

UPDATE ON COORDINATION ISSUES

1. Following on the last update on coordination issues presented to the 31st meeting of the Standing Committee, this information note will focus on UNHCR's activities in relation to United Nations coordinating bodies, most notably in the context of current initiatives on humanitarian reform taking place within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the United Nations system at present. Relations with the United Nations Departments of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and of Safety and Security (UNDSS) are also noted, and there is a section on inter-agency missions. Bilateral relations with United Nations and other organizations, cooperation on asylum/migration issues as well as UNHCR's collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are also included in this note.

I. INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION

A. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), Executive Committee on Humanitarian Assistance (ECHA) and cooperation with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

2. UNHCR continues to pursue its commitment to effective inter-agency coordination by participating actively in the IASC and ECHA at all levels of these bodies.

3. The Office has actively engaged in all discussions on the reform of the United Nations humanitarian system, including on humanitarian funding and strengthening the Humanitarian Coordinator system, and on humanitarian coordination within United Nations integrated missions. It has been particularly deeply engaged in the ongoing consultations within the IASC, under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator and OCHA's Internal Displacement Division (IDD), to determine how best to strengthen the inter-agency response to the plight of internally displaced persons (IDPs). This and UNHCR's related participation in the Humanitarian Response Review and its follow-up have been described to the Standing Committee in a note prepared for its informal consultative meeting on 20 September 2005.

4. As explained in the above-mentioned note, during the summer of 2005 the Office has taken a prominent role in the working groups organized at the initiative of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, aimed at strengthening the humanitarian response of agencies through the identification of clusters of agencies for each sector of activity, and a lead agency for each cluster. UNHCR has taken the lead in the working groups on sectors of camp coordination/management, emergency shelter and IDP protection, and has been directly involved in the discussions on all other sectors. The work of the groups focuses primarily on

humanitarian response for IDPs and affected local populations, but excludes refugee response where UNHCR's own mandate applies and there is already an existing network of operational agreements.

5. In parallel to its participation in the inter-agency dialogue, the Office has also worked to make its decision-making processes on IDP situations speedier and more predictable. In response to concerns about protection gaps for internally displaced persons in certain operational situations, notably in Darfur, southern Sudan, northern Uganda, Liberia, and Somalia, UNHCR has been examining potential courses of action and solutions together with fellow agencies. The Office has also been providing protection expertise to Country Teams and additional protection officers for field work.

6. Through various subsidiary IASC bodies, UNHCR has helped develop training guidelines on HIV/AIDS for offices in the Field; guidelines on human rights for Humanitarian Coordinators; the new inter-agency Early Warning/ Early Action system now feeding into every IASC working group; and Guidelines for gender-based violence intervention in humanitarian settings - focusing on prevention of and response to sexual violence in emergencies. UNHCR participated in a needs analysis workshop under the auspices of the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) which considered lessons learned from the piloting of the needs assessment framework in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and adjusted the matrix and process for further roll-out. Meanwhile, UNHCR's proposal to design and provide Emergency Team Leadership Training (ETLP) was endorsed by the IASC Working Group. Funding has been identified, and the initial roll-out of this training will take place before the end of 2005.

7. At the IASC Working Group and Principals' meetings UNHCR has engaged in substantive discussions on operations in Darfur, northern Uganda and Liberia with the intention of resolving protection gaps. In December 2004, UNHCR fielded emergency teams to assist the United Nations in its overall response to the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster and participated in all the relevant coordination task forces, including on common services such as the United Nations Joint Logistics Centre (UNJLC).

8. Through the Expanded ECHA Core Group the Office participated in and provided substantive comments on the DPKO/OCHA study on United Nations integrated missions while also engaging in a number of country discussions within the regular ECHA meetings. The theme of sexual exploitation and abuse moved from the IASC to ECHA and now includes the Executive Committee on Peace and Security (ECPS), with several sub-groups continuing to promote the widespread implementation of the Secretary-General's Bulletin on the subject. UNHCR staff from a cross-section of Bureaux/Divisions provide regular inputs to these various groups. Through the ECHA Implementation Group on Protection of Civilians UNHCR is helping to develop a more systematic and timely system of reporting information on key protection concerns in armed conflict situations. This included the convening in June 2004 of an Experts Meeting on maintaining the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum, and developing operational guidelines on the separation of armed elements from refugee populations.

B. Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and
Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS)

9. UNHCR's formal Agreement with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has led to increased coordination and cooperation between the two organizations in five key areas: Refugee Security; Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR); Mine Action; Rule of Law; and Technical Cooperation. To facilitate this coordination and examine effective cooperation at the strategic and operational levels, a staff exchange has taken place. One very effective element of this strengthened interaction with DPKO has been UNHCR's work with the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). This has included - along with all the relevant agencies - a detailed review of the 1998 United Nations Mine Action Policy and resulted in a new framework document entitled "Mine Action and Effective Coordination: The United Nations Inter-Agency Policy." In May 2005, the Emergency and Security Service (ESS) organized a mine awareness event at Geneva Headquarters. The five-day exhibition was a success, and featured UNMAS, sister United Nations agencies, international organizations and NGOs involved in mine education and de-mining. Also in relation to refugee and staff security, UNHCR has continued to follow closely developments and responses to the global issue of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) through the Geneva Process and Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA). A special edition of "Refugees" magazine was prepared in time for the 2nd Biennial Meeting of States held in New York in July 2005 to review the United Nations Programme of Action on the illicit trade and proliferation of small arms.

10. UNHCR has established strong liaison and effective coordination with the new United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). UNDSS' mission statement and role in enabling the safest and most efficient conduct of the programmes and activities of the United Nations system is of critical importance to UNHCR. The key tasks of operational effectiveness and integration demand close cooperation and coordination between UNDSS and UNHCR. Nevertheless, UNHCR continues to place strong emphasis on enabling operations in the Field.

C. Inter-agency missions

11. While the growing number of inter-agency missions cannot all be cited in this update, the following are some examples of UNHCR's participation during the past year.

12. Following the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster in December 2004, along with other United Nations agencies and NGOs, UNHCR actively participated in several joint assessment missions to the affected areas. One of the first joint missions was to Banda Aceh in Indonesia to assess the needs of those severely affected by the disaster. Several other inter-agency missions took place in response to the tsunami, a shelter assessment mission to Nias Island and another to West Aceh to assess the overall health situation. In Thailand, UNHCR, UNDP, UN-Habitat, ILO, UNESCO and UNEP visited Phuket and Phang Nga, two of the most affected among the six southern provinces hit by the disaster.

13. In January 2005 UNHCR participated in an Internal Displacement Division (IDD) mission to Colombia to promote an enhanced coordinated response to the IDP situation in the country. As a result of the mission, UNHCR's protection mandate was reaffirmed and the reactivated United Nations Thematic Group on Displacement is now chaired by UNHCR. In

May 2005, the Deputy Director of UNHCR's Department of International Protection joined the Head of the Internal Displacement Division (IDD) on a mission to Burundi, Uganda and Kenya to follow up the IDP-related recommendations made after previous IDD missions to those countries. The mission also met with the Humanitarian Coordinators and United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs), as well as with NGOs, to take stock of progress made, problems faced, and future proposals in relation to advancing the collaborative response to IDPs in each of the countries.

14. As a member of the UNCT in Kyrgyzstan, UNHCR participated in a United Nations Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Group inter-agency mission to evaluate the humanitarian needs of the country in light of the political events in March 2005, as well as facilitate inter-agency contingency planning to strengthen the preparedness of United Nations agencies in the Kyrgyz Republic.

15. UNHCR, the Norwegian Refugee Council and the Danish Refugee Council undertook a mission to Georgia in March 2005 to assist with preparations for a joint strategy for Abkhazia in support of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia's conflict resolution efforts and to focus on the viability of return to the Gali district. On security-related matters, UNHCR joined WFP, OCHA and UNDSS to review the situation in Chechnya in December 2004. In connection with a joint project for the Human Security Trust Fund, UNHCR, UNDP, FAO and ILO undertook a mission to North Ossetia in February 2005.

16. In consultation with relevant government authorities, donor representatives, operational partners, beneficiaries, and specialists, as appropriate, UNHCR and WFP continued to assess jointly the overall food aid and related non-food requirements. In recent months, seven joint assessment missions have been conducted in the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Chad (Sudanese refugees), Nepal, Bangladesh, Yemen and Burundi.

D. United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and Durable Solutions

17. UNHCR's membership in the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) started to bear concrete results in 2004. UNHCR joined UNDG with the objective of strengthening its partnerships in the pursuit of durable solutions for refugees, returnees, and IDPs. UNHCR has focused on three key areas:

- 1) Jointly with UNDP, UNHCR co-chaired a UNDG inter-agency working group to develop guidelines for United Nations Resident Coordinators and United Nations Country Teams. The UNDG adopted, in October 2004, a Guidance Note on Durable Solutions for Displaced Persons. For the first time, a common policy was adopted among United Nations development actors on the importance of attaining durable solutions for displaced persons and on how to incorporate them into joint planning and implementation strategies. The Guidance Note has been included in the existing UNDG Guidelines on Common Country Assessment (CCA) and in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

- 2) UNHCR had an important role in the joint UNDG/World Bank needs assessments for countries emerging from conflict. At the policy level, UNHCR contributed toward the development of the UNDG/World Bank *Practical Guide to Multilateral Needs Assessments in Post-Conflict Situations* as well as in discussions leading to the development of new resource mobilization strategies for transition situations through the setting up of multi-donor trust funds. At the operational level, UNHCR took on the leadership of the priority clusters covering durable solutions for displaced persons in the needs assessments for Liberia and Sudan. Most recently, together with the World Bank, UNHCR took the lead, on behalf of UNDG, of the planning mission for a Somali joint needs assessment.
- 3) UNHCR is also highlighting refugees and other displaced persons in the ongoing discussions on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly in September 2005. UNHCR is stressing the need for displaced persons to be included in and to benefit from planning and programmes aimed at the MDGs.

E. HIV and AIDS and UNAIDS Cosponsorship

18. UNHCR has remained an active member of the IASC Reference Group on HIV and AIDS in Emergency Settings. This has included field testing the IASC Guidelines for HIV and AIDS Interventions in Emergency Settings as well as training. UNHCR is also a key member of the Regional HIV and Emergency groups in East/South Africa and Central/West Africa.

19. As a new UNAIDS cosponsor, UNHCR participated in the development of the UNAIDS Unified Budget Workplan for 2006/2007. Conflict, refugees and other displaced persons were explicitly included in numerous global initiatives, including the Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Coordination among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors, the UNAIDS Policy Position Paper on Intensifying HIV Prevention, as well as the Global Initiative on Prevention Education.

20. UNHCR continued to work closely with the UNAIDS Secretariat and the cosponsors. Specific initiatives include the following: Antiretroviral therapy guidelines with WHO and other partners; HIV and nutrition/food strategy implementation with WFP and UNICEF; care for survivors of rape that includes post-exposure prophylaxis with UNFPA; the Great Lakes Initiative on AIDS with the World Bank; Global Initiative on Prevention Education with UNESCO; and HIV in the workplace with ILO.

F. ECOSOC Substantive Session

21. The 2005 ECOSOC Substantive Session took place from 29 June to 27 July 2005. The High Commissioner addressed the Opening Session of the High Level segment on 29 June under the heading: "Voices against poverty". The address focused on the need to have national strategies to ensure that efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals make reference to displaced persons; the relationship between conflict and the MDGs; and the fact that the

achievement of the MDGs is just as vital for the work and aims of humanitarian agencies as for the development actors. UNHCR also contributed to the process resulting in the adoption of the resolution for the Humanitarian Affairs Segment: "Strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations".

22. During the General Segment, the Director of the New York Office and Special Advisor of the High Commissioner delivered an oral report on the coordination aspects of the Office in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/153, and an oral report on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa as requested by General Assembly resolution 58/149.

II. BILATERAL COOPERATION

A. Bilateral Partnerships within the United Nations system

23. UNHCR and WFP have continued their close collaboration over the past year. The Executive Director of WFP addressed the 55th plenary session of the Executive Committee in October 2004, and the Assistant High Commissioner participated in WFP's Executive Board annual session in Rome in June 2005. Periodic high-level meetings between WFP and UNHCR are followed by working-level meetings in Rome and Geneva. There has also been a commitment by both organizations to have WFP's regional directors visit UNHCR Headquarters and for UNHCR's new field representatives to visit WFP's regional offices in order to strengthen working relationships.

24. There have been several recent developments in this partnership, including a new initiative to develop a joint donor communications strategy and improve visibility for refugees and food-related problems. Meetings have also been scheduled between the respective resource mobilization services to strengthen collaboration.

25. Activities such as joint high-level field missions, exchange of relevant website publications and closer cooperation in private sector fundraising are expected to be developed later this year. In addition, the evaluation of pilot food distributions has now been finalized and the two organizations will discuss findings and the way forward later this year. Joint needs assessments are continuing (Yemen and Uganda) and the joint assessment guidelines (JAG) have been translated into French. The first joint JAG training was held in April in the United Republic of Tanzania covering five major operations in East Africa and Great Lakes and a second one in July covered seven joint operations in West and Central Africa.

26. Self-reliance strategies are also being explored by UNHCR and WFP in order to help stabilize the food security situation of refugee populations, both for those in protracted situations as well as for returnees. With the recent signing of a letter of cooperation between UNHCR and FAO, possibilities for alternative solutions to food aid, such as agricultural projects, self-reliance strategies or proactive encouragement of local integration programmes, will need to be examined.

27. WFP has contributed a short text to UNHCR's Global Report 2004 and there is now an agreement to include food needs in all future UNHCR's appeals. UNHCR also welcomes WFP's announcement regarding the strengthening of the Programme's organizational capacity to deal with refugee issues in order to better address the operational needs of refugees and IDPs.

28. UNICEF has a longstanding partnership with UNHCR in the area of humanitarian coordination among agencies. Along with WFP, UNICEF remains one of UNHCR's key partners in the Field and within multilateral coordination bodies including the IASC. UNHCR and UNICEF have maintained close cooperation on issues such as IDPs, integrated missions and humanitarian reform issues, as well as on important sectoral areas, notably education, water and sanitation, and health for displaced populations. Both the High Commissioner and the newly appointed Executive Director of UNICEF have committed themselves to further collaboration and dialogue between the two organizations.

29. In February 2005 the Executive Heads of FAO and UNHCR signed a joint letter on strengthening cooperation between the two organizations. This partnership agreement aims to further enhance the productive capacity of persons of concern to UNHCR in the area of agriculture and other rural livelihood sectors, and highlights the vital role FAO can play in improving the food security and self-reliance of persons of concern to UNHCR. Country-specific agreements with FAO have also been signed in recent months in Burundi, Chad and Liberia, as well as a letter of agreement for a land and property study in Sudan. UNHCR and FAO have also worked in partnership together with the Norwegian Refugee Council to conduct a study on land tenure in south Sudan.

30. A Joint Statement by the Director-General of ILO and the High Commissioner was signed in November 2004. The Statement builds on the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 1983, reflects the practical dimensions of the operational partnership, and seeks to further encourage proactive collaboration on the ground. The main goal of this joint statement is to achieve durable solutions for displaced populations by promoting sustainable livelihoods and self-reliance through the implementation of employment-oriented strategies. Efforts to operationalize this partnership at the country level have resulted in the deployment of several livelihood experts from ILO to UNHCR country offices since January 2004 to help refine UNHCR's livelihood interventions by providing technical support in the areas of microfinance, skills training, income generation activities, and women's socio-economic empowerment, etc. The technical support provided by ILO in the area of microfinance and related issues (e.g. business development services and economic recovery of conflict-affected areas) serves to enhance the prospects for refugee self-reliance and is particularly appreciated in 2005, the International Year of Microcredit.

31. The cooperation with ILO in the context of the Afghanistan Comprehensive Solutions process is a good example of joint work covering both migration and livelihoods. As part of this process, UNHCR and ILO have signed an agreement for a joint project aiming to contribute to the comprehensive solution to the displacement of Afghans by providing a sound basis for labour migration policies and programmes.

32. As part of the Afghanistan Plus Initiative, ILO is conducting Afghan labour market studies in the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. Such studies will help to further the dialogue with Governments in the region on Afghan labour migration.

33. In 2006-2007 the cooperation foresees the secondment of an ILO technical expert to Afghanistan's Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to assist the Government in strengthening its labour migration management capacity.

34. UNHCR and UN-Habitat signed a Memorandum of Understanding late in 2003 and since that time a number of field-based initiatives have taken place. Joint activities were undertaken in Liberia, Iraq, Afghanistan, eastern Sudan and Somalia in a number of areas including land and property rights issues, shelter and self-reliance activities. At the headquarters level, an expert roundtable meeting on "Housing, land and property rights in post-conflict societies: Proposals for their integration into UN policy and Operational frameworks" took place in Geneva in November 2004, jointly organized by UNHCR and UN-Habitat.

35. UNHCR's partnership with the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) has been strengthened since 2003 when the Office's internal policy guidelines on UNV deployment and administration were developed through close collaboration with the Volunteers.

36. Under the reinforced framework of partnership in 2004, nearly 700 professional individuals have contributed to UNHCR's field operations as international or national UNVs, both in emergencies and more stable operations. In 2005, by mid-year already 500 Volunteers had joined UNHCR operational teams in various countries, bringing in precious expertise in areas such as information technology, logistics, and health and civil engineering.

37. Work has also progressed on the finalization of the comprehensive bilateral Memorandum of Understanding which is currently at the final stage of endorsement at UNHCR, having received full endorsement from the UNV Executive Coordinator. Also in 2005, the Office has developed a practical Field Guide on UNV deployment and administration as an easy internal reference for coherent and standardized use regarding UN Volunteers within UNHCR's operations. Together with the policy guidelines and the MoU, the Field Guide is expected to be finalized as part of UNHCR's UNV Handbook during the last quarter of 2005.

B. Other bilateral partnerships

38. As noted in the section on cooperation within the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), partnerships with bilateral development partners and other United Nations organizations are essential to achieving durable solutions for the displaced. As already mentioned, the World Bank is also a key player for UNHCR in this area.

39. In discussions with the World Bank on how to better integrate displacement issues into its work, it was agreed that UNHCR would provide an analysis of the Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) for countries affected by displacement. The analysis of the PRS was shared with the World Bank in October 2004. The analysis confirmed that displaced populations are rarely taken into consideration when preparing PRS. In addition, the study established that there is no systematic approach to include displacement issues in the PRS. The findings of the study

have been discussed with the World Bank and inform the ongoing World Bank-IMF review of the 'PRS +5'. Upon a recommendation of the World Bank, UNHCR is encouraging staff to engage in the preparations of PRS or Interim-PRS at field level ensuring that displacement is factored into the process, for example by providing poverty profiles of displaced persons.

40. ICRC remains one of UNHCR's closest partners, both at headquarters and field levels. Since the last update, some important areas of ICRC/UNHCR cooperation have focused on IDP protection, including in the context of recent initiatives on humanitarian coordination and reform. ICRC continues to provide a constructive perspective on the new measures under discussion in the IASC to improve the humanitarian response. The annual high level meeting between ICRC and UNHCR is due to take place in November 2005.

C. Inter-agency cooperation on asylum-migration issues

41. Inter-agency cooperation is a crucial element in the discharge of UNHCR responsibilities in the realm of the asylum-migration nexus, incorporating issues such as trafficking, smuggling, interception and other areas where there is an interface between protection concerns and migration control. The Department of International Protection ensures the lead role within UNHCR in these efforts.

42. UNHCR is an active partner in a number of migration-related fora and initiatives. Key amongst these is the Geneva Migration Group (GMG) which provides a platform for the executive heads of UNHCR, OHCHR, ILO, ODC, UNCTAD and IOM, to meet on a regular basis and exchange information on migration-related developments as they impact on the specific mandate of each of the participating organizations. First convened in April 2003, the GMG has tried during the past year to build upon the information-sharing potential of the Group, in order to enhance concrete operational cooperation in the Field.

43. December 2004 saw the convening of the Berne II Symposium, an important step in the ongoing Berne Initiative led by the Swiss Federal Office for Migration. UNHCR has played an active role in this process since its initiation in 2001 and was a member of the Steering Group which contributed to the drafting of the International Agenda for Migration Management (IAMM) which was presented for the consideration of States meeting in Berne in December 2004. The IAMM is intended as a working tool for policy makers, providing a listing of common understandings and effective practices for a planned, balanced and comprehensive approach to the management of migration. UNHCR's engagement with the Berne Initiative ensured that the final document is sensitive to the protection concerns which arise in the event of forced displacement and which are not necessarily resolvable from an exclusively migration control perspective.

44. With respect to cooperation between UNHCR and IOM, since the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in 1997, there has been a gradual shift from ad hoc operational cooperation towards a more clearly defined and strategic relationship. In the course of the Global Consultations on International Protection, UNHCR and IOM cooperated in the preparation of a joint paper on Refugee Protection and Migration Control. The Action Group on Asylum and Migration (AGAMI), which grew out of that process, has the potential to be a useful inter-agency forum, but it has yet to realize its full potential and only managed to meet twice

during the course of 2004. While UNHCR and IOM are different agencies with different mandates and sometimes different perspectives, fruitful has been achieved, especially where asylum and voluntary migration intersect and the respective mandates converge, and where the agencies are able to complement each others' strengths and create genuine synergy. While progress has been made in this area, both organizations remain committed to further dialogue in the forging of common approaches.

45. In an important area of cooperation under the Afghanistan Plus initiative, a study by IOM on cross-border population movements between Pakistan and Afghanistan is about to be finalized in October 2005. Plans are also under way to offer technical expertise by IOM and ILO to the Afghan Government in order to help them to set up a labour migration programme. UNHCR has also much appreciated IOM's constructive support in recent months in the IASC inter-agency dialogue on strengthening the humanitarian response of agencies, especially in the sector of camp coordination.

46. UNHCR's continued participation in the OHCHR-led Intergovernmental Organization (IGO) Contact Group on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling has proved an excellent avenue for consolidating broad inter-agency cooperation on trafficking and smuggling-related concerns. Close and practical collaboration amongst the various participants, including ILO, OSCE, IOM, UNICEF and others, has facilitated the development of mutually supportive networks that take into account and build upon the distinct mandate concerns of each of the IGO participants. One concrete example of cooperation relates to the drafting and negotiation of the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking, opened for signature in May of 2005. Several IGO participants contributed to this process in their capacity as observers in the drafting group and their close cooperation and sharing of information through the IGO meetings greatly enhanced the possibilities for individual agencies to keep apace of the process and make their respective contributions without the need to be physically present in Strasbourg for each drafting session.

47. Cooperation between UNHCR and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on maritime-related issues continued throughout the year. Following the adoption in 2004 of IMO-developed guidelines on the treatment of persons rescued at sea, cooperation has shifted to the finalization of a jointly produced information leaflet explaining the guidelines for the benefit of a wider audience. This is work in progress which should be finalized before the end of 2005. In the meantime UNHCR has continued to be an active participant in the various IMO Committee sessions which touch upon issues such as stowaways and which are thus relevant to the Office's mandate responsibilities.

48. Cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on trafficking-related issues has been pursued both through the IGO Contact Group and through numerous direct contacts between the two Offices. UNHCR has contributed to the further development and implementation of the UNODC Action Plan which was endorsed by the United Nations Chief Executives Board (CEB) as well as to the reporting and monitoring mechanisms established by UNODC in connection with the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, in particular its two supplementary protocols on trafficking and on smuggling.

49. On migration-related issues in general, UNHCR has a direct interest in the many consultations currently under way, not least in the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) and in preparatory discussions in advance of the debate on migration and development scheduled to take place in the United Nations General Assembly in 2006. The Office welcomes the opportunity to contribute to such efforts and is committed to active participation, within the context of its mandated role.

D. Non-governmental organizations

50. UNHCR continues its policy to forge effective partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in order to achieve the Office's core priorities of advocacy, providing protection and assistance, and finding durable solutions.

51. In 2004, UNHCR channelled some US\$ 248 million - one quarter of its annual budget - through implementing partnerships with 605 NGOs. In an effort to promote and use local capacities and expertise, 453 of the Office's NGO implementing partners are national or local NGOs. The main operational sectors covered by this wide-reaching collaboration include the following: transport/logistics; agency operational support; shelter/other infrastructure; legal assistance/protection; education; health and nutrition; and community services.

52. Strengthened collaboration remains one of the best means to ensure that the basic needs of refugees are met. In a move to examine the implications of shifting from a resource-based to a more needs-oriented planning and programming exercise, the Office has been engaged in consultations with NGOs with the aim of establishing strategic operational partnerships, as NGOs increasingly bring their own resources and expertise to refugee assistance, protection, and resettlement operations. This should help to improve coordination, avoid duplication of efforts and better target humanitarian assistance and protection.

53. UNHCR also works closely with numerous NGOs and NGO umbrella groups on advocacy and policy formulation. NGOs play a pivotal role in UNHCR's Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement which each year bring together States, NGOs, and UNHCR to review ongoing programmes and policies. NGOs have also participated actively in the discussions of the Core Groups of the High Commissioner's Forum on the three strands of Convention Plus: the strategic use of resettlement; irregular secondary movement of refugees and asylum-seekers; and targeting development assistance to achieve durable solutions.

54. NGOs bring special expertise and field experience to UNHCR's governance meetings, notably through the joint NGO statements delivered at the Executive Committee and its Standing Committees throughout the year. Following an ExCom decision in 2004, NGOs have a greater role in the consultative process in which member States prepare ExCom conclusions and decisions by providing comments to drafts through the Rapporteur.

55. For the first time, NGOs were represented on the customary annual mission of the newly elected Chairman of the ExCom Bureau to a field location. The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), on behalf of the NGO community, joined the mission to Chad and

Darfur, which allowed for both parties to hear the perspectives and draw conclusions from the different actors involved in the operation – the Governments, United Nations, NGOs, and other international organizations.

56. In view of their expertise, NGOs were heavily involved in the review and drafting of a policy on refugees in urban settings in collaboration with several UNHCR Headquarters units.

57. As protection partners, NGOs are involved in numerous activities ranging from the provision of legal advice and participation with UNHCR in the refugee status determination (RSD) process to field protection monitoring and support. A follow-up meeting to a December 2003 retreat on Protection Partnerships with key NGOs and the ICRC was held on the margins of the June 2005 Standing Committee. The meeting focused on tools developed by NGOs to assess the protection needs of refugees and on strengthening UNHCR and NGO cooperation on implementing the Agenda for Protection.

58. UNHCR maintained its standby arrangements with NGOs, some of which have existed for up to ten years. These arrangements enhance the Office's capacity to respond to emergencies through deployment of qualified staff in the areas of refugee protection, resettlement, community services, field security, child protection, engineering, telecommunications and other vital sectors.

59. Collaboration with NGOs is also seen throughout UNHCR's extensive field operations. In Central and South America, the Office works extensively with national NGOs to form Protection Networks whose services extend from providing legal counselling to assistance to urban refugees and the internally displaced. Similarly, in Central and Eastern Europe, the Office works in association with some international NGOs to strengthen the capacities of dynamic national NGOs who will remain an active force for refugee protection as UNHCR's operations phase down. In Southern Africa, UNHCR collaborates closely with national and international NGOs on providing legal services, information and educational opportunities to urban refugees. In Asia and the Middle East, UNHCR continues to offer emergency management training with an emerging group of national and international NGOs which are increasingly active in refugee emergency operations.

60. UNHCR has provided financial support to a number of NGO initiatives including the Global IDP Project managed by the Norwegian Refugee Council, ICVA's advocacy role on refugee policy, and the ReachOut Project protection workshops. Financial support was also provided to national NGOs to attend the March and June Standing Committee meetings. NGOs were able to participate in the European Representatives' meeting held at Headquarters in June. This opportunity allowed NGOs to promote the importance of their strategic involvement in operational activities, such as needs assessments, programme planning and project monitoring and evaluation.