagement in six vital areas: **field support; the security workforce; oversight and governance; interagency liaison; training; and security of persons of concern.**
- Before doing so, by way of background, it is worth clarifying what is meant by a Culture of Security. For UNHCR a Culture of Security means that security and safety are integrated as normal functions of UNHCR operations and incorporated in planning from the earliest stages. It means that managers at all levels have a specific responsibility for security and conduct operations from a risk management perspective. It means that UNHCR is an active participant of the common UN security system, complying with guidelines and contributing to improve overall security management. It means that resources allocated for security are sufficient. Finally, it means that staff are knowledgeable and disciplined about security and take responsibility for their personal safety. This is what a Culture of Security means for UNHCR, and these are the outcomes that FSS is working to attain.
- Secondly, it is worth recalling the operational context which makes a Culture of Security indispensable for UNHCR. Security challenges have continued unabated, with crises raging in Syria and Mali and significant deterioration of security elsewhere forcing staff to suspend operations, relocate or evacuate. Meanwhile, in these and other places, dangers to persons of concern remain equally great, emphasizing the challenge of integrating operations and security in order to stay and deliver. Sadly, this period has not been without tragedy for UNHCR; since 2012 three national staff have lost their lives while off duty. Two were killed at their houses when they were victims of crime, in DRC and more recently in Kenya; while a staff member in Syria was killed when undertaking personal travel at night.

With this as background, let me present the achievements that have been obtained to strengthen the Culture of Security within UNHCR:

- **First**, the Field Safety Section provides managers with sound and well-reasoned technical advice and support when they face security challenges. Senior Field Safety Advisers are designated with regional responsibilities that correspond to UNHCR's Regional Bureaux. These senior FSAs provide advice to managers at headquarters and deploy frequently to the field to support emergencies and resolve problems. Since 2012 Field Safety Section staff have deployed over 45 times in support of field operations. This represents an increase from previous years, and a shift to more frequent proactive assessment missions as opposed to longer response and backfilling missions. The Senior FSAs also provide structured analysis of threats while one FSA at headquarters provides full-time analytic support. The section further deploys a structural engineer to review and develop additional mitigation requirements in high-risk operations. The ultimate aim of all these systems is a proactive approach that enables the Bureaux and FSS to jointly identify potential problems early on, and take action preventively rather than in responding after the fact.
- **Second**, UNHCR invests in a diverse workforce to meet the UNHCR's increasingly complex operational context. Twelve Field Safety Advisers were recruited in 2012, bringing the total number of professional security officers to 59 by the start of this year. The Field Safety Section continue to work to create a profile of security professional that is technically proficient, analytic, a strong communicator, and imbued with a strong sense of UNHCR's humanitarian purpose.
- **Third**, the dynamic nature of UNHCR's working environment demands regular review of security postures and allocation of resources. In 2012 an audit on security resource management was conducted by the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services, whose findings reaffirmed the importance of appropriate security budgeting and accountability. As part of this process, FSS undertakes a review of all Country Operations Plan documents during the Annual Programme Review to ensure that the security context is adequately addressed and resources allocated correspond with the needs, providing detailed recommendations to managers in the field and at headquarters.
- **Fourth**, UNHCR continues to be fully engaged in UN inter-agency processes on security at all levels with a particular focus on policy and guideline development to ensure that operational concerns are appropriately reflected in system-wide policies and practices.
- **Fifth**, security training continues to be a high priority. FSS, in collaboration with UNHCR's Global Learning Center, provide a range of training for managers, security professionals and staff in general. Managers and security professionals are two categories of particular importance due to the large number of staff potentially affected by their actions and decisions. For managers, the ground-breaking Security Management Learning Programme and related Security Management Exercise continue to be distinctive platforms presenting the concepts and practices of risk management in a humanitarian field environment. In 2012 the courses were run 11 times, and another 8 sessions are foreseen for this year. To date the

number of managers who have been trained in risk management stands at nearly 900. As for security staff, training aims to of shaping the professional corps toward UNHCR's vision of a well-rounded security professional, with emphasis on areas like analysis, communications skills and security of persons of concern. FSS and GLC arrange two annual training events for FSAs to continue honing these skills, with the aim being for each FSA to attend at least one event per year. For staff in general, the GLC and FSS are developing an ever-increasing base of e-learning products designed to make security training available to the widest possible audience.

- **Finally**, while the work of FSAs is traditionally focused on security of staff, developing the skills to enable them to contribute to the safety of persons of concern has been a standing objective of FSS. In 2011, DESS/FSS, in collaboration with the Division of International Protection, developed and released the Manual on Security of Persons of Concern. The Manual offers practical guidance in addressing security problems experienced by refugees and other persons of concern, and is a tool designed to foster cooperation and an interdisciplinary approach between security, protection and other staff and partners. Since the launch of the Manual a comprehensive roadmap of actions has been developed for its rollout. Included in the plan are the systematic incorporation of material from the Manual in various UNHCR training programmes, development of an e-learning module on safety of persons of concern, and the collection of input from the field toward release of the Second edition of the Manual which is currently under development. The e-learning module will come on-line at the end of the year.

*Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates;*

- Strengthening the culture of security is a multi-year effort requiring commitment throughout the organization to adhere to security management principles even when operational urgency and financial challenges are great. UNHCR remains committed to delivering in challenging security environments while ensuring that the appropriate risk mitigation measures and security procedures are in place, in order to protect the well-being of its staff, partners and persons of concern.

We are grateful for your continued support to these efforts. Thank you.