

UNHCR'S EXPANDED ROLE IN SUPPORT OF THE INTER-AGENCY RESPONSE TO
INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT SITUATIONS

I. Summary

1. At the global level, UNHCR cluster leads continue to refine and develop their tools and services in areas such as staffing capacity, technical guidance, and information management. UNHCR is also in the process of studying the eventual effects of the expanded engagement with IDPs in relation to the protection of refugees in ongoing operations.
2. Generally speaking, UNHCR is successfully assuming its leadership role under the cluster approach in the four pilot countries, and most recently in Lebanon and Côte d'Ivoire. However, to judge its performance more systematically, the Office will need to use measurable impact and performance indicators which would be agreed upon with the country operations. The country offices are currently working on their 2007 IDP special programmes, and, together with the Global Clusters, a consolidated 2007 workplan including these indicators will be finalized shortly.
3. In non-cluster pilot countries, UNHCR is working collaboratively with governments, NGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, and United Nations agencies to respond to other IDP crises. In these countries, UNHCR's expertise in protection, emergency shelter, and camp coordination/camp management greatly contribute to the overall strategic humanitarian action plans and relief efforts that benefit hundreds of thousands of IDPs.
4. Internally, UNHCR is actively taking steps to improve its own operational capacity to ensure UNHCR staff members have the skills, resources, and information to undertake their leadership role effectively. UNHCR is reflecting on the last nine months to assess its cluster leadership performance thus far and set new goals and indicators for the months ahead. UNHCR is also addressing the slow, rigid process of deploying UNHCR staff with the development of an internal roster of qualified candidates to assist with future IDP operations.
5. UNHCR cluster leads have also actively contributed to inter-cluster processes to further develop what the cluster leadership approach means in both theory and practice. Stronger relationships with other protection partners are increasingly operational at both headquarters and field levels.
6. As IDP operations are increasingly mainstreamed into UNHCR's overall programming, further clarification is still required about the ongoing need for Special Budgets. It is hoped that within the context of the ExCom discussions, a decision will be made to mainstream the Special Programmes into the regular budget by 2008.

7. Funding also remains a critical issue. Donors have been extremely generous in funding the global clusters, as well as the Uganda and Timor-Leste operations. However, UNHCR's success in other cluster countries and IDP operations will in part depend on the resources available for programme implementation. In some situations, UNHCR's leadership role may be compromised if it lacks operational capacity, particularly in terms of staff and geographical coverage.

II. Introduction

8. During the 36th meeting of the Standing Committee from 26-28 June 2006, member States reaffirmed their strong support for UNHCR's expanded role in support of the inter-agency response to internal displacement situations. They encouraged the Office to continue to strengthen its leadership role for IDPs in conflict situations in the areas of protection, camp coordination/camp management, and emergency shelter. Member States recognized however, that UNHCR needed to invest additional resources and time to fulfil these new responsibilities. They pledged their support both politically and financially as witnessed by the much appreciated sizeable cash contributions both to the Global Cluster Appeal as well as to the country operations.

9. Recognizing the greater responsibility associated with this new role and the time required to be fully operational on these new responsibilities, member States requested UNHCR to set a road map with clear objectives, tangible activities and impact indicators that would be used in the coming months and years to measure UNHCR's performance in this field. Some countries also noted that an institutional shift in focus and skill set would be required to successfully fulfil this responsibility, and requested information about plans to mainstream the IDP leadership role in programming and training. Other Members requested information on UNHCR's activities to expand its operational capacity, including the development of emergency rosters. Finally, recognizing the need to maintain the dialogue between member States and the Office on progress made on this expanded role, the Standing Committee requested frequent updates on the successes and challenges of UNHCR's IDP operations in both the cluster pilot countries and in its other IDP operations.

10. This paper will seek to address all of these concerns, and more generally to provide an update on UNHCR's activities over the three months following the June Standing Committee meeting. The first section of this paper will provide an update on UNHCR's global cluster leadership activities. The second and third sections will outline recent activities in the cluster pilot countries and developments in UNHCR's other IDP operations. The fourth section will describe the work of UNHCR's inter-departmental IDP Support Team to facilitate UNHCR's overall IDP operations. Finally, the paper will draw some conclusions and discuss next steps.

III. Update on global cluster activities

a. Camp coordination and camp management cluster

11. The global Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster (CCCM) is focusing its activities on two issues: training and information management support. Cluster members have begun to sensitize country teams on the conceptual underpinnings of the cluster approach and CCCM through training events. The first training was held in June in Addis Ababa/Ethiopia with participants from Uganda, Sudan, and other countries from the Horn of Africa. Upcoming trainings are planned for Asia in September in Manila/Philippines, benefiting representatives

from Sri Lanka and Nepal, and French-speaking Africa in October in Bamako/Mali, with participation from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, and the Central African Republic. Moreover, with the expertise provided by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), these training events will produce more than 50 trainers in United Nations and international agencies and NGOs familiar with the "Camp Management Toolkit." At the global level, the cluster is updating its guidance material.

12. The CCCM cluster provides information management technical support to UNHCR operations in Uganda and Somalia. Based on this support, UNHCR Somalia is developing a population tracking system, while the team in Uganda is collecting, analysing and sharing baseline data on more than 100 IDP camps.

b. Emergency shelter cluster

13. In accordance with its implementation plan, since June 2006 the Emergency Shelter Cluster Working Group developed a number of guidance documents and tools. These include the "Guidelines for Assessment in Emergencies," which are now being tested in the Lebanon crisis. The Working Group also prepared a comprehensive document entitled, "Lessons Learned from the Pakistan Earthquake." This document has been shared with all the cluster members and incorporated in future planning. The list of Non-Food Items for stockpiling has been reviewed on the basis of discussions within the Emergency Shelter Cluster members in order to suit the reality of the Cluster. Finally, a "Monitoring and Reporting Tools" document was prepared and distributed to Cluster members for discussion and finalization.

14. Providing direct assistance to the Field, the Cluster supported the deployment of a technical expert to Beirut to set up the Emergency Shelter Cluster in Lebanon. The success of this effort is shown by well-attended meetings with participation of all the stakeholders, and the creation of a Joint Technical Action Plan that built on initial technical damage assessment missions that took place 19-21 August 2006. A shelter expert has also been fielded to Somalia in order to establish an Emergency Shelter Cluster. The expert supports UNHCR's field office to conceptualize and form the Cluster in cooperation with UN-HABITAT. The Cluster also facilitated joint missions with UN-Habitat and the Danish Refugee Council to Garowe, Bossasso and Hargeisa to assess a shelter prototype.

15. To enhance the capacity of Emergency Shelter Cluster at the global level, an NGO Reference Group was established in connection with the Cluster. UNHCR also developed its own Resource Group to draw on existing best practices within UNHCR.

16. As of September 2006, two technical staff, on secondment from NRC and Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) respectively, are supporting cluster activities at the global level and are also available for immediate deployment to the Field depending on operational requirements.

17. The Emergency Shelter Cluster has a number of activities planned up until the end of 2006. Among these, training of cluster members, in coordination with OCHA and others is of paramount importance. Accordingly, UNHCR's regular Workshop for Emergency Management (WEM) will be enhanced to encompass the cluster approach and, more particularly, emergency shelter issues. Other workshops will be organized focusing on emergency shelter. In the context of these endeavours, a training module will be developed for shelter experts.

18. The Working Group is also finalizing a website for the Emergency Shelter Cluster. Guidelines and strategies for different scenarios and standard operating procedures will be further developed. Finally, UNHCR is in the process of strengthening the response capacity of UNHCR as the cluster lead by deploying technical officers based in Africa who will have global coverage of issues that are of direct relevance to the emergency shelter cluster if and when required.

c. Protection cluster

19. The positive response from donors regarding the Global Cluster Appeal has enabled a rapid response of support to the Field. Discussions with managers in field operations revealed that staffing was the most critical and urgent need. During the reporting period, there have been six (6) SURGE deployments (project managed with International Rescue Committee) to Pakistan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic (out of eight so far during 2006) and two requests are pending for deployments to Colombia and Chad. There have been 11 ProCap deployments (Tier 1) during this period, of which six are deployed to UNHCR and one indirectly supports UNHCR. UNICEF and OHCHR have also made use of ProCap. For ProCap Tier 2 deployments, 40 people were trained by OCHA of whom 13 were deployed and five were seconded to UNHCR (Timor-Leste, Kenya, Pakistan, Mexico, and Liberia). There have also been internal UNHCR emergency deployments to both Timor-Leste and Lebanon where senior protection staff chaired and facilitated the protection cluster in the case of Lebanon and the protection working group in Timor-Leste

20. Staff with the right profile and relevant skills and experience are providing critical support to the success of the cluster approach and especially with regard to protection. To support the development of skills and knowledge, the Handbook on IDP Protection is being developed with several agencies contributing substantive inputs to various chapters. This manual will be a practical tool for those working in IDP operations and will hopefully be produced towards the end of this year. Training workshops focusing on key protection issues in internal displacement are being planned for the last quarter of 2006.

21. Since June, three global protection cluster meetings have focused on gender, working modalities as well as inter-agency activities in the context of the Uganda IDP operation and the Lebanon crisis. The meetings were well attended by UN agencies, NGOs and ICRC. This has provided a forum for open discussion between all participants and will continue.

22. The cluster countries have finalized protection strategies and are in varying phases of carrying out needs assessments. UNHCR is also in the process of studying the eventual effects of the expanded engagement with IDPs in relation to the protection of refugees in ongoing operations. This review, which will look at the risk mitigation strategies briefly discussed with member States at the June meeting, is being carried out in consultation with field operations. Risk identification would likely differ for each situation, however, the key risks identified at present are: admissibility to territory (access to asylum); whether States will assess UN involvement in IDP operations as an indication for safe return; the diminishing importance being given to strengthening national asylum procedures and institutions; resources (human and material) which could be diverted from refugee activities to IDP activities; involvement with IDPs undermining the concept of neutrality, etc. Risk mitigation strategies would need to be individually tailored for each specific situation, depending on the risks. An assessment of potential impacts needs to be monitored over a certain period of time in order to be able to detect trends and to correlate these to involvement in IDP situations. UNHCR and operational

partners would need to remain fully engaged with governments on asylum matters and maintain awareness for any potential negative effects. Funding interests can also affect the importance given to various aspects in UNHCR's operations given the current funding mechanisms, e.g. under-funded Annual Budgets and fully funded Special Budgets. Risk mitigation strategies would be necessary for ongoing operations. However, if the Office assesses that accepting a role in an IDP operation would have a negative impact on the institution of asylum, UNHCR may not get involved at all.

IV. Achievements and challenges in cluster pilot countries

a. Democratic Republic of the Congo

23. Providing humanitarian assistance and protection in a country the size of western Europe that is facing a multitude of gross human right violations in different parts of the country is a challenge. Rolling out the cluster approach in the Democratic Republic of the Congo within this same context is also full of challenges, particularly given the diversity of beneficiaries who include refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs and returnees. Under these circumstances, UNHCR has struggled to define, in concrete terms, its role as cluster co-lead for the Protection and the Return and Initial Reintegration/Early Recovery clusters as well as its part as a member of Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI) cluster. This process has involved balancing realistic assessments of operational capacity and expertise against the organization's mandated responsibilities.

24. The Protection Cluster, under the leadership of UNHCR with the co-lead support of MONUC, has evolved into an advocacy force that has begun to improve the protection environment for Congolese. For example, the network, which consists of seven provincial protection working groups and the national umbrella group, has successfully established regular communications with the Congolese National Army and MONUC. UNHCR is a full member of MONUC's Joint Operation Committee where the Office is able to highlight the protection concerns facing IDPs. These links, alongside ongoing training on international human rights and humanitarian law, have enabled humanitarian actors to successfully lobby for enhanced protection of civilians. More concretely, in Ituri District, IDPs have been able to enjoy greater freedom of movement from 2 km to 20 kms. In South Kivu there have been increased patrols of MONUC forces. The collaboration with the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission, while meriting close, continuous attention to protect humanitarian space, has additionally enabled protection measures to be incorporated into military interventions leading to fewer civilian casualties. The Cluster has contributed towards the development of overall country strategies and is facilitating the distribution of funds obtained through the pooled funding and CERF channels for protection activities.

25. The Return and Initial Reintegration/Early Recovery Cluster, which transformed out of an existing working group led by UNHCR and UNDP, is trying to assess its activities against those being pursued in other clusters such as Watsan, and Shelter and NFIs to avoid duplication of efforts. To date, income-generation activities and livelihood recovery in general have emerged as areas where the Early Recovery Cluster has an operational role. Alongside this discussion, there is also insufficient information about the level of assistance other clusters are providing to returning refugees, which needs to be resolved to avoid duplication.

26. Within these clusters and the Shelter and NFI cluster, UNHCR has sought to develop its comparative advantage in relation to identified gaps. Monitoring has been identified as a key expertise of UNHCR. As a result, UNHCR developed a significant project with NRC aimed at targeted protection interventions and the prevention of new displacement. Mobile phones with solar chargers are also being procured to distribute to communities in the Ituri District who will then be able to keep the humanitarian community informed on the situation in their communities. This will facilitate monitoring in an area where there has been severely limited humanitarian access due to security risks and poor infrastructure. A mapping exercise of protection risks and existing capacities among different actors has also begun in an effort to ensure that gaps are addressed and that programmes and activities are adapted. UNHCR's registration competencies have also proved useful in Katanga Province in identifying IDPs for improving the delivery of assistance. Building upon its return programme for refugee returnees, additional community reintegration projects are being planned to increase access to basic social services as well as provide for the initial immediate non-food items of families. To date NFIs have been procured for about 15,000 families; procedures for distribution are currently being finalized.

b. Liberia

27. Following the completion of the assisted return of registered IDPs, the Protection Core Group has also become involved in the closure of IDP camps through a review of lessons learned and the implementation of a comprehensive inter-agency assessment, which looked at aspects of protection, remaining populations, property, basic services and the environment in 35 camps. Detailed operational and budgetary plans are currently being developed for implementation as per the recommendations of the Assessment Report. The Camp Management and Camp Coordination Cluster will be focusing on environmental rehabilitation of the 35 camps in collaboration with the Protection Core Group. The identification of durable solutions for the remaining IDPs with special needs is under way in collaboration with other cluster partners. The activities of the Emergency Shelter/NFI Cluster have also been redirected from providing travel grants and return packages for returning IDPs towards meeting the shelter needs of returning populations.

28. Complementing its role as a cluster lead, UNHCR has been implementing community empowerment projects to support the restoration of basic services in districts with high levels of IDP returns to support their reintegration. More specifically, the rehabilitation of education facilities has enabled around 3,000 children in return areas to enroll in school. The construction of 68 wells, 171 latrines, and 300 latrine slabs has reduced the occurrence of waterborne diseases such as diarrhea and eye infections by 10 per cent. Finally, the rehabilitation of 56 health clinics has increased access as well as the quality of medical care for returned IDPs and refugees alongside the larger community.

c. Somalia

29. Strong inter-agency collaboration has been a cornerstone of the roll-out of the cluster approach for the Somalia operation. Starting in 2005, the UN Country Team began strategizing on how to address the needs of IDPs. This led to the development of the Joint UN Somalia IDP Strategy in mid-2005. This Strategy was fully integrated into the 2006 Somalia Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP). The CHAP, cluster objectives and agency projects are all

firmly based on this strategy. The Strategy and CAP projects have also fed into the work of the Somali Joint Needs Assessment, which is due for completion in the second half of 2006 in the Somalia Recovery and Development Plan.

30. Transforming these structures into the new approach has been time consuming given the presence of existing coordination mechanisms. The inter-agency element, which evolved from being a UN Country Team to an Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Country Team, has further slowed down the process as the IASC aims to reach consensus prior to action. Consequently, the clusters which UNHCR leads have developed at different paces. Although the Protection Cluster is now operational in four locations (Nairobi(Kenya), Puntland, Somaliland, and Mogadishu), the IASC has not yet endorsed the establishment of the Shelter Cluster (to be co-chaired with UN-Habitat). A UNHCR mission funded through the Emergency Shelter Cluster has been fielded to assist the IASC Country Team in reaching a decision.

31. UNHCR has begun implementing activities on behalf of IDPs to contribute to improving the current living conditions of IDPs. Work is ongoing to procure emergency NFIs, in particular to provide immediate relief in situations of fire, which are common in IDP settlements. For example UNHCR has ordered 25,000 plastic sheets which would be viewed as a temporary solution for which UNHCR and UN-Habitat are seeking to identify a more durable shelter material / solution for IDPs. With an aim towards empowering IDPs to defend their basic human rights, a total of six (6) protection workshops (women and children's rights) collectively reaching more than 60 local NGOs were held in the first part of the year. The *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* have also been translated into Somali and will be published in the form of booklets for wide dissemination.

32. UNHCR has also facilitated the preparation of tools and compilation of key planning data, much of which has been achieved through the Danish Refugee Council and ProCap (Tier I and Tier II) secondees hosted by UNHCR. A common protection monitoring tool is being fine tuned with protection partners' staff being trained on its use. A total of 26 local NGOs are involved in this programme. A literature / desk review of existing data and documentation on IDPs in Somalia was recently completed and will be field tested in the upcoming months inside Somalia. This project will test the draft profiling guidelines that were developed by an IDD/NRC consultant based on a recommendation of the IASC Working Group at the global level. Additionally, a population movement tracking system has been developed with over 25 partners - the majority of which are national NGOs. Finally, a small grant fund has been established to build the administrative capacity of local partners providing information on population movements.

d. Uganda

33. While initially there was a lack of clarity on the cluster approach within the Country Team, the humanitarian community in Uganda is significantly advancing in developing a comprehensive, solution-based approach towards meeting the needs of IDPs. UNHCR initiated the process through the development of a protection strategy which remains a living document. With this as an umbrella strategy, three separate strategies on rule of law, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and camp management are currently being drafted under the auspices of OHCHR, UNICEF and UNHCR respectively.

34. Protection Clusters in the form of Inter-Agency Protection Teams (IAPTs) at the district level are also gradually coming into existence. To date UNHCR has spearheaded the establishment of IAPTs in Kampala, Gulu and Lira. UNICEF, pending the deployment of UNHCR staff, has also led set up the Teams in Pader and Kitgum. These teams have only begun to meet and the first challenges are information sharing and management, for which the CCCM cluster at the global level is providing support in terms of reporting formats and databases, etc. This is particularly important with regard to returns, which have been on the rise as people move either to their previous residences or to new locations closer to their former residences. Approximately 300,000 IDPs (200,000 from Lira, 70,000 from Gulu and 30,000 from Kitgum) are expected to return to their communities during 2006. These spontaneous returns appear to be occurring for a variety of reasons, such as improvements in the security situation, government interventions, and the arrival of the planting season. Return Assessment Teams plan to monitor returns and assess the protection risks in areas of return. The Early Recovery Cluster, under the leadership of UNDP, has been carrying out complementary assessments of the reintegration needs in main areas of return. A total of 34 assessments have been completed in Masindi District.

35. While these returns will necessitate some humanitarian interventions through a shift of activities from the camps towards the areas of return, improving the conditions in the camps still remains a preoccupation for humanitarian actors. Towards this end, UNHCR has signed sub-agreements with two partners to manage a total of 13 camps with an entire population of 370,000 in Lira District. Efforts to prioritize needed interventions in all the camps are also continuing. These include trainings on camp management and community self-management schemes.

V. Activities in other IDP operations

a. Central African Republic

36. The Country Team continues to use the cluster approach for guidance in responding to the continued displacement of some 50,000 persons. As a preliminary condition for full governmental consent to starting work in the Field, UNHCR recently held a basic training for senior government officials on the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*. More workshops are being planned with NRC in the Field to sensitize local authorities and train local monitors. Through the recent deployment of two staff members (one ProCap and one Surge), the Office is establishing a presence in the Field and is in the process of identifying and recruiting local monitors.

b. Chad

37. Despite earlier confusion within the UN Country Team about the activation of the cluster approach, the Country Team is now in the process of assessing the humanitarian operations, which UNHCR hopes will lead to a new, stronger cluster approach. In this context, UNHCR fully supports the cluster approach at the level of Goz Beida, Abeche (the operational hub of eastern Chad) and N'Djamena, and continues to work under the guidance of the Humanitarian Coordinator and in close collaboration with the Country Team and operational partners. UNHCR has assumed responsibility for the establishment of coordination

mechanisms and development of strategy for the protection and security cluster, the shelter/NFI cluster, and the logistics, transport, and telecommunications cluster. The coordination mechanisms are broadly inclusive of UN operational agencies, NGOs, and the Red Cross Movement and work closely with the relevant Chadian authorities.

38. The UN response to IDPs in Chad has gathered momentum since the earlier part of the year, but still faces major operational challenges related to security, access, and resources. A major security vacuum remains throughout the IDP-hosting area which has a direct impact on the access to IDPs. Access has also been compounded by poor road conditions with the arrival of the seasonal rains that cut off large areas of eastern Chad. UNHCR's estimated financial requirements for IDPs in eastern Chad stand at just over USD 2.8 million for 2006, of which UNHCR has by the end of August received some 62 per cent.

39. With the continued deterioration of security in Darfur and the growing militarization of the border area between Chad and Sudan, there are dim prospects for any short-term resolution of the displacement problem in eastern Chad. Unless in the very near term there is some positive development in Darfur which would have a corresponding 'spill-over effect' to eastern Chad, there is a growing likelihood of further displacement in the region.

40. Current estimates place the IDP population at 50,000 in eastern Chad. A significant number have settled close to the Sudanese refugee camps of Djabal and Goz Amir which were established in early 2004 and where today approximately 50,000 Sudanese are assisted by UNHCR and its operational partners. UNHCR maintains two field offices (Goz Amir and Koukou-Angarana) in IDP host communities.

c. Colombia

41. UNHCR's role with IDPs in Colombia is defined in the Memorandum of Intent signed in 1999 with the Government. UNHCR's main objective is to provide a comprehensive and coordinated response to the humanitarian crisis in order to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to IDPs, as well as to foster durable solutions. It includes direct protection to IDP communities and support to state authorities in making the response to internal displacement effective. Based on UNHCR's recommendation and advice, the Constitutional Court issued three court orders that oblige the authorities to deploy greater resources to help displaced people. The Office works very closely with national institutions such as the Ombudsman Office and the Attorney General's Office. Partnerships with civil society organizations and IDP associations are fundamental for advocacy and active participation of IDPs in decentralized bodies. UNHCR also supports community-based initiatives in the main areas of internal displacement.

42. The current IDP population in Colombia is approximately 3 million people. Although the official registered figure is 1.8 million, the Government recently acknowledged the increased overall number of IDPs. In 2005, some 136,000 newly displaced people were registered by the Government.

43. UNHCR has been chairing the UN Thematic Group on Displacement and plays a leading role in IDP protection. An IASC mission to review implementation of the cluster approach and accountability within the UNCT is scheduled for September 2006. The

Government of Colombia has requested UNHCR to expand its activities in the country. New offices will be opened in Bucaramanga, Villaviciencio and Medellin. Operational staff and administrative costs are included in the 2007 Supplementary Budget submitted for Colombia.

d. Côte d'Ivoire

44. In response to recommendations by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and the Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on the Human Rights of IDPs following their respective missions in the first part of 2006, the Humanitarian Coordinator sent a letter to the ERC informing the latter of the reformation of the previous protection network into a protection cluster aimed at strengthening responses to the dire protection situation facing IDPs. This is expected to lead to the formal adoption of the cluster approach in Côte d'Ivoire. To meet its cluster responsibilities, the Office is currently finalizing a budget submission to the CERF. The immediate goals of the protection cluster will be three fold: first, to undertake a study to estimate the exact number of IDPs, including in the northern part of the country, second, to provide guidance and build the capacity of governmental authorities dealing with IDPs including the development of a comprehensive plan of action for the return of IDPs, and finally to monitor all human rights and protection-related issues and provide basic assistance to the most vulnerable IDPs.

e. Georgia

45. Under the Secretary-General's authority, in 1993, UNHCR was given the responsibility of acting as the lead international agency to help the Government in dealing with problems related to IDPs in Georgia. UNHCR's mandate in Georgia was to provide protection and assistance to the estimated 260,000 people (95 per cent from Abkhazia and 5 per cent from South Ossetia) displaced as a result of the Abkhaz-Georgian and South Ossetian-Georgian conflicts. Since then, UNHCR has been implementing projects within a broad range of sectors including legal assistance, agriculture, shelter, education, health, income generation and community services in the parts of the country most affected by the conflict or by the arrival and temporary settlement of IDPs. In collaboration with the Government, UNDP, OCHA, World Bank, USAID and SDC, UNHCR also financially supported the "New Approach" project aimed at providing a transition bridge between relief and development assistance that began in 1999.

46. In February 2006, the Government committed itself to developing a national strategy on IDPs and established to this effect a Government Commission under the chairmanship of the Minister of Refugees and Accommodation (MRA). A roadmap for developing the strategy was agreed in May 2006. Working with line ministries, international organizations and local civil society, UNHCR is playing an active role to further develop the policy by providing financial and technical assistance. The Office is closely involved in the policy discussions, particularly through participation in two of the four thematic working groups, namely the Legal and Housing Working Groups. A ProCap Senior Protection Officer was recently deployed to UNHCR Georgia to support further the development and implementation of this strategy.

f. Lebanon

47. With the formal adoption of the cluster approach by the Country Team, UNHCR assumed a cluster leadership role in protection and emergency shelter for IDPs in Lebanon. The overall goal of UNHCR, as agreed with the Prime Minister during the Assistant High

Commissioner for Operations' mission to Beirut, was to help people return to their places of origin as soon as possible. Throughout the crisis, UNHCR held cluster meetings that were well attended by the Lebanese Government, UN agencies, ICRC, donors, and international and national NGOs. These clusters facilitated information sharing on the number and location of IDPs, an agreement on the most effective system for identifying protection issues, and assessments of the various forms of emergency shelter interventions required.

48. In the initial stages of the conflict, UNHCR staff members assisted IDPs who had fled to the mountainous outlying areas of the Aleye Valley and the Kesrouan region by conducting assessments and providing NFIs that could be procured locally.

49. Following the ceasefire on 14 August and the massive population return to Lebanon, UNHCR has been working closely with the Government and humanitarian partners to facilitate IDP returns. As of 22 August, approximately three-quarters or 600,000 IDPs had returned or were in the process of returning to their places of origin. However, the sustainability of these returns is uncertain given the poor condition of many homes. UNHCR recently negotiated an early recovery shelter strategy with the Government of Lebanon, which will focus on ensuring that the most vulnerable IDPs have transitional shelter, NFIs, and tents as they wait for their homes to be reconstructed.

g. Nepal

50. UNHCR has participated in the United Nations inter-agency missions to IDP areas in the far-western region of the country in December 2005 and to the most eastern region of Nepal in May 2006. Another mission was undertaken with OCHA and NRC in June/July 2006. UNHCR's plans for activities are based on the findings of these missions as well as on inter-agency discussions carried out during the July 2006 mission of the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations. Over the past two months, UNHCR has increased its staffing capacity to address IDP issues and is in the process of establishing a field presence in Nepalgunj and Biratnagar.

51. Although the UN Country Team in Nepal has not at this stage agreed to adopting the cluster approach, there is a basic agreement on the division of responsibilities within the Country Team on the IDP issue along the lines of the matrix developed by the RSG on the Human Rights of IDPs and the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*. While OCHA plays its coordinating role, OHCHR focuses on protection from displacement (prevention) and provides feedback on the Government's IDP policy. UNHCR focuses on protection during and after displacement, in particular with regard to access to basic services, registration, documentation, monitoring return conditions, property restitution, access to shelter and housing, and returns. Along these lines, UNHCR and OHCHR in Nepal co-chair a sub-working group on IDP protection, under the umbrella of the Human Rights and Protection Working Group chaired by OHCHR.

52. One of UNHCR's goals, already agreed with OCHA and OHCHR, is to mobilize the different political actors around the definition of a commonly-approved strategy for return, with a clear message calling for reconciliation and dialogue.

h. North Caucasus

53. UNHCR was one of the first UN agencies to establish a presence in the North Caucasus, in the aftermath of the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict and after the outbreak of the first Chechen war. The first major outflow of Chechen IDPs occurred during the first Chechen conflict (1994-1996). During this period, UNHCR's protection focus was on life-saving material emergency assistance and protection, mainly in individual cases. Currently, UNHCR and NGO's protection programming in the North Caucasus focuses on four areas of activity: (a) field protection monitoring and intervention, (b) legal counselling and legal assistance, (c) dissemination of protection-related information, and (d) capacity building and strengthening of the institutions so that they carry these protection activities.

54. Presently, 22 humanitarian and development assistance agencies work under the *2006 Inter-Agency Transitional Workplan for the North Caucasus*, and coordinate their activities with dozens of other organizations. The Transitional Workplan was built on the foundation of a six-year humanitarian Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) for conflict-affected Chechnya and its neighbouring republics. However, the Workplan is broader than the North Caucasus CAP and the scope of its activities now include an expanding range of integration and livelihoods projects. The UNHCR Representative has assumed the role of Humanitarian Coordinator and UNHCR leads the protection and shelter sectors.

55. In July 2006 a joint OCHA/UNHCR/OHCHR Mission led by the Director of OCHA's Internal Displacement Division (IDD) went to the region to undertake a review of protection needs against capacity in the North Caucasus, and to stimulate inter-agency consultations about protection objectives for 2007.

57. The UN Security Phase inside Chechnya has been lowered which should ultimately allow more frequent and much-needed monitoring activities in Chechnya with the expected opening of UN premises in Grozny by early 2007.

i. Sri Lanka

58. At the time of the High Commissioner's official visit to Sri Lanka in July 2006, UNHCR's mid- and long-term approach was focusing on effective protection monitoring; stabilizing the IDP population to facilitate voluntary returns; and building confidence among communities. UNHCR had been collaborating with the central and local Government and the LTTE, encouraging the Government to take the lead in providing protection and humanitarian assistance to the displaced population. Together with other agencies, UNHCR had been assessing needs and security concerns for displaced communities to be addressed by responsible parties and tried to ensure the restoration of services in villages of return.

59. However, since July 2006 the situation has seriously deteriorated. Community-level violence, military engagement and general deterioration of security in the north and east of Sri Lanka have increased the number of internally displaced persons to some 200,000, with an additional 9,000 persons who sought refuge in India. In the short term, UNHCR is participating in an inter-agency emergency response under a Common Humanitarian Action Plan/Flash Appeal for approximately USD 5 million which will address immediate needs in the areas of domestic items, community services, shelter and protection.

j. Sudan

60. The current preoccupation in the Sudan relates to the preparations for the return of Sudanese IDPs to the South. In this context, UNHCR is current reviewing the added value it could bring in this respect. The Office plans to hold an internal meeting at the end of August following which further discussions will be held with the Country Team.

Blue Nile State

61. UNHCR is the lead agency in the collaborative effort with UN agencies and NGOs to complement the Government's efforts in the assistance and protection of approximately 160,000 IDPs in Blue Nile State. The key issues in the State are access to basic needs, destroyed infrastructure; insecurity due to the presence of mines and unexploded ordinance (UXOs) in some possible IDP return locations; very weak, and in some places non-existent government structures; and inability to access many of the intended areas of return.

62. Both UNHCR Damazine and Kurmuk have embarked on an IDP registration project that has thus far reached 16,324 IDPs, a majority of whom are in Damazine and Roseiries and wish to return to Southern Blue Nile. UNHCR has led an inter-agency assistance effort for extremely vulnerable IDPs in Kurmuk County. UNHCR Damazine and Kurmuk have continued carrying out protection monitoring in IDP locations. In July, UNHCR entered into an agreement with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to assist with the monitoring. In June, a protection working group was established in Damazine to address major IDP protection concerns and develop strategies for their protection. Since its establishment, a number of inter-agency village assessments have been carried out in IDP areas, resulting in the provision of food and material assistance.

63. The activities planned up to December 2006 include: continued registration and village assessments of IDPs; strengthening protection working groups; carrying out information campaigns; advocating with State authorities and other agencies to assist IDPs wishing to return with transport assistance and supplying basic amenities in return areas; and conducting trainings and capacity-building sessions for agency staff and government officials in Damazine and Kurmuk.

Darfur

64. UNHCR has been present in Darfur since June 2004 in response to the call for increased involvement by the Country Team in Sudan. Specifically, the United Nations Secretary-General asked UNHCR to "take responsibility for the protection and voluntary return of IDPs to their villages of origin in West Darfur in partnership with other agencies..." On 31 January 2005, UNHCR signed a Letter of Understanding (LoU) with the Government of Sudan which further formalized UNHCR's role in West Darfur and opened the way for an expanded presence. Out of the estimated population of 1.8 million IDPs in Darfur, there are 700,000 people in West Darfur, 700,000 people in South Darfur and 400,000 people in North Darfur.

65. In West Darfur UNHCR coordinates protection efforts among different actors, chairs the Protection Working Groups in El Geneina, Mukjar, Habila and Zalingei, and supports NGO and UN partners' protection initiatives, including in areas where UNHCR is not present. In addition, UNHCR coordinates camp management and related protection activities. UNHCR also focuses

on the special protection needs of women, maintaining 34 women's centers in IDP settlements and villages, and is currently in the process of creating additional centers. Finally, UNHCR plays an active role in SGBV working groups to establish prevention and response mechanisms.

66. The major challenge in Darfur remains the severe lack of security. Insecurity not only prevents IDPs and refugees from returning to their villages of origin, but it also limits humanitarian access and the delivery of basic services to a large part of West Darfur, which ultimately increase protection concerns. The continued disruption of IDPs' livelihoods and economic coping mechanisms, coupled with unpredictable donor commitment and competing emergencies in other regions, will impact negatively on UNHCR's ability to meet the increasing expectations for humanitarian assistance by IDPs in Darfur through 2006 and into 2007.

Khartoum

67. Increased joint advocacy efforts by protection agencies (UNHCR, UNMIS Human Rights, UNMIS Protection of Civilians, UNICEF and protection-oriented NGOs) in 2006 have resulted in an improved protection environment. Even so, dramatic changes on the ground are still not visible and the overall protection environment for IDPs remains harsh. Police continue to undertake regular and increasingly frequent police raids in IDP settlements and camps, resulting in various human rights violations. Until recently, the Government largely respected its commitment not to relocate IDPs forcibly, but on 16 August authorities initiated a relocation of some 12,000 IDPs and urban poor in Dar Assalaam settlement approximately 40km south of Khartoum. It remains unclear whether this is the beginning of a series of relocations or a one-time occurrence. Nevertheless, given the expansion of Khartoum's urban centre and increasing land prices, there will likely be continued pressure for authorities to push IDPs and the urban poor further away.

68. Efforts to revitalize the Protection Working Group chaired by UNHCR are slowly paying off. The specific focus of the group has centred on joint and coordinated fact-finding efforts as well as advocacy initiatives in response to the violence and excessive use of force by the police in IDP settlements. UNHCR's implementing partners, INTERSOS and Save the Children UK, have become operational in IDP sites targeted by the Office's protection and community service interventions. Six IDP representatives participated in the first "go and see visit" to Western Eatoria in June, the findings of which were shared in six IDP community meetings in Khartoum. Finally, UNHCR supplied emergency support in the form of plastic sheeting to vulnerable IDPs with destroyed and damaged shelters from heavy rain fall in August.

69. Until the end of 2006, UNHCR plans to continue to coordinate and improve information exchange through the Protection Working Group, ensure ongoing protection monitoring and interventions through UNHCR staff and its partners, coordinate the 2007 Protection Sector UN Workplan, improve provision of information to IDP communities, and continue planning for pilot returns of IDPs.

k. Timor-Leste

70. Based upon a request of the President of Timor-Leste and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, UNHCR took responsibility for protection of IDPs in camps following the outbreak of violence in Dili in April and May 2006. The political unrest and violence led to the displacement of approximately 150,000 IDPs (some 15 per cent of the total population) in the country, including some 70,000 persons in Dili, and 80,000 from Dili to the districts.

71. In close coordination with the authorities and other humanitarian actors, UNHCR's emergency response has two major priorities. The first is providing protection to IDPs, and in particular co-chairing a protection working group with the Government which coordinates interventions in the areas of physical protection, prevention and response to SGBV, registration and protection monitoring. The second is improving conditions in existing IDP sites, as well as establishing new sites to decongest overcrowding through the provision of tents, various NFIs, and technical advice on site planning and co-chairing of the working group on shelter.

72. While subsequent government changes have to some extent reduced the feeling of insecurity among the population, return remains very limited. Should conditions for sustainable return (e.g. security and resumption of basic services) improve, UNHCR will engage in additional activities in the following areas: returnee monitoring, in particular protection needs of those in vulnerable categories (individuals at risk of retaliatory violence); mass information activities; "co-existence" projects with local partners; and capacity building of local institutions to monitor and address human rights issues.

VI. Internal adjustments within UNHCR, and external partnerships

73. The IDP Support Team, an informal inter-departmental task force with the Office, has continued to meet regularly since mid-2005 to provide operational and strategic support and to ensure coherence within UNHCR's IDP operations. Since June 2006, the Support Team has produced a "Question and Answer" document on UNHCR's expanded role and distributed the document to all UNHCR staff members. It has developed a generic profile for cluster leader coordination, which will be used to develop an internal roster of UNHCR staff members with the necessary skills who can be called upon in times of emergency to lead UNHCR's respective clusters in the field. Based on the skills in the profile, training modules in the three clusters under UNHCR's responsibilities will be developed. To avoid overlap and duplication as it develops its own training, UNHCR is working closely with OCHA's Humanitarian Reform Support Unit's (HRSU) initiative to create cluster leadership training at the global and field level. The IDP Support Team is also developing a site on the UNHCR Intranet to provide staff with updated information about the humanitarian reforms and UNHCR's expanded IDP operations.

74. The IDP Support Team is planning an internal lessons learned review and best practices workshop on UNHCR's expanded role in support of the cluster approach. This workshop is currently scheduled for mid-October in Nairobi, and will include participants from headquarters, UNHCR offices in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Uganda, Nepal, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, Colombia, and Pakistan. This workshop will attempt *inter alia* to draw initial lessons on UNHCR's involvement in the cluster approach at both the global and field levels and also provide a forum of exchange where the pilot countries can share experiences and effective practices. The information collected from this exercise will also be fed into the HRSU's review exercise on the overall cluster approach.

75. Since June 2006, UNHCR has continued to work closely with its humanitarian counterparts, including other cluster leads, NGOs, and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, to fulfil its cluster leadership responsibilities. Following the global MoU between NRC and UNHCR, a communication was sent to all UNHCR staff regarding this relationship, and meetings have been held at the working level to begin implementing the agreement. A working group between the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNHCR has met twice since June 2006 to discuss and improve operational cooperation in IDP field operations. A Memorandum of Understanding between OHCHR and UNHCR was signed in July 2006 to set out a clear working arrangement with the Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on the Human Rights of IDPs, which includes UNHCR hosting a staff member from the Representative's office. This staff member will also devote some time assisting with UNHCR's IDP operations notably on protection related issues. In July, the inter-agency Internal Displacement Division seconded a staff member to assist UNHCR's Senior Policy Advisor on IDPs at the headquarters level. UNHCR has also met with ICRC to clarify operational roles regarding the protection of IDPs. Finally, UNHCR has been working closely with the HRSU to further clarify the cluster approach, including terminology such as the "provider of last resort", and activation of the cluster approach. In addition to contributing to HRSU's training module, UNHCR is also contributing to HRSU's efforts to develop a common humanitarian reform website, and newsletter.

Update on funding

76. Overall, financial support for UNHCR's expanded role in relation to IDPs has been extremely generous. With the exception of Colombia and Nepal, all of the country operations and the global clusters are well funded. Global clusters, Uganda, and Timor-Leste have registered funding in excess of 100 per cent. Funding levels are at 62 per cent for Chad, 45 per cent for Colombia, 4 per cent for Nepal, 90 per cent for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 43 per cent for Liberia, 57 per cent for Somalia, and 64 per cent for Lebanon.

VII. Conclusion and Way Forward

77. In the coming months the primary challenge for UNHCR will be to continue to actively improve its own operational capacity to ensure UNHCR staff members have the skills, resources and information to undertake their leadership role effectively. One key initiative in reaching this goal includes ensuring that programming instructions include specific directives about how to address IDP operations in programme submissions. IDP-specific assessment tools, such as standards and indicators for collecting information on IDP populations, are also being developed in consultation within UNHCR's various technical sections and ultimately with its cluster partners.

78. Staffing will also need to be addressed further. Of particular concern has been the slow, rigid process of deploying UNHCR staff. While the deployment of temporary staff, most notably in the form of ProCap and SURGE, has substantively assisted operations, there have been gaps in replacing such staff. The identification of operational partners with the required expertise and capacity and in the locations of concern has also been difficult. As mentioned previously, UNHCR is seeking to address this problem by creating an internal roster of qualified candidates to assist with future IDP operations. Building upon the generic cluster leadership profile, the next step will be to identify and train staff to be placed on a roster for future deployments.

79. At the global level, UNHCR cluster leads continue to refine and develop their tools and services in areas such as staffing capacity, technical guidance, and information management. UNHCR has also actively contributed to inter-cluster processes to further develop what the cluster leadership approach means in both theory and practice. In particular, UNHCR participates in the IASC “Looking Group” created by the IASC in July to improve the field guidelines and clarify key cluster issues such as: the criteria and procedure for activating the approach, the relationship between global and field clusters, and how the cluster approach fits together with pre-existing and broader coordination structures at the field level.

80. Generally speaking UNHCR is successfully assuming its leadership role under the cluster approach in the four pilot countries, and most recently in Lebanon and Côte d’Ivoire. However, to judge its performance more systematically, the Office will need to use measurable impact and performance indicators which would be agreed upon with the country operations. The country offices are currently working on their 2007 IDP special programmes, and, together with the Global Clusters, a consolidated 2007 workplan including these indicators will be finalized shortly. OCHA was requested by the IASC Working Group to lead a process to review the cluster approach in pilot countries. UNHCR will participate in the “core learning group” which will conduct the review in the coming weeks.

81. UNHCR’s success in IDP operations depends on its ability to develop strong links and partnerships with many humanitarian actors. Admittedly, there have and continue to be challenges as the organization adapts towards developing more strategic partnerships which involve greater consultation and defining realistically UNHCR’s added value and capacity to deliver. Even so, stronger relationships with other protection partners are increasingly operational at both headquarters and field levels. In both cluster and non-cluster pilot countries, UNHCR is working collaboratively with governments, NGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, and UN agencies. UNHCR’s expertise in protection (particularly with regard to protection monitoring and return planning), emergency shelter, and camp coordination/camp management greatly contribute to the overall strategic humanitarian action plans and relief efforts that benefit hundreds of thousands of IDPs. However, UNHCR must continue to identify and build relationships with partners with implementing capacity to maximize the impact of UNHCR’s contributions.

82. The implementation of the cluster approach already provides some useful insights about how to improve coordination within the humanitarian community, particularly among UN agencies. As noted, debates are taking place in the Field that should lead to a clear recognition of the roles of cluster leads and cluster members in the context of their mandates as necessary. Opportunities also exist to further the discussion on bridging the gap between relief and development. For example, UNHCR’s new commitment to lead early recovery shelter projects for the most vulnerable IDPs in Lebanon should be monitored closely. Finally, in some locations the need for increasing presence has positively led to increased sharing of resources by UN agencies. This is most notable in Uganda (Lira and Gulu) and Somalia (Merka) where UNHCR is sharing premises with other agencies.

83. Finally, funding remains a critical issue. Donors have been extremely generous in funding the global clusters, as well as the Uganda and Timor-Leste operations. However, UNHCR’s success in other cluster countries and IDP operations will in part depend on the resources available for programme implementation. Without the necessary resources, UNHCR will lack the capacity to provide the necessary staff training and to develop IDP-specific tools, or the financial resources to contribute material assistance to the inter-agency relief efforts. In

some situations, UNHCR's leadership role may be compromised if it lacks operational capacity, particularly in terms of staff and geographical coverage. While UNHCR has taken advantage of the emergency financial assistance generously made available through the Central Emergency Response Fund, a more predictable funding source is the best way to ensure humanitarian assistance reaches IDP populations in need without delay.

84. As IDP operations need to be gradually mainstreamed into UNHCR's overall programming, further clarification is still required about the ongoing need for IDP Special Programmes. It is hoped that within the context of the ExCom discussions, a decision will be reached to mainstream the Special Programmes into the regular budget by 2008.

5 September 2006