

**Distribution of non-food items to Malian refugees in Fassala, Mauritania.**



# Responding to Emergencies

**U**NHCR EXPECTS that the massive emergency-response which started in 2011 and has continued throughout the current year will need to be sustained in 2013. Emergency preparedness and response are one of its Global Strategic Priorities. As a result, UNHCR is ready and prepared to cope with sudden, large-scale and simultaneous humanitarian emergencies; to deliver initial life-saving support within the first 72 hours of an emergency being declared; and to maintain the capacity to assist more than half a million people of concern at any given time.

Many of the humanitarian crises which began in 2011 in Africa and the Middle East have intensified, and new emergencies have erupted, such as the flight of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) into Rwanda and Uganda. Most of these crises fit UNHCR's definition of an emergency as *"any situation in which the life or well-being of refugees and persons of concern to UNHCR will be threatened unless immediate and appropriate action is taken, and which demands an extraordinary response and exceptional measures."*

In the first eight months of 2012,

UNHCR deployed a total of 197 emergency staff and standby-partner personnel to major operations such as the Syria operation (in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey), the Mali situation (in Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal), the eastern DRC situation (in Rwanda and Uganda) as well as in Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan. The first wave of two-month emergency deployments is being followed by the assignment of staff for six-month periods to ensure continuity.

Supplies for the hundreds of thousands of people of concern affected by these emergencies are channeled through a network of seven strategically located regional hubs: Accra, Amman, Copenhagen, Douala, Dubai, Isaka and Nairobi. The global stockpile in Amman has proved invaluable in 2012 for the dispatch of relief items to countries affected by the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.

#### **A CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY**

TO DEVELOP A TEAM OF SENIOR STAFF capable of managing large emergencies, in 2012 UNHCR established its second Senior Corporate Emergency Roster of personnel at the P-5 to D-2 level, two of whom were deployed during the first

eight months of the year. A new roster will be established in April 2013.

Each roster consists of 20-25 senior professional staff with proven emergency-management experience. The members are on standby for a 12-month period and can be deployed once during this time for a two- to three-month mission. The roster will also help UNHCR to meet its commitments, under the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)-led Transformative Agenda (see *Working in Partnership* chapter), to deploy senior staff to any system-wide emergency operation.

UNHCR is strengthening its internal technical capacity as well as its emergency standby arrangements with partners who possess expertise in specific areas. This should ensure the availability of enough specialists for rapid deployment to any new humanitarian crisis. Measures taken in 2011 and 2012 to build networks of staff and external experts with technical profiles in areas such as information management, shelter, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene), information and computer technology and public information, are expected to result in fully functional technical rosters by 2013.

All these rosters are complementary to UNHCR's Emergency Response Team (ERT) roster, in which 100 staff members are listed annually. The ready availability of additional senior and technical staff will allow UNHCR to find the right competencies and profiles required for each emergency. Meanwhile, the emergency deployment database is being upgraded to improve the management and tracking of staff deployments. When completed in 2013, it will provide better information on available profiles and skill sets.

## INTER-AGENCY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

UNHCR PARTICIPATES IN THE IASC Sub-Working Group (SWG) on Preparedness, and in the Inter-Agency Rapid Response Mechanism's (IARRM) Technical and Steering Group. The Director of UNHCR's Division of Emergency Security and Supply is a member of the Inter-Agency Emergency Directors' group that coordinates responses in the lead-up to and during emergencies, and advises heads of agencies in preparation for discussions at that level.

As a member of the IASC SWG on Preparedness, UNHCR contributes to system-wide efforts to strengthen Early Warning and Early Action capabilities and the development of inter-agency guidelines to deal with complex, large-scale emergencies.

## PARTNERSHIPS IN EMERGENCIES

UNHCR PARTICIPATES IN INTER-AGENCY efforts to get the most out of standby partnership arrangements. In 2012 it worked with the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), the Norwegian Refugee Council and RedR Australia on the drafting of the Joint Standby Partnership Review, to be conducted by an independent consultant. In 2013, UNHCR will work with standby partners and other UN agencies to follow up on this review.

Recognizing the critical role national and local NGOs play in responding to humanitarian crises, in September 2012 UNHCR launched a pilot project targeting selected national NGOs in Africa, the Middle East and South-West Asia. The project, implemented by UNHCR in partnership with the International Medical Corps, aims to enhance the institutional capacity of national NGOs by providing management training and tailored, on-site coaching. The objective is to enable local partners to take a greater role in emergency preparedness and response in a refugee crisis.

Upon completion of the project, organizations that have taken part are expected to be on standby for a certain period of time as implementing partners for UNHCR's emergency operations. This is a good example of a collaborative approach engaging both national and international NGOs in the shared goal of improving emergency response.

In cooperation with standby partners such as Germany's Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW) and Sweden's MSB, UNHCR has sought to enhance internal and external technical capacity in areas such as WASH, shelter, and information management, all areas where there is currently high demand. Thematic training on Information Management in Emergencies was organized in partnership with THW in 2012, while training in the areas of WASH and shelter is scheduled for late 2012. Such efforts will continue in 2013, in coordination with other UN agencies wherever possible, thereby making standby surge capacity more predictable.

In January 2012 UNHCR held a training session on emergency management in Qatar, in partnership with the Qatari authorities, as part of ongoing efforts to diversify its standby partners. Another example is the development of arrangements with the International Humanitarian Partnership through its support for several UNHCR emergency operations in the form of service packages, such as

office space and staff accommodation in operations where there is no suitable infrastructure available.

At the same time, UNHCR has stepped up efforts to harness advanced technology for emergency response. The Emergency Standby Agreement signed with the Government of Luxembourg in 2012 allows UNHCR to gain access to cutting-edge information and communications technology tailored to a humanitarian context.

#### CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING

UNHCR CONTINUES TO DEVELOP capacity-building and training programmes for emergency management. These include the Workshop on Emergency Management, held several times a year to prepare staff for emergency deployments and participation in the ERT roster; the Senior Emergency Leadership Programme, held every April to prepare staff at the P-5 to D-2 levels to lead emergency operations as members of the Senior Corporate Emergency Roster; and the Situational Emergency Training scheme, which assists regions and country operations to prepare for, and respond to, emergencies in their specific contexts. In addition, the Emergency Team Leadership Programme, an inter-agency training scheme, is made available as required.

All these programmes will continue in 2013, with Transformative Agenda-components incorporated in existing learning programmes as appropriate. UNHCR has been closely involved in the development of training related to the Transformative Agenda in 2012, both at the Principals' level (Heads of Agency) and through the IARRM. It will remain engaged in the IARRM process and inter-agency training on the response to system-wide emergencies.

The eCentre in Tokyo plays an integral role in UNHCR's emergency preparedness activities in Asia and the Pacific, working closely with governments, civil society, the United Nations at large and regional partners.

The eCentre organizes field-based training programmes and provides tailored technical support to partners. It will continue these activities in 2013, with a special focus on protection in emergencies, natural disasters, contingency planning and the strengthening of partner networks.

#### POLICY, COORDINATION AND SUPPORT

IN 2013 UNHCR WILL CONTINUE to develop and update its policies and guidance on emergencies to reflect the changing operational environment. A revised edition of the *Handbook for Emergencies*, last published in 2007, is being prepared for release in late 2013.

Policy and guidance on ways to strengthen specific areas of UNHCR's emergency response have been developed, updating procedures at both headquarters and field levels. Guidance notes were issued in April 2012 on the following topics: procedures for declaring emergencies and associated mechanisms, staffing for emergencies, inter-agency coordination in emergencies, emergency appeals, financial procedures in emergencies, and the emergency appeals process.

These documents have aligned UNHCR's policies on emergencies with those of WFP and UNICEF, as well as with the Transformative Agenda, and will be fully implemented in 2013. Policy documents on procurement in emergencies, contingency planning and reporting will also be issued in 2013.

#### A STRENGTHENED LOGISTICAL NETWORK

UNHCR CONTINUES TO BUILD A world-class supply chain for shelter and core relief items in humanitarian emergencies. This helps to ensure that a sustainable pipeline of shelter and core relief items as well as vehicles, fuel and operational equipment is swiftly established.

At the onset of an emergency, UNHCR employs a three-pronged supply-chain strategy, using airlifts, regional road and sea transport, and

“white stocks” that are goods, available to UNHCR at any time, remaining in the supplier’s warehouse or in the production line. The flexibility of this supply chain allows UNHCR to deliver emergency shelter and core relief items to more than half a million beneficiaries within 72 hours, and to serve two or three large-scale emergencies in parallel, while continuing to meet the needs of its ongoing operations.

UNHCR’s logistical network has seven supply hubs worldwide: in Europe (Copenhagen), Africa (Accra, Douala, Isaka and Nairobi) and the Middle East (Amman and Dubai). Tents have been prepositioned in strategic regional locations to facilitate timely delivery by road or sea and to complement emergency airlift operations. This logistical network proved invaluable in 2012, when the need arose to move supplies quickly from the Amman hub

generate a substantial improvement in the operating effectiveness of the vehicles used in operations, significantly reduce operating costs, improve asset control, increase staff safety and safeguard donor funds. In combination with this system, a vehicle tracking scheme will assist operations to deal with fuel and maintenance issues and improve staff security even in remote areas.

### **FACILITATING SECURITY MANAGEMENT IN EMERGENCIES AND INSECURE ENVIRONMENTS**

ACCESS TO PEOPLE OF CONCERN is essential for UNHCR if it is to provide protection and assistance both in emergencies and in ongoing operations. The deployment of field safety advisers (FSAs) during emergencies and in other high-risk operations provides qualified and up-to-date guidance on

## **IN THE FIRST EIGHT MONTHS OF 2012, UNHCR DEPLOYED A TOTAL OF 197 EMERGENCY STAFF AND STANDBY-PARTNER PERSONNEL TO MAJOR OPERATIONS**

for the Syria crisis; the Accra stockpile for the emergency in West Africa and the Sahel; and the Nairobi hub to cope with the crisis in the Horn of Africa. UNHCR will maintain and strengthen these stockpiles in 2013. Dubai and Copenhagen remain the main hubs for airlift operations.

To improve services in general, and especially in emergency operations, UNHCR will launch its Global Fleet Management (GFM) System in 2013. This will centralize vehicle stock management, with the GFM centre leasing vehicles to operations. The objectives of the GFM project are to

security and safety, both preventively and in response to incidents, reports and queries.

In 2013, in line with revised policies within the UN Security Management System (UNSMS), UNHCR will continue to enhance and adapt its approach to security to enable operations to function while mitigating existing risks to the extent possible. The UNSMS has taken a more flexible approach to enabling operations in difficult environments: the focus has moved from deciding “when to leave” to finding ways to “stay and deliver”.

In today's complex environments, where threats include improvised explosive devices and kidnapping, staying and delivering can require specialized measures. These include the structural reinforcement of buildings and the procurement of armoured vehicles and vehicle tracking systems. State-of-the-art "hardening" measures can be expensive, but where they are required by threats, there can be no alternative. UNHCR will continue to guide and monitor security budgeting and oversight, so that operations achieve full compliance with the UN Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS). Eighty-seven per cent of UNHCR's offices are MOSS-compliant.

Dealing with complex insecure environments takes more than just equipment, however. In articulating his response to today's threats, the High Commissioner has often evoked the need for a dual-track approach. While providing the necessary security hardware, it is also important for UNHCR to ensure the use of "software", such as projecting the right image, obtaining clear information and analysis and deploying smart, disciplined staff. Considerable investment has been made in analysis training for FSAs, with the aim of developing a team of security professionals who are proactive, technically proficient and able to think analytically.

The comprehensive security training programme for staff will continue to target the specific needs of operations, according to the contexts in which they work, particularly in emergencies. A range of programmes is now available, including a Security Management Exercise focused on security risk assessment and management and a Security

Management Learning Programme to help managers in the Field balance operational imperatives and staff safety. Training in communication skills is helping FSAs to present their security strategies convincingly, particularly to senior managers. Courses are also available on the analysis of security information and on how to build information processing systems in operations.

Approximately 700 senior managers and core staff have been trained through either the Senior Management Learning Programme or the Security Management Exercise. In addition, approximately 1,000 staff members have already received security-awareness training in the Field in 2011-2012, with an additional 300 expected to finish the programme by the end of 2012. Some 200 managers are to be trained in 12 security management exercises in 2013, and another 700 staff in security awareness.

Since being issued in 2011, UNHCR's *Manual on the Security of Persons of Concern* has been used in the training of FSAs as well as in existing emergency-management and leadership programmes. The manual provides best practices for dealing with recurring security threats against refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless people. ■