

**INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE-WORKING GROUP
50th MEETING**

18-19 September 2002

Conference Room 9, United Nations Headquarters New York

**IDPs: Update on the work of the IDP Unit
ToR on Protection Coalition on Internal Displacement
(For Information)**

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Background

1. It is recognized that protection of internally displaced persons (IDPs) poses enormous challenges to operational agencies in the field, as humanitarian intervention confronts many obstacles including lack of local capacities and insufficient awareness of the plight of IDPs, lack of political will, restrictions to access, continuing human rights abuses, gaps in mandates, lack of operational capacity and insufficient funding.
2. The need to further enhance protection for internally displaced persons was clearly stated in the terms of reference of the Internal Displacement Unit, established to support the ERC in his overall coordination responsibility on behalf of IDPs within the UN system. In addition to identifying and developing approaches to reinforcing protection, the Unit proposed the creation of a Protection Coalition, particularly aiming at supporting the role of RCs and HCs in implementing their responsibility for the strategic coordination of the UN's response to protection and assistance needs of IDPs and ensuring that gaps in the response are systematically addressed¹.
3. The definition of protection that will be used by the Protection Coalition in its work is the IASC definition, elaborated in an ICRC-sponsored workshop: The concept of protection "*encompasses all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (human rights, humanitarian and refugee law)*".²

Purpose

4. Using the IASC paper on "Protection of Internally Displaced" as the overall policy guidelines, together with the relevant domestic, human rights and international humanitarian law instruments as legal framework and the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as its frame of reference, the purpose of the Protection Coalition is two-fold:

¹ Paragraph 18 of the Supplementary Guidance to Humanitarian/Resident Coordinators on their Responsibilities in Relation to Internally Displaced Persons of 4 April 2000.

² Protection of Internally Displaced Persons, Inter-Agency Standing Committee Policy Paper Series No. 2, p. 4; the policy paper was endorsed by the IASC on 6 December 1999.

- a. To improve the quality and effectiveness of practical protection in the field
- b. To advise the Unit in its efforts to improve the general protection framework for IDPs.

Participation

5. The Coalition is open to all members of the Senior Inter-Agency Network on Internal Displacement. It is however envisaged that agencies with a protection mandate or interest will form a core group of participants³. Other members of the Network may participate in the context of a specific task or activity of concern to their organisation.
6. Coalition members will work closely with the Country Team and other humanitarian agencies in the field and based on each member's expertise and capacity, contribute in each instance of intervention.
7. On occasion, the Coalition through the Unit may invite a non-member to a specific session, when its technical expertise or knowledge of the situation renders its participation useful.

Basic Criteria for Coalition Involvement

8. The Coalition will deal primarily with specific protection questions or problems referred to this forum by the HC/RCs.
9. The Coalition may also receive information on and requests for support in regard to specific protection issues from other relevant actors, including field-based humanitarian organizations and NGOs. It may also seek information on its own initiative. In both these cases, the HC/RC of the country concerned will be consulted as to the possible action required. Likewise, the Coalition may be called upon to follow-up on the protection recommendations stemming from country missions undertaken by the Unit, the Senior Network, inter-agency teams and of the Representative of the Secretary General on Internally Displaced Persons (RSG-IDPs).
10. The issues referred must manifest a specific protection problem or gap, and it must fall under the purview of the members of the Senior Network.
11. In relation to system-wide improvements, the Coalition will be consulted to guide the work of the Unit in the implementation of a Protection Survey to be undertaken jointly with the RSG-IDPs and the Brookings Institute-SAIS Project

³ After consultations with members of the Senior Inter-Agency Network, the core group will consist of representatives of ICVA, Inter-Action, IOM, NRC, OCHA, OHCHR, SCHR, RSG-IDPs, UNDP, UNHCR and UNICEF. As standing invitees, ICRC and IFRC will liaise closely with the members of the Coalition while keeping their independence towards policy statements issued by the Coalition

on Internal Displacement⁴. Advice will be sought from the Coalition on the selection of IDP operations and themes to be prioritised in the Survey, the design of a questionnaire and for the identification of best field protection practices. This may relate, for instance, to practical ways of applying the Guiding Principles or improved implementation of existing guidelines, such as the IASC policy paper on “Protection of Internally Displaced”.

Working Methods

12. In order to ensure mutual collaboration and trust between the humanitarian community in the field and the Coalition, the Unit will actively pursue a dialogue with HCs/RCs on the purpose of the Coalition.
13. The Unit will ensure that at all times the Senior Inter-Agency Network is fully informed of the activities of the Coalition.
14. The Coalition will base its work on the institutional knowledge of each participating agency through their field representation and will seek to enhance the field capacity to respond.
15. Activities may be undertaken directly by the Coalition or some individual members, as well as through experts or consultants. These may include, *inter-alia*, technical legal advice, capacity building, support in the development of common protection standards and monitoring systems, fielding of missions, deployment of experts on a short-term basis, sharing of best practices applicable to or related to the situation under review, or mobilization of resources in support of protection projects. Special emphasis will be placed on identifying and anticipating problems to reduce displacement. The Coalition will also examine ways of responding promptly to protection emergencies.
16. The Unit will seek to cover the costs of support services through a range of financial sources, including the concerned Country Teams’ budgets under or outside CAPs, the Human Security Trust-Fund and other financial sources earmarked for IDP activities currently being explored by the Unit.
17. The Unit shall act as the Secretariat of the Coalition. In consultation with members, the Unit will set the agenda and convene meetings. It will prepare minutes of meetings, which shall be shared with the concerned operational agencies in the field through the HC/RC. An internal review of the work of the Coalition will be conducted at the end of the first year of its existence.

⁴ See enclosed the Terms of Reference of the Protection Survey