

**CREATION OF AN ASSISTANT HIGH COMMISSIONER, PROTECTION
NOTE FOR
8 FEBRUARY INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE MEETING**

The High Commissioner has proposed the creation of an Assistant High Commissioner, Protection [AHC-P] to strengthen his Executive Management structure. The ACABQ has endorsed it in principle. The High Commissioner has also more recently proposed that the creation be realised through an upgrading of the position of Director of the Department of International Protection (DIP), from the D2 to the Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) level.

The rationale for the upgrading is essentially the same as that for the post creation which was set out in ExCom document A/AC.96/992/Add.1 [attached for easy reference]. The incumbent would be a principal and authoritative advocate in the organisation for more effective protection systems globally. The main aim for the post remains to expand the availability and strengthen the delivery of protection globally. A primary focus would be on improving protection sensitivity, protection capacity and protection delivery, as well as accountability therefore, in the field, with a strong results-based orientation. The management of these functions at the ASG level would help to redress certain of the problems attributable not least to the fact that protection delivery, as well as investment in protection over the longer term, has had to compete with handling the exigencies of operations. This has been all the more difficult as protection delivery, and global advocacy and systems building respectively, are managed currently at different levels of seniority. The upgrade of the DIP Director post would underpin its enhanced functions with the necessary authority and, with the structural link to DIP still in place, would contribute to better overall management and oversight of the DIP/field interface.

Executive Committee members said, in October 2004, that they would welcome an independent study of the ASG post creation and where it would fit in the overall management structure of the organisation. That independent study has now been released in draft.

The independent study supports as “*a major priority for the organisation*” an initiative designed to strengthen the delivery of protection and the realisation of durable solutions [p. 14]. In this connection it notes the importance of maintaining the distinction between the separate but complementary roles of the Bureaux and the supporting divisions, of which DIP is classified as one. The differences are characterised as follows: that the Bureaux and the field managers are responsible for taking management decisions within the context of UNHCR’s policies, while DIP is responsible for formulating and for interpreting policy for the Office [p.19]. As regards accountability, the authors of the study suggest the line as being that the operations department is responsible and accountable for the management of operations, while DIP is accountable for the quality and effectiveness of their roles and functions [p.19]. The overall conclusion of the study is that an AHC-P “*would be very desirable, as it could significantly support UNHCR’s overall effort to strengthen the capacity of the Organisation in protection and durable solutions and help to build a more effective interface between operations and DIP*”, the latter of which is argued in the study as key to strengthening protection delivery by the Office. In lending its support to the proposal, the study takes note of the advantages of such a post to raise the profile and presence of UNHCR in protection externally [p.23], as well as the fact, internally, that “*it would be much easier for the Director, DIP, to participate actively in the executive management group if s/he were at the level of AHC-P*” [p.25]. The costs are seen as “*reasonable*” [p.25], as is the impact the post creation would have on UNHCR’s executive structure, when this is compared to the staffing tables of comparable agencies and departments in the UN system more broadly [p.25]. The study also prefers the AHC proposal to the alternative recently put on the table by the JIU [p.26-27].

In short, the independent study lends its support to the High Commissioner's revised proposal that the position of Director, DIP, be upgraded to the ASG level and that it perform a variety of functions designed to improve the availability of protection and its delivery, including by the organisation itself. The attached ToR's for the AHC-P set out the recommended functions for that position. Their preparation has taken into account the recommendations of the independent study and has been informed by the discussions to date in the context of the Executive Committee's Standing Committee.