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ENVIRONMENT IN UNHCR

Editorial

Many people were surprised when environmental issues became a policy priority for UNHCR. Some asked why the High Commissioner for Refugees should worry about fuel-efficient stoves or whether it was more appropriate to plant trees or encourage natural regeneration? Why should she be interested in agricultural activities or environmental education? Were these priority issues for a humanitarian organisation?

While visiting refugee camps in many countries, I soon came to realise that the massive presence of refugees can have destructive effects on the environment. Conversely, the state of the environment affects the well being of refugees. Rather than drawing away from our "traditional" areas of expertise, environmental issues are closely intertwined with so much of what we do. I saw a clear need for this to become a core part of our policy. If anything, I believed that a greater commitment to protecting the environment would enrich our operations and make us more credible to global efforts.

Many countries have made extraordinary advances in managing their environment – both from legislative and practical angles. Our job is to ensure that refugees as well as refugee operations do not threaten this work and, in so doing, threaten the institution of asylum – the willingness of a country to accept refugees fleeing for their safety.

The High Commissioner, Mrs. Ogata, visiting a nursery run by UNHCR and ACORD, Uganda, June 2000

When I was first appointed as High Commissioner, few state leaders would talk to me about environmental issues. Today, this topic is often among the first points on the agenda. UNHCR's funding situation remains critical, and it is of course difficult to justify allocating funds for the environment when these resources are needed in other vital programme areas, such as health care. But I consider it essential that we continue to give environmental concerns due recognition in all of our work.

Eight years ago, during the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, we planted a seed and have watched it grow through many difficult years. Today, we have appropriate environmental policies and guidelines that have been welcomed and approved by UNHCR's Executive Committee. Through hard work and with the generous support of a small number of

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donors – together with the expertise of a much larger number of implementing agencies – we have transformed these policies into practice, bringing positive, visible benefits to refugees and local communities in dozens of countries. Governments now see that, where funding allows, UNHCR can make a difference and that we do respect the natural heritage of refugee hosting countries.

As UNHCR continues to promote and ensure sound environmental management in refugee operations, we must make sure that this essential work receives the support and attention it needs. As I leave office, I take great pleasure in seeing how well UNHCR has embraced environmental issues as a policy priority. My successor, Mr. Ruud Lubbers, is no stranger to environmental issues, and I am confident that he too will share this commitment. My sincere thanks go to all those who have helped to bring this important concern to the fore and who continue to work for our common cause – the welfare of refugees worldwide.

Sadako Ogata
High Commissioner

To find out more about Mrs Ogata's views on the environment, please refer to a special interview with the High Commissioner (www.unhcr.org)

Integrating Environmental Concerns in UNHCR

Few would question the positive impact which UNHCR has had in the past decade in delivering environment-related policy tools and practical support where this has been most needed in refugee operations.

Our role as the co-ordinator for environmental activities fits well with our mandate. Formerly viewed as a concern that *might* be addressed, environment is now very much *accepted* as a priority issue – and the sooner we take environmental issues into consideration in our work, at headquarters and in the field, the more effective we can hope to become.

Evidence that this is happening can be seen through:

- the growing range of environment-support activities undertaken in an equally increasing number of countries;
- the mounting interest of staff to attend regional environment training workshops, including their willingness to take on additional training tasks in their own time;
- an enhanced commitment by some field offices to consider environmental concerns at critical stages of operations;
- a steadily increasing number of environment focal points in the field;
- increased requests for technical assistance and guidance from implementing partners; and
- increased demand for our publications and guidelines.

Although we are definitely making progress towards integrating environmental issues and con-

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cerns at various stages of refugee operations, there remains much to be done. This was also clearly stated during the 17th Standing Committee Meeting in February 2000: "*There remains a constant need to ensure that 'environment' is not considered as an add-on but that it is taken into account at key times during each refugee operation. While a successful start has been made to mainstream environment into UNHCR's operations, this crucial activity should not be viewed as having been completed*".

To reach this level of achievement, much more resources and support needs to be made available to ensuring that environment is adequately considered. A recent EESS survey, for example, showed that 14 of the 47 offices who responded to a questionnaire did not yet apply UNHCR's 1996 Environmental Guidelines to their work. Likewise, when we look at UNHCR's Country Operations Programme, it is clear that although Branch Offices are requested to consider environment when completing these programmes, the manner in which this is done is far from consistent.

Realising that there is still much to be done, we, in EESS, have put together an ambitious work programme for 2001. While continuing many of our traditional activities, a new suite of activities are designed to deliver more targeted and efficient support to the field and headquarters. Among the activities foreseen is:

- increased assistance and guidance to selected country programmes to identify where and how environmental issues might be addressed and dealt with;
- proactive actions to address recognised or emerging needs. Planned activities include the development of new environmental assessment and monitoring tools, additional model projects which seek to catalyse action (and funding) through implementing our environmental principles, and new, more user-friendly, guidelines for environmental management;
- to learn from experience, for example from an EESS-supported environmental education workshop in Africa – to be organised in conjunction with UNESCO PEER – and an inter-agency workshop to identify appropriate and best practices in environmental management in refugee operations;
- a more structured and dynamic environmental management training programme, in line with UNHCR's revised training strategy;
- closer links with programmes to increase compliance with UNHCR's Environmental Policy; and
- strengthened project and programme co-ordination at the field level, including better working relations with implementing partners.

Given the current financial crisis facing UNHCR, we are acutely conscious of the need to make each of our activities as timely, efficient and cost-effective as possible. We cannot do this alone, but depend on your co-operation, guidance and support to enable us to assist with the design, implementation and follow-up on specific environment-related activities that will help enrich country programmes and ultimately help mitigate the environmental impacts of refugees and refugee operations.

Aziz Ahamed
Chief, EESS

Thailand: Empowering Refugees in Environmental Management

Thailand provides sanctuary for over 100,000 refugees from Myanmar. In 1999, for security reasons, some 15,000 refugees from Mawker and Huay Kalok camps were relocated to a new site at Umpium. Located in the Mae Sot Forest Reserve, a protected area under Thai law, particular attention is required to ensure that environmental degradation is minimised.

The Challenge: Preventing environmental degradation

While the hills above the camp are well forested, predominant characteristics of the site are its steep, grass-covered slopes which are drained by three streams. Environmental problems identified in Umpium by UNHCR included soil erosion, drainage control, water contamination and tree cutting.

Recognising the potential for environmental degradation, EESS helped formulate a programme of mitigation and rehabilitation. Co-ordinated by a Thai non-governmental organisation, the

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Umpium: Emerging gullies in disturbed areas

Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees (COERR), refugees set about improving drainage works, protecting the slopes and planting trees in communal areas before the onset of the rainy season, thus minimising the risk of possible land slides. With earmarked environmental funds, EESS was also able to provide an Engineering and Environmental Advisor for five months to assist COERR.

The Response: Empowering refugees through environmental groups

Once preliminary work had been completed, environmental education workshops organized by COERR served as the starting point for developing a refugee-led approach to establish a refugee environmental group. Additional capacity building support from COERR is enabling the refugees to develop skills to manage local environmental affairs. As a result, refugee environmental leaders and COERR now coordinate environmental issues with the Thai authorities, UNHCR, other non-governmental organisations and local villagers.

Providing Solutions for Refugees to choose

Home gardens are one example of how COERR – through the refugee environment group – provides seeds and information such as planting techniques or soil stabilization methods to households. Each family then decides how to care for allocated land, what to plant on this, and how they maintain trees or crops.

Refugees at Umpium are very keen to plant fruit tree seedlings but, until recently, these have only been available outside of the camp. Now, however, tree nurseries in the camp provide seedlings – usually indigenous species – to refugees. Each seedling given out is recorded to help control demand, provide a record for follow-up care, and to impress upon the refugees that this is a serious business. Given the initial success and demand, this scheme seems set to continue. Future plans may include establishing some type of fee for the more popular seedlings, for example, by having families provide volunteer labour in exchange for seedlings.

Phob Phra District: Forest Department Nursery

Awareness Raising: From the household to the community

While awareness for environmental issues increased at the household level, there was a clear need to extend this to a much larger community. Awareness campaigns have turned out to be an effective means of improving environmental conditions on communal lands within the camp and beyond. On World Environment Day, COERR staged a camp-wide planting programme in which more than 30,000 trees were set. Schools, religious groups, communities and government officials all took part. A similar approach is now being used for waste management, by controlling garbage and household wastes, and is set to expand into areas outside the camp. Improvements are also foreseen with regards drainage control and water contamination, especially as any local contamination of the streams passing through the camp will affect downstream users.

Although much has been achieved to date, a considerable challenge remains as changing people's attitudes and behaviour takes time and patience. Added to this are tensions which exist in a refugee setting, such as conflicts between groups within the camp or with local villagers. Such remaining concerns should not, however, detract from the fact that COERR, with the support of UNHCR, has positively affected the lives of these refugees through supporting their initiative for environmental management and training.

James Hawryluk
EESS Environment Consultant, Thailand

Kenya: Firewood Availability and Resource Management Planning around Dadaab Camps

Since the early 1990s, more than 100,000 Somalian refugees have been accommodated in three camps around Dadaab township, eastern Kenya. Given the semi-arid climate of this region, fears have been expressed about the environmental impact of collecting large amounts of fuelwood and other wood-based resources.

Dead wood has, until now, played a central role in the energy supply of the Dadaab camps. This has been accomplished through spontaneous harvesting by refugees and an organised firewood supply project, a measure introduced in 1998 to limit the number of sexual assaults on refugee women collecting firewood.

As fuelwood availability, and harvesting has become a major concern in this region, EESS commissioned a scientific survey of wood availability within a 30km radius of the camps. Conducted by EESS Consultant, Mr Nicolas Blondel, the study set out to measure the actual amount of firewood available, and to prepare a management plan for rational and sustainable firewood collection.

Indefinite Availability of Fuelwood at Current Levels

The survey established that dead wood, to a great extent, is a renewable and sustainable resource. The collection of such wood is almost in balance with the rate at which dead wood accumulates. Sufficient resources are available within a 30km radius for both the refugees hosted in the camps as well as the local population. Thus, the surrounding vegetation can, if properly managed, produce all necessary resources (fuelwood, building and fencing materials, for example) without significant damage to the environment. However, one factor that is essential for this situation to be upheld is that the collection system based on donkey carts continues to spread the pressure thinly over this area. To concentrate in one or even a few areas will upset this balance and could alter the situation completely.

Fuelwood Survey and Free Fuelwood Distribution

Among the many observations from this study is that the supply of free fuelwood to refugees on a large scale cannot be justified on environmental grounds. The fuelwood project – originally launched for humanitarian reasons – is, to some extent, environmentally sound as it facilitates the use of available dead wood in order to avoid live wood cutting around the camps. Possible negative effects, in environmental terms, are a higher risk of poaching as harvesting operations develop further and an overall increase in fuelwood consumption in the camps as the supply chain becomes smoother and simpler. Thus, should justification of this project ever be contested, the environmental benefits it provides should be carefully compared to the high costs that it implies.

Establishing a Resource Management Plan

A resource management plan has subsequently been established on the basis of this survey, providing further guidance to management. Three scenarios are envisaged given current rates for wood collection, an increased rate, or a drop in the amount of free fuel being provided. While the plan strongly advocates against any further increase in supply, a range of actions and measures are proposed to deal with continuing supplies at the current level and to accommodate a lower level of free firewood provision. Actions are focused around issues such as diversifying those species harvested, improving the tendering and transport systems, improving monitoring mechanisms, and reorienting ongoing environmental activities in and around all three camps.

Lessons to Note

Apart from the obvious site-specific value of this study for management in and around the Dadaab camps, it also demonstrates that scientific measures are available for detailed and precise assessments of the carrying capacity for selected natural resources, and environmental impacts in refugee-affected areas. Such assessments and surveys should continue to serve as a first step from which environmental management decisions are taken.

Based on reports by Nicolas Blondel, EESS Environmental Consultant

Afghanistan: Integrated Environmental Protection and Management Programme in Returnees Areas

Social and economic crises have rocked Afghanistan since 1978. Years of warfare, conflicts and hostilities have affected all aspect of life. Although many Afghan refugees have now returned home, more then three million people still remain outside the country but may be expected to return in the coming years. When this happens, additional pressure will be brought to bear on an already strained environment – a situation which needs to be avoided at all costs.

Addressing Priority Needs

During 1999, the Agency for Rehabilitation and Energy Conservation in Afghanistan (AREA), in cooperation with UNHCR, started an environmental protection and management pilot programme in Kabul, Lagman and Nangarhar provinces – three returnee areas in Afghanistan.

Introducing biogas technology to 45 pilot households was one innovative part of this integrated programme – a deliberate move to address the chronic shortage of fuelwood in the regions. A preliminary assessment of the impact of biogas on fuelwood consumption has indicated that even in the early phase of trials this has had a positive contribution towards reducing fuelwood collection and protecting local vegetation. On a daily basis, the 45 biogas units produce 85,500 litres (85m^3) of gas that can replace 299kg of fuelwood. In a single year, the 30,780m^3 gas produced will substitute 107,730kg of fuelwood. When waste from toilets are plumbed into the biogas plant, gas production can increase by an additional 20 per cent – a move that equates to a saving of almost 130,000kg of fuelwood.

Witnessing Multiple Benefits

In addition to such impressive savings on scarce natural resources, additional benefits of this programme are improved agricultural practices (using residue from biogas plants as fertilizers), improved environmental hygiene within households, and overall better livelihood security.

Returnees were, understandably, hesitant to adopt the technology in the first instance, but once they had visited the pilot plant operation and seen the benefits for themselves, everyone wanted to have the technology in their homes.

Mr Haji Noor Ahmmad, who returned with his family from Pakistan to Kareze-e-Kaber Village, Nangarhar Province, recently told AREA's social workers that: "My family, especially my wife and daughters, put pressure on me to go back to Pakistan because it is very difficulty to get fuelwood here and the available cow dung creates too much smoke. At the same time I don't have enough money to buy fuel. I can hardly meet other basic living requirements. We were at the stage of leaving our village again when I heard about biogas. My wife urged me to request the project staff for assistance to build a plant. I did so and they heartily helped me. Now I have my own biogas plant which meets our needs for gas (fuel) and provides good fertilizer for the next cultivation season. Moreover, we have a clean house yard, which has never been like this before. To my surprise, my wife – through her savings from the sale of handcrafts – has managed to pay the instalments for the cost of the unit."

Constructing a biogas plant

Witnessing how beneficial innovations such as this can be for refugees and returnees is always gratifying, especially when as a result of such actions – and peoples' willingness to try these new practices – the local environment can be given a chance to recover some of its former condition. Promoted together with other simple practices and awareness raising campaigns, this work of AREA is expected to carry on producing many benefits for refugees, local communities and, gradually, the environment for quite some time to come.

S. Najibullha
Programme Manager, AREA

Geographical Information and the Environment: Modern Tools for Practical Applications

Geographical parameters are increasingly becoming important components of environmental management programmes – even in refugee operations. At issue might be the proximity of a refugee camp to a sensitive ecological site, or a change in forest cover due to the collection of fuelwood by refugees. Geographical data is also useful for planning purposes, especially for helping identify potential camp sites, as well as keeping track of developments at older sites, as they evolve. By noting the location of where field information is collected – with precise geographical co-ordinates – and storing this information in databases, UNHCR is not only building up its institutional memory, but also the ability of linking the surveyed parameters to other sectors and themes through geographical information systems (GIS).

Traditional field techniques for collecting environmental information combined with new tools are the foundation for comprehensive environmental studies. Examples of such tools now being used by UNHCR include global positioning system (GPS) receivers, aerial and satellite images, and GIS. By gathering data in such a standardised manner, management and information sharing become far easier. Improved decision-making can also be expected.

Global Positioning Systems

GPS receivers are small devices, the size of a cellular telephone, used to record the exact geographic position of, for example, a refugee camp, water points or clusters of trees in a camp or elsewhere. Information is then stored in a database from which maps – with different layers of information – can be produced. New, more user-friendly, systems means that these receivers can be easily used in the field.

Aerial and Satellite Images

The use of aerial photographs and satellite images has recently become far more practical for UNHCR. With user-friendly analysis software and improved computer capacity, these sources of information serve as useful documents for assessing environmental situations at different scales. With current technology, details such as individual tents and trees can even be defined on satellite images – a system that is bound to find widespread application in future humanitarian operations.

Geographical Information Systems

Through gathering data based on a common geographical framework, relevant parameters can be mapped in relation to each other, and a comprehensive analysis of the situation carried out using a GIS. By plotting two or more layers of data, for example, the co-ordinates of a proposed camp (as determined using a GPS) and the position of a country's protected areas (such as national parks and forest reserves – the co-ordinates of many of which are already available from specialist agencies) planners and decision-makers are able to quickly visualise whether the intended location of the camp would pose a threat to any protected area. The findings might, in this instance, show that the camp should be positioned further away from such an ecologically sensitive zone. When such an exercise is repeated for other variables, UNHCR is able to base its recommendations on site locations on the best available information. Likewise, such information can be used to advise governments to encourage them to not opt for such sites, if it is apparent that environmental integrity could or would be jeopardised.

Detailed satellite image of Beldangi refugee camp, Nepal and nearby river. This image is part of the EC supported Environmental Monitoring using High-Resolution Satellite Images (ENVIREF) study. Image copyright Space Imaging, image processing Satellus.

Jean-Yves Bouchardy and Einar Bjorgo
Geographic Information and Mapping Unit, UNHCR

Nepal: Bio-engineering to mitigate Water-induced Hazards

Preventing water-induced hazards such as flooding, excessive waste water accumulation or erosion are considerations that need to be taken into account in developing and managing refugee camps. Yet, gully or stream bed erosion, undercutting or breaching of river banks, inundation of low-lying areas, and water logging due to high groundwater tables are examples of water induced hazards already experienced in refugee camps in different countries. Such incidences adversely affect the living conditions in camps, mostly for children and women, and should receive more attention in our programmes.

Bhutanese refugees in Jhapa, Nepal, for example, have witnessed the destruction of some of their shelters and community facilities, have has access routes cut off – often for weeks at a time – and have had to deal with land degradation and conflicts with host communities on account of such environment-related events. Such hazards could have been avoided had adequate attention been given at the outset to camp site selection and development.

Applying Bio-engineering

Techniques

Supplementing classical engineering approaches with the experience of surrounding communities, Sub-Office Jhapa has in recent years begun to address the problem by employing bio-engineering techniques. In this, native trees, shrubs and grasses are used in conjunction with reinforcing materials to prevent erosion and land degradation. Although it looks straightforward at first, experience has shown that this practice requires a thorough understanding of the bio-physical environment, the choice of plants to encourage root growth, water absorbtion capacity and the like, and the hydrological, geomorphological and water hydraulics patterns of the area.

In 1999, Sub-Office Jhapa, through its implementing partner the Nepal Red Cross Society, launched a pilot project in Beldangi-I camp employing bio-engineering principles and structural protection measures. This approach was found to be very effective, as bio-engineering techniques alone are not adequate in situations where severe (gully/streambed and riverbank) erosion are experienced. The satellite image contained in Article by Bouchardy/Bjorgo p.7 shows the riverbank next to Beldangi Camp, which has been subject to bio-engineering works.

Several training workshops were organised to raise awareness among refugees and local people of the problems and the approaches being recommended to tackle the problems. Inspiration for this approach came from a successful project in the adjoining Madhumalla village, which, like many other villages in similar situations in Nepal, suffered from flooding and subsequent destruction of valuable agricultural lands during the monsoon season. Since the village launched its project in the early 1990s, it has started to reap benefits, among which are relief from flood hazards, and the reclamation of 80 hectares of land, which will shortly be ready for commercial agroforestry.

This lesson from Nepal points to the fact that bio-engineering is not only less costly and environmentally friendly, but is also easy to implement with local know-how and resources. Indeed, if carefully designed and implemented, this could become a more widely used approach towards mitigating water-induced hazards in refugee camps.

Dinesh Shrestha
Senior Water Development Officer, EESS

Photo Credits: *Page 1, UNHCR/P. Stromberg; Page 4, M. Owen; Page 6, AREA; Page 7, UNHCR/PCS/GIMU; Page 9, A. Jones; Page 11, UNHCR/C. Sattlberger.*

Macedonia: Applying Permaculture in Rehabilitation of Cegrane Refugee Camp

At the height of the 1999 Kosovo refugee crisis, the Cegrane refugee camp – situated on the Rudina foothills in western Macedonia – housed over 40,000 refugees. Managed by CARE International, as refugees repatriated, consideration turned to the future development of the campsite using permaculture as a framework for rehabilitation.

The Concept

Permaculture – made up of the two root words, 'permanent' and 'culture' – is a design science that aims to harmonise productive systems with natural features of landscapes and cultures. The outcome of permaculture design is a system that maximizes diversity, minimizes waste and places different elements of a system – houses, animal units, streams, forests and the like – in mutually supportive relationships.

The permaculture design in Cegrane integrates the physical rehabilitation of the site with the development of a permaculture training institute and development of various on-site small businesses. Overall, the approach aimed to overcome any physical damage caused to the site by compaction, terracing and the spreading of gravel to provide a suitable base for construction, while at the same time establishing longer-term productivity. It also addressed local issues related to the lack of employment, vulnerable households, and lack of municipal sanitation systems.

The original permaculture design was developed with local stakeholders. This was then presented to the Macedonian government and international donors, with UNHCR support. Management of the project is now moving from CARE International and is, at the time of writing, currently placed with the Permaculture and Peacebuilding Centre, a local organisation that co-operates with local stakeholders.

Summer kitchen gardens and accommodation facilities, Cegrane

From Planning to Implementation

The project design involved four project phases over two years. The initial phase established earthworks consisting of 7.2km of swales (earth mounds on contours) in order to trap water in the landscape and allow for infiltration. This also provided the basis for site revegetation. The subsequent two phases focused on the development of structures incorporating passive solar design and the use of alternative and recycled materials, vegetable gardens, a children's garden, the inclusion of small animal systems, construction of an amphitheatre, and further vegetative stabilization of the site. Education through permaculture design courses and seminars has been a feature of all phases, and more than 600 students have graduated from these courses. There are now six fully qualified local permaculture teachers. A business plan for the site has been developed for the final 12-month phase of the project to make use of the infrastructure now in place.

Lessons Learned

The project has highlighted the value of permaculture as a rehabilitation approach for degraded landscapes, which is appropriate to refugee camp rehabilitation. Additionally, there is great scope to include the permaculture approach in the design/establishment of emergency human settlements, management and rehabilitation. This integration has the potential to significantly reduce pollution, environmental damage and life cycle costs associated with such settlements, with associated improvements in conditions and opportunities for residents and surrounding communities.

Andrew Jones
Project Manager, Cegrane

Environmental Training: a New Look

Regional Environmental Management Workshops

Regional Environmental Management Workshops are fundamental to UNHCR's effort to mainstream environmental concerns and issues related to refugee operations. The goal is not to train participants to become environmental specialists, but rather to enhance the mainstreaming ability of staff involved in such operations. Thus, the objectives of the training workshops are to:

- raise awareness of environmental issues and help identify the main environmental impacts in refugee and refugee-like situations;
- make participants familiar with certain approaches – lessons learned and best practices - to address environmental impacts and problems;
- integrate environmental concerns into everyday operations and enable participants to incorporate and mainstream these concerns into planning, management and the execution of UNHCR projects and activities; and
- promote a thought process by which participants ask the "right" questions concerning the environment at the "right" time, while involving the "right" people and/or agencies.

Adjusting to UNHCR's New Learning Strategy

In June/July 2000, some 60 participants from Anglophone and Francophone countries in Central and West Africa attended two EESS-organised workshops in Conakry, Guinea.

When planning for these workshops, particular thought was given to improving the delivery process over previous workshops, making the workshops more cost-effective, aiming for a higher impact on participants, and bringing the training approach more in line with UNHCR's revised training strategy.

Taking these concerns into account, a three-phased training programme was initiated, consisting of:

- a pre-workshop phase aimed at raising participants' awareness of general environmental issues and concerns in refugee operations;
- the workshop, which was the occasion for learning and sharing information on a broad range of issues; and
- a post-workshop phase aimed at ensuring that participants apply the gained knowledge and skills in their work place. Currently underway, participants are allowed several months to consider the training experience and then report on the added value – if any – of the workshop, through completion of a worksheet.

Feedback from these workshops will, as before, be used to further develop the overall training programme. It is, for example, envisaged to broaden coverage of physical sectors such as physical planning, shelter, water and environmental sanitation. These, together with efforts to maintain these events as cost-effective, and as locally and regionally appropriate as possible will continue to receive attention in the coming year.

Enhancing Impacts: Spin-off and refresher workshops

Reactions to the workshops to date have, in large, surpassed expectations. This, we interpret, in a positive manner in so far as the information being given to participants – which range from UNHCR Programme Officers to implementing agencies and government officials – is seen as relevant and is most certainly welcomed. While continuing to revise our central training programme to make it as relevant as possible, EESS is also keen to launch – and seek support for – two new training initiatives: "refresher" workshops and "spin-off" workshops.

The first of these is intended to allow former workshop participants to attend a more focused training workshop, the main intention being to revisit some of the most topical issues and concerns in environmental management. Participants will also be required to express specific problems they have dealt with in the recent past and to present their own personal experiences in addressing environmental issues.

Spin-off workshops, in contrast, depend entirely on the initiative of participants from previous workshops organising their own mini environmental management workshops. A few such initiatives have already taken place in Liberia and Tanzania – and perhaps elsewhere – with phenomenal success. We know that more are planned in other countries and strongly encourage any such actions as these events greatly extend the value added from the regional workshops to more local and focused contexts. Some sup-

(Continued on page 11)

port materials such as publications can be obtained free of charge from EESS to help with such meetings, and we are always happy to assist with designing programmes and advising on the structure and content of such workshops. At the same time, we are also keen to know how these succeed, so please do let us know.

Jarl Krausing
Associate Programme Officer (Environment), EESS

ENVIRONMENT IN BRIEF

« Safeguarding the environment is one of the foundations of peace and security»

Kofi A. Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations

☞ Interested in environmental management in refugee situations? EESS is updating its Consultants' Roster and is looking for suitably experienced consultants and volunteers in topics related to environmental management. Interested? Please mail krausing@unhcr.org for an application form.

☞ Reacting to a special plea from UNHCR's Private Sector Fundraising Section, donors in Germany and the USA have enabled important anti-erosion measures to be taken in Mtendeli camp, Tanzania, and provided newly arrived Eritrean refugees in eastern Sudan with instant access to, and training in the use of, fuel-efficient stoves. Details of other projects in need of funding can be obtained from our website www.unhcr.org, or from the contact above.

☞ EESS has just launched a new project in Chiapas, Mexico, to identify ways of integrating environmental components into income generating activities and identify a sustainable development strategy for repatriated Guatemalan refugees.

☞ In September 2000, EESS participated in a UNEP-led mission to assess the environmental impacts of refugees in Albania and Macedonia, following the Balkan war. Findings indicate a very limited impact in both countries thanks, in large, to precautionary measures taken in both countries.

☞ Two further regional environmental management training workshops were held in 2000 for countries in West Africa. Highly successful spin-off workshops have also been initiated in Liberia and Tanzania for UNHCR and implementing partner staff.

☞ David Stone has been appointed Senior Technical Officer (Environment), replacing Chris Talbot, who has taken up new duties as Senior Technical Officer (Education) in HCDS/HQ. No stranger to many of our operations, David is available to assist field offices in any environment-related matter, and will continue to promote environmental awareness and compliance in field and headquarters programmes.

☞ Responding to initial interests from many Branch Offices, EESS plans to further investigate the need for an inter-office guideline on sound environmental practices for field and HQ use.

Key Environmental Publications

- ***The following key environment publications are available upon request. (As some of our publications are currently under revision, only one copy of each publication will be available).***

TITLE	YEAR	LANGUAGE
Environmental Guidelines	1996	English
Principes directeurs en matière d'Environnement	1996	French
Directivas para el Medio Ambiente	1996	Spanish
UNHCR Environmental Guidelines: Domestic Energy in Refugee Situations	1998	English
UNHCR Environmental Guidelines: Forestry in Refugee Situations	1998	English
UNHCR Environmental Guidelines: Livestock in Refugee Situations	1998	English
Environmentally-Friendlier Procurement Guidelines	1997	English
Refugee Operations & Environmental Management - Selected Lessons Learned	1998	English
Opérations d'Aide aux Réfugiés & Gestion de l'Environ. – Quelques Leçons Apprises	1998	French
Refugee Operations & Environ. Managt-Key Principles for Decision-Making	1998	English
Opér. d'Aide aux Réf. & Gestion de l'Environ. – Principes Clés pour la Prise de Décision	1998	French
Environmental Management within Refugee Operations - Training Module	1999	English
Evaluation of Energy Saving Options for Refugees: Solar Cooker, Ethiopia	1998	English
Evaluation of Energy Saving Options for Refugees: Grass Burning Stove, Tanzania	1998	English
Evaluation of Energy Saving Options for Refugees: Grass Burning Stove, Uganda	1998	English

- ***Should you wish to receive the full list of technical publications available in EESS, please request this from Evelyne Raisin (E-mail:*** raisin@unhcr.org ***– Fax 00 41 22 739 7371 – Tel 00 41 22 739 8553 or mail: UNHCR/ EESS-TS01, Case Postale 2500, CH-1211 Geneva 2 Depôt).***

Contact us:

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