Working with the internally displaced

The number of people who have been displaced within their own countries as a result of armed conflict now stands at approximately 26 million. UNHCR, with its long record of protecting and assisting the displaced, is well positioned to support national and international responses towards internally displaced persons (IDPs). Currently, it is active in some 28 IDP operations involving approximately 14 million people.

Sixteen of these operations—in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Guinea, Indonesia, Kenya, Liberia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Somalia, Uganda and Zimbabwe—have implemented the cluster approach. Almost three years have passed since the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) welcomed the humanitarian reform process and adopted the cluster approach, under which UNHCR assumed leadership responsibilities on certain matters relating to conflict-affected IDPs. The global clusters are inter-agency groups at the headquarters level which build overall capacity, set common standards and develop policies and tools to support field operations.

This draws on the comparative advantages of each UN agency and builds partnerships to maximize resources and ensure an integrated response. UNHCR leads the global protection cluster. It also co-leads the global camp coordination and camp management (CCCM) cluster with IOM, and the global emergency shelter cluster with the IFRC. In the clusters it co-leads, UNHCR is responsible for conflict-induced internal displacement, while IOM and IFRC are responsible for situations arising from natural disasters. UNHCR also contributes to the global water, sanitation and hygiene cluster, as well as the clusters dealing with health, nutrition, education, early recovery, logistics and emergency telecommunications.

UNHCR staff trying to reach IDPs in remote areas of Colombia.

The Office has produced some key programmatic and protection tools, strengthened its emergency response capacity by providing technical expertise to the Field, replenished its stockpile and trained a large number of its own and partner staff.

As the work of the clusters is being consolidated in 2009, many of the activities will be fully mainstreamed, although some recurrent costs may remain through the transition period in 2009.

A camp for IDPs in Nyongera, the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

UNHCR/F. Fontanini

IDP policy and strategy

UNHCR will review progress in mainstreaming IDP-related functions into all its work and ensure it has the capacity to carry out its cluster-leadership responsibilities. The Office will also address issues related to its role in support of an improved humanitarian response to IDP situations. This has been challenging due to its expanded responsibilities and an increase in the number of beneficiaries.

As the cluster approach continues to develop, gaps in policy and operational capacity will have to be addressed in the coming year. UNHCR has worked to strengthen the linkages among the clusters it leads. As IDP operations frequently require more information sharing among partners than in traditional refugee situations, well-developed data systems are needed to make the humanitarian response faster and more predictable and enhance inter-agency coordination. UNHCR will provide technical support on data management to IDP field operations. The Office will also review security measures and training to ensure the safety and security of staff and IDPs.

Protection cluster

UNHCR chairs the Protection Cluster Working Group (PCWG). The overall focus of the working group is to strengthen protection coordination and response in emergencies. This includes deployment of protection staff to emergencies and evaluations of the cluster approach. Furthermore, the working group has given advice on the protection of older persons in Uganda and Indonesia, and supported the newly-established protection working group in Afghanistan.
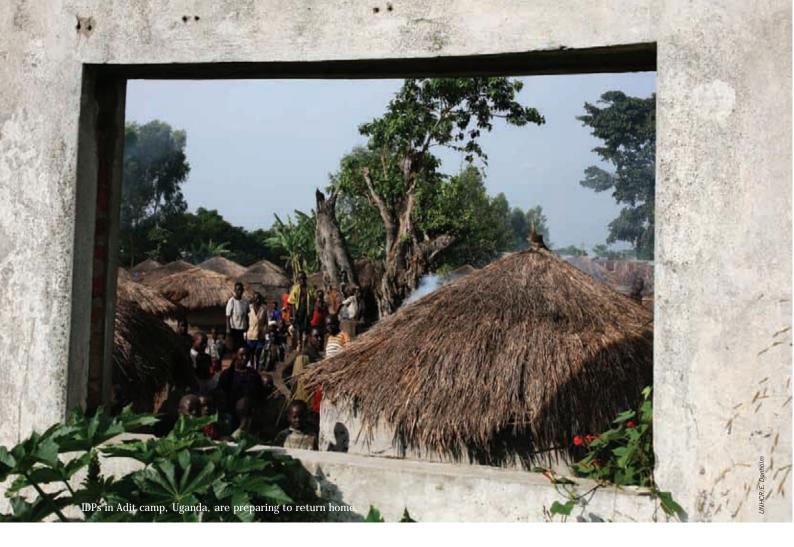
The cluster helps protection coordination mechanisms in 18 countries. It concentrates on leadership in five technical areas: child protection; housing, land and property; gender-based violence; mine action; and rule of law and justice.

To address specific aspects of its work plan, the working group established the Task Force on Learning and the Task Force on Protection Staffing. It has also convened *ad hoc* meetings on protection information management and the collating of good practices.

Providing predictable leadership to coordinate protection in disasters and other emergencies remains a challenge for all agencies. While progress has been made in addressing the five technical areas under the cluster's responsibility, more needs to be done to ensure operational guidance and resources are available for both new and ongoing emergencies. UNHCR, as lead of the cluster, will help to meet these needs and enhance partnerships, particularly with NGOs, at both the global and field level.

In November 2008, the group will establish its strategic priorities and work plan for 2009. Strengthening support to field operations will remain a priority. The development of technical expertise in the five key areas of the working group's responsibility will be emphasized.

UNHCR-led activities in 2009 will include support for protection working groups in the field and the strengthening of operational partnerships. Secondments from Help Age International and Handicap International will improve assistance for people with specific protection needs.

IDPs in Adit camp, Uganda, are preparing to return home.

UNHCR will review existing tools, standards and guidelines; develop an inter-agency rapid assessment tool for protection in emergencies; and implement the PCWG Operational Framework for Mainstreaming Protection. Expanded use of protection-incident monitoring systems, including for sexual and gender-based violence, will improve cluster coordination, data sharing and analysis.

UNHCR will work with the Task Force on Protection Staffing to strengthen inter-agency coordination in emergencies. It will also work with partners on cross-cutting issues, including age, gender, environment and HIV and AIDS. As part of the Task Force on Learning, UNHCR will conduct protection cluster coordination training for field coordinators.

Camp coordination and camp management cluster

The CCCM cluster, led by IOM and UNHCR, works closely with all members to coordinate the cluster activities outlined in the 2008-2009 work plan. An important task is to ensure the mainstreaming of CCCM concepts in inter-agency tools, as was done in 2008 for the *Camp Management Toolkit, Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action* and the *IDP Protection Handbook*.

In partnership with the protection cluster, the CCCM cluster supported the inter-agency effort to develop IDP profiling guidelines, and participated in a successful IDP profiling exercise in Chad. In June 2008, the cluster released a revised version of the *Camp Management Toolkit.*

In 2009, UNHCR and its CCCM cluster partners will focus on the development of standards and tools, including a handbook on camp closure and phase-out; finalize and deploy a CCCM needs assessment framework; share best practices; and strengthen support to IDP operations. To facilitate faster and more predictable humanitarian responses, UNHCR will develop new standardized data systems for the lead clusters in IDP contexts. Newly developed and revised training modules will assist cluster leads in camp coordination, and camp management agencies.

Emergency shelter cluster

UNHCR and the IFRC co-chair the emergency shelter cluster, which is active in Afghanistan, Chad, the DRC, Indonesia, Lebanon, Liberia, Mozambique, Pakistan, the Philippines, Somalia and Zimbabwe. In addition to providing overall leadership, UNHCR also implements shelter activities directly.

IDP operations

Colombia

The challenge in Colombia is keeping humanitarian issues at the top of the political agenda in a context focused on development and security needs. A recently enacted law on IDP rights may lead to more efficient implementation of IDP laws, while a nationwide campaign will help raise awareness and build partnerships and consensus.

A recently signed agreement between the Ministry of Agriculture and UNHCR provides IDPs with the chance to achieve greater socio-economic stability through the protection of abandoned lands and new initiatives to restore property rights. In the last eight years, people have lost tenure of an estimated 5 million hectares of land as a result of forced displacement.

Sri Lanka

As the designated lead agency for protection, emergency shelter and non-food items and camp management, UNHCR aims to protect refugees and IDPs, and to seek durable solutions to their displacement. UNHCR advocates for IDPs' freedom of movement; physical security free from violence; and access to shelter and livelihoods. The Office also works to improve conditions in return areas.

UNHCR works with sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) networks to ensure that survivors of such violence receive adequate legal and psychosocial assistance. It promotes protection training and awareness among aid agencies working in IDP camps to reduce SGBV, for instance by ensuring adequate lighting, privacy and separate bathing and toilet facilities.

Uganda

UNHCR and its cluster partners in Uganda focus on returnee monitoring, the opening of access roads to new settlements and return areas, demining, rehabilitation of water sources, the clearing of huts and filling of latrines in abandoned camps, and the provision of bicycles and communication equipment to the police.

In Kitgum district, UNHCR's advocacy led to the restoration of freedom of movement in almost half of the district. UNHCR also updated data for more than 194 villages to which IDPs have returned, and provided emergency shelter assistance to over 2,000 returning and resettling households in the form of plastic sheets. The CCCM cluster provided mapping and database assistance to agencies involved in camp management and trained more than 60 inter-agency field personnel in CCCM concepts.

A major achievement of the cluster has been the stockpiling of common shelter-related non-food items for emergencies involving up to 500,000 people worldwide. In 2008, several new tools were made available to the field, including the *Emergency Shelter Strategy.* Furthermore, guidelines were provided on performance management to ensure an effective response, initial shelter assessments, climatic variations, environmental impact, risk mapping and early warning, and shelter options.

To enable the cluster to improve the effectiveness of its responses, cluster members will review the 2009 priorities and work plan. In particular, UNHCR will assess the results of the cluster's training strategy and adjust training modules to field requirements. To meet its commitments in emergency shelter response, UNHCR will maintain procurement of blankets, emergency tents and plastic sheeting. It will also continue to develop standards and tools and share good practices.

Other global clusters

UNHCR also participates in global clusters led by other partners. Given its operational expertise in forced displacement, the Office's participation ensures the efficacy of efforts to assist refugees and IDPs. UNHCR's technical staff play an important role in shaping the various clusters' policies, tools, training and response. UNHCR ensures that: (1) policies and guidelines address displacement-related issues in a practical and operational manner; and (2) interventions in emergency settings improve the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian operations.

Each of these clusters is essential to the well-being of people of concern to UNHCR. To reinforce its commitment to the non-lead clusters, in 2008, UNHCR strengthened ties with each of them.

The **early recovery cluster** works to create durable solutions for IDPs and to facilitate sustainable post-conflict recovery. UNHCR contributes to the cluster with interventions on return and reintegration and through field support. Based on lessons learned from reintegration programmes, UNHCR is developing a standardized Return and Reintegration Management System, which will include databases, assessment tools, guidance and training materials. The system will be piloted in selected countries in 2009.

As a member of the **logistics cluster**, UNHCR has strengthened its logistics training and human resources capacity to ensure that it can contribute effectively to inter-agency humanitarian responses.

UNHCR has helped develop policies for the **water, sanitation and hygiene** cluster, and leads a project to strengthen technical advice and support to field operations. The Office also participates in the capacity-building steering committee, which is developing a roster of cluster coordinators and a training programme for technical experts.

In the **health cluster**, UNHCR participates in the working group on country support and contributes to the development of field guidance and tools. UNHCR co-chairs the steering committee of the Health and Nutrition Tracking Service and has worked closely with cluster partners on the creation of three cluster-assessment tools and the *Health Cluster Guide*.

In the **nutrition cluster**, UNHCR participates in the work of the thematic working groups on assessment and capacity-building and leads the development of cluster-specific tools. It is exploring ways to increase participation in field clusters.

With the **education cluster** getting underway, UNHCR has contributed to the formulation of its work plan and is helping to develop an assessment and monitoring tool and a capacity mapping exercise. In 2009, the cluster will develop an education training strategy for cluster coordinators and members.

HIV and AIDS are cross-cutting issues which affect all sectors. UNHCR is the lead technical agency for HIV and AIDS in refugee and IDP emergencies. The Office has organized inter-agency and technical field support missions to the CAR, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, the DRC and Nepal. Furthermore, UNHCR has developed a multi-sectoral inter-agency assessment tool for HIV and AIDS.