

Update on UNHCR's regional operations and global programmes Executive Committee 2008

Part A: Introduction

This note reviews developments in 2008 in UNHCR's global programmes and partnership initiatives. It focuses on ongoing efforts to identify and address gaps, as well as on current opportunities for UNHCR to achieve its objectives in collaboration with its main partners.

Part B: Progress on UNHCR's global strategic objectives

Responding to emergencies in a timely and effective manner (GSO 4)

- Additional staff and non-food items (NFI) were deployed in response to conflict and/or natural disaster-related emergencies (Kenya/Cameroon/Chad, Myanmar, South Africa, Ethiopia and, most recently, Georgia).
- By mid-2008, some 200 staff had been deployed as part of the emergency response support.
- Efforts are being pursued to maintain UNHCR's general emergency response capacity to cover non-food item (NFI) requirements for up to 500,000 beneficiaries and tents for 250,000. This target has been reached, with the exception of tents mainly due to funding constraints.
- As part of preparedness activities, in 2008 UNHCR has held two workshops on emergency management, and organized an emergency team leadership programme, which is run annually on behalf of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to strengthen the leadership skills of managers. The e-Centre based in Tokyo has organized six training activities, covering various emergency preparedness and response-related topics.
- Additional standby capacity (65% of the workforce deployed in 2008) was developed through new arrangements with CANADEM and the Icelandic Crisis Response Unit.

Ensuring safety of staff and of people of concern to the Office (GSO 1 and 9)

- UNHCR continues to work on strengthening the compliance of its offices with the Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS). A review in 2007 indicated that only 5 per cent of the offices had remained non-compliant, mainly due to the relocation or opening of new premises and to the adjustments of security standards
- The Office carried out vulnerability assessments in all operations to determine requirements for responding to threats. Based on these assessments, UNHCR intends to issue a separate funding appeal for specific security-related needs.
- In 2008, UNHCR received an in-kind donation from the Government of Sweden through the Swedish Rescue Service Agency, allowing it to use its facilities for two additional security management learning programmes. This will help to increase the number of field managers and decision-makers trained in security management, and instil an organizational culture of security.
- Field safety advisers carried out more than 100 weeks of support missions to over 20 countries.

Improving the level and quality of registration, data collection, analysis and documentation at all stages of an operation (GSO 7.3)

- UNHCR's global registration tool *ProGres*, is now in use in 65 countries. In total, 1,420 staff, including personnel from partners and governments, have been trained on registration standards.
- The new version of the software (Version 3) will be tested in the latter part of 2008 and rolled out early in 2009. This year, new developments with *ProGres* are focusing on improving security access functionalities, including better management of food distribution.
- Several large-scale registration and verification exercises are ongoing in 2008, including in Africa (Burundi, Eastern Sudan, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda) as well as in the Middle East sub-region. In Asia, Nepal has completed ID card issuance and distribution to refugees in six out of seven camps, covering over 66,000 individuals. Distribution in the remaining camp is continuing.
- UNHCR is reviewing the use of biometrics in the registration process. Four out of the eight pilot countries are being evaluated and a final report will be available towards the end of the year. An external evaluation of beneficiary data protection is planned for 2009.
- UNHCR has established a Steering Group to review existing standards and indicators for IDP operations and make recommendations for any necessary adjustments. A sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) database is being piloted in Kenya, Thailand and Uganda. It facilitates the safe sharing of highly-sensitive data between service providers for SGBV survivors and automatically produces statistics to be used in SGBV interventions and advocacy activities.
- The global protection and camp coordination and camp management clusters are supporting IDP profiling exercises in Chad to provide direct assistance, fine-tune programme strategy and promote protection. Since 2007, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Somalia and Uganda have received support with operational data management.
- As part of an effort to homogenize geographic information records on place of origin and camp address, a Standard Address Code Set repository is being developed in UNHCR.

Reducing malnutrition and major risks to the health of the population of concern (GSO 3.1)

Priority projects

- The integrated package of activities initiated to improve the health and nutrition status of refugees and others of concern includes reproductive health, malaria prevention and treatment, nutrition and provision of micronutrients, water and sanitation.
- In 2008 the projects were extended to Algeria, Brazil, Cameroon, Chad, Costa Rica, Ecuador, India, Panama, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and Yemen. They involve deploying experts; strengthening working relations with WFP, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and others; and providing essential drugs, material and equipment such as long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets, complementary and therapeutic foods, birth-delivery kits, as well as support to improve basic health infrastructure.
- The mainstreaming of the High Commissioner's Special Projects within UNHCR's regular activities is under way; this is essential to ensure sustainability.

Epidemic preparedness and response/avian and human influenza (AHI)

- The focus in 2008 has been on improving water and sanitation services, particularly in health centres, for approximately 5 million refugees and others of concern living in 30 countries.

Malaria

- UNHCR has begun implementing its new Malaria Strategic Plan for 2008-2012. Currently, most refugees in malaria-endemic areas have access to the recommended anti-malaria drugs. The emphasis in 2008 has been to roll out the activities in more countries and to reinforce this treatment strategy by improving case management through the use of standard protocols and the training of health staff.
- There is also a focus on malaria prevention strategies, such as the provision of intermittent preventive treatment to pregnant women during antenatal visits; the distribution and promotion of use of long-lasting insecticide-treated nets; and the promotion of prevention activities by the community.

Reproductive Health

- The Special Projects continue to focus on improving safe motherhood and reducing SGBV, improving emergency obstetrical care and safe deliveries. UNHCR has launched a Reproductive Health Strategic Plan for 2008-2010 in line with efforts to support of the UN Millennium Development Goals.

HIV and AIDS

- Basic HIV prevention services are in place in all UNHCR programmes, which will allow the organization to provide all people of concern in refugee camps with full coverage. UNHCR has strengthened its HIV prevention and response programmes, focusing on vulnerable and at risk groups, including transactional sex workers, alcohol and substance users.
- UNHCR has extended refugees' access to voluntary counselling and testing and to prevention of mother-to-child transmission. The objective is to cover at least 25 operations by the end of 2009.

Nutrition and food security

- Joint assessment missions with WFP have been carried out in eight countries resulting in more harmonized interventions.
- In light of the global food crisis, UNHCR has flagged its concern about the particular vulnerability of 2 million refugees and IDPs who depend almost exclusively on food aid in 30 countries. By the end of May 2008, 43 per cent of refugee camps receiving food aid were given fortified blended food. Substantial input has been provided to the United Nations Comprehensive Framework for Action and other strategic documents, and WFP has made a commitment to prioritize food aid to refugees. Coordination is also being strengthened with FAO, and technical guidance made available to enable the effective implementation of nutrition, food security, and livelihood activities, and to assist field offices in accessing the special reserve under the Central Emergency Response Fund.
- A strong focus on anaemia has produced a strategy and country proposals to address this serious problem among children and women.

Improving standards of living, especially in relation to water and sanitation services (GSO3.2)

- The Office has launched a special initiative to enhance water and sanitation services in selected operations in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Efforts focus mainly on the improvement/rehabilitation and/or upgrading of existing water and sanitation facilities; the provision of non-food items; the enhancement of technical capacity to monitor and improve the quality of services; and on the implementation of hygiene promotion activities.

Enhancing education and skills training for young people (GSO 3.4)

- In 2008 UNHCR put priority on education needs in Chad, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic, with a view to addressing challenges related to access, quality and safe learning environments. USD 5 million has been raised for primary and post-primary education in eastern Chad.
- UNHCR is analysing the 2007 standards and indicators, as well as developing an education strategy for 2009 which will identify additional priority countries for support. The Education Field Guidelines have been revised and updated.
- Efforts to boost technical capacity have included the secondment of five education officers to Bangladesh, Jordan, Chad, Southern Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic. Training on minimum standards for education was conducted at Headquarters for 25 staff, and UNHCR staff in Asia and Central Europe attended regional workshops run by the inter-agency network for education in emergencies, chronic crises and reconstruction (INEE).
- Earmarked funding has enabled UNHCR to strengthen the delivery of post-primary education in certain countries. A session was organized at the NGO Annual Consultations focusing on post-primary education and employment.
- This year, a limited number of Masters scholarships by the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative Scholarship Programme have been made available for refugee students in sub-Saharan Africa. DAFI focuses on subject areas which will enable the graduates to contribute to the reconstruction, peace and stability and rehabilitation of their home countries.
- The nine million.org project for education and sports programmes is in its third year, supporting operations in Chad, Liberia and Uganda, with additional programmes due to be started, for example in Southern Sudan.
- Partnership brings opportunities to reinforce common usage of standards and guidelines as well as to strengthen technical capacity. Through participation in the INEE Steering Group UNHCR has helped develop guidelines for teachers' compensation, and involvement in the Education Cluster has included working on an assessment and monitoring tool.

Environmental issues (GSO 5.2, 5.3, and 5.5)

- To address the problem of environmental damage associated with refugee and IDP camps, in 2008 UNHCR has developed multi-year environmental restoration strategies for implementation in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. A compendium of experiences has been developed to help ensure that consistent and responsible approaches to camp closure and rehabilitation are followed in future operations.
- Some of the manifestations of climate change – such as flooding, water scarcity and food insecurity – are affecting UNHCR's operations. The Office is developing a strategy to identify and introduce the most appropriate preparedness, adaptation and coping mechanisms in its operations.
- UNHCR has been promoting a number of activities, including reforestation; construction of environmentally-friendly shelters using sun-dried mud bricks; and the introduction of sustainable forms of agriculture in refugee camps/settlements. A number of operations have embarked upon energy conservation initiatives. Solar power is now being used by UNHCR in many places for lighting, telecommunications and cooking. This is giving displaced populations access to clean energy to help protect limited natural resources in hosting areas. UNHCR is pursuing an initiative on sustainable energy management in refugee settlements and host regions. This has resulted in enhanced technical partnerships and in additional public and private sector funding for innovative and environmentally safe solutions.

- Efforts to strengthen existing partnerships and explore new avenues continued. Initiatives such as post-conflict and environmental-disaster management have been reinforced, with the World Conservation Union, CARE International, the Southern Alliance for Indigenous Resources and the Environmental Foundation for Africa being instrumental in supporting rehabilitation activities, disseminating tools and providing technical support in the Field.

Creating opportunities for self-reliance (GSO 3.5)

- Efforts to protect the livelihoods of refugees and asylum-seekers are ongoing in over 70 per cent of hosting countries. Livelihood programming, supported by the deployment of experts, is an essential protection tool for helping people prepare for return, resettlement or local integration, and preventing the negative consequences of protracted refugee situations.
- In 2008, technical partnerships with ILO and with the Danish and Norwegian Refugee Councils have supported the deployment of expertise to operations in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt and Yemen to address livelihoods needs identified through the SPCP protection gaps analysis. Partnerships with FAO and with NGOs are being pursued to strengthen UNHCR's work in micro-finance and livelihoods assessments.
- UNHCR's Women Leading for Livelihoods programme connects women leaders with refugee and displaced women worldwide to support training, encourage entrepreneurship and stimulate women's empowerment. By mid 2008, projects were implemented in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia, Kenya, Morocco and Serbia. Another 15 operations are preparing proposals for this initiative.

Strengthening strategic partnerships for durable solutions (GSO 6.1 and 6.4)

- UNHCR contributes to inter-agency fora that have a direct impact on the long-term wellbeing of refugees and IDPs. As the cluster approach continues to mature, UNHCR supports partners working in the three clusters it leads. UNHCR as an active partner in the inter-agency country teams, has been contributing to joint assessments, strategies and activities, and to the coordination and implementation of action plans to respond to the humanitarian needs of IDPs.
- Discussions with United Nations agencies, NGOs and other partners on the new reintegration strategy of UNHCR were completed in the first half of 2008. The draft policy was also the subject of consultations and discussions in the Standing Committee, earlier this year.
- The High Commissioner's initiative on protracted refugee situations has identified five priority situations: Afghan refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan; "1972" Burundian refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania; Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh; Eritrean refugees in Eastern Sudan; and refugees from Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina in Serbia. Protracted situations will be the topic of the second meeting of the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges in December 2008.
- Partnership with UNDP ILO, FAO, UN-HABITAT, and other members of the Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery (CWGER) has been strengthened through inter-agency livelihoods missions and approaches to land/tenure issues. A workshop on durable solutions for IDPs in the early recovery context was organized in partnership with UNDP, OCHA, and the Office of the Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of IDPs. The workshop allowed agencies to achieve a common understanding and commitment to early recovery as a window of opportunity for engagement towards durable solutions for IDPs. Moreover, a guidebook on protection

assessment in situations of conflict-induced IDPs has been published by the Protection Cluster and the CWGER.

Engaging with “Delivering as One”

- UNHCR’s engagement with the Delivering as One initiative requires the organization to be an active participant in United Nations common programming processes, namely the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). In addition to security, risk assessment and management, contingency planning, disaster preparedness and general capacity building, which already regularly involve UNHCR in United Nations Country Team consultations, offices are advocating to include refugee-hosting areas in national development plans and strategies and to promote the early engagement of development actors in supporting local integration, reintegration upon return and refugee-impacted areas.
- At a global level UNHCR is fully integrating within the United Nations Development Group and the Resident Coordinator system while planning for more substantial integration within the United Nations common regional management team. The High Commissioner is a permanent member of the undg Advisory Group.

UNHCR
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