

Standing Committee
Informal Consultative Meeting on Staff Safety and Security

4 May 2005

Summing up by the Chair

This informal consultative meeting has given us the opportunity to comment on the review by UNHCR's Steering Committee on Security Policy and Policy Implementation, as well as to hear an update on progress made on the committee's recommendations up to the first quarter of 2005.

I would now like to sum up some of the key points raised by delegations today:

- We have noted that the Steering Committee's Report is a "living document" in relation to the evolving safety and security needs of the organization and its staff and that UNHCR would welcome further input and comments on the recommendations presented.
- On their part, delegations would appreciate clear indications as to when, where and how the Office believes ExCom can help in this respect. The Office will also share with us relevant documentation including its Plan of Action, which prioritizes the recommendations of the review and sets out implementation targets.
- The recommendations stemming from the review have important implications for ExCom's responsibilities in relation to the Office's budget and to the general policies governing programme implementation. Delegations welcomed the inclusion of security considerations in the Country Operations Plan (COP) process for 2006.
- We also heard several references to UNHCR's attempts to include security costs in the UN Regular Budget. The majority of delegations intervening supported this move, however one delegation cautioned that this was unlikely to transpire in view of other competing needs at the New York level.
- We were pleased to note the positive developments in building relations with the UN's global security system - formerly UNSECOORD and now re-established as the Department for Safety and Security (DSS) - led by Under-Secretary-General David Veness. We agreed that this is a very important connection requiring active engagement by UNHCR.
- Another crucial interface for UNHCR in upholding security is with NGO implementing partners and we appreciated MSF's and World Vision's interventions which emphasized the need for more and speedier UN presence on the ground in emergency situations.

This meeting has demonstrated a high level of support by members for staff security issues. I would like to thank Messrs. Akodjenou, Floyer-Acland and Touré, as well as the participating delegations, for their well-prepared interventions today. We will discuss the topic of security again at the Standing Committee in September and we look forward to further updates on this important topic on a regular basis.