

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP
27&28 November 1997

**Item 2.: Divestment of Operational activities currently undertaken
by DHA in Afghanistan, Angola and Liberia**

The ECHA-WG tasked the IASC to review the coordination arrangements in Afghanistan, Angola and Liberia to identify what operational activities were currently being undertaken by DHA in those countries. The ECHA-WG further recommended that the operational activities so identified, be divested by the end of 1997. Flowing from the discussions in the Working Group, the assumption is that activities related to Demobilization and Reintegration, Demining, Logistics/Communications, and IDPs could be considered operational. Consultations were consequently initiated with the Humanitarian Coordinators in the three countries on these activities. These consultations were accompanied by the exchange of information and a desk review of these four major activities in the three countries. Since these activities have direct implications on personnel, special emphasis has been placed on reviewing the staffing/functions of the organigrammes of the coordination structures (see annex I-III - only in hardcopy form). The financial implications of the operations are not considered important at this level of analysis to allow the IASC-WG to take decisions on divestment. Hence this area has not been covered. Outcome of the reviews are given below:

Afghanistan

UNOCHA is not involved in any demobilization activities. It has devolved responsibilities for IDPs to the operational agencies, viz ICRC as the lead agency collaborating with WFP and UNHCR.

The Aircraft Operation and Radio Communications that UNOCHA manages provide common services to all UN agencies, NGOs, local authorities and diplomatic corps travelling to Afghanistan. The aircraft is run on the basis of cost-sharing ("user pays") and is supported by 27 national staff. The communication system, providing services to UN agencies and NGOs, is run by 1 international and 12 national staff. The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator considers these two activities as "services" and not "programmes" or "projects". He proposes that the Aircraft and Radio Communication operations remain under the management of the UN Relief Coordination for Afghanistan.

UNOCHA manages a very successful Mine Action Programme, headed by a Senior Programme Manager and Deputy Designated Official for Security. It is staffed by six international and 20 national staff. The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator proposes that the Mine Action Programme remains attached to the Office of the UN Coordinator for Afghanistan and continues to be administered by UNOCHA.

This proposal is supported by the recommendation of the ACABQ to the Secretary-General in its letter of 9 May 1996, reconfirmed by the Director of the Budget Division on 8 June 1997, that "the demining coordination activities of UNOCHA represent the coordination and supervision of the overall demining programme in Afghanistan and should be a part of the UNOCHA coordinating budget". Furthermore, the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on United Nations reform: measures and proposals (document A/52/303 states in paragraph 25.8 that "the Emergency Relief Coordinator will retain responsibility for... humanitarian programmes in Afghanistan and Cambodia, together with their related staffing and resources."

In addition, UNDP, to which UNOCHA could have divested its Mine Action Programme as well as the Aircraft and Radio Communication operations, may not have the capacity to undertake these responsibilities. Moreover, with the change in management the overhead costs for the operations would increase significantly.

Angola

UCAH does not provide any logistics services to the operational agencies. It has phased out of the Mine Action Programme. It has 1 international professional staff responsible for monitoring IDPs. It maintains a total of 44 staff, 13 of which are international professional staff (6 paid by DHA), 21 UNV's and 10 national staff managing the Demobilization and Reintegration Programme. UNDP has expressed willingness in principle to take over these responsibilities, with IOM as its implementing partner. IOM has agreed on the condition that adequate funding be ensured.

Liberia

UN/HACO operates in support of the humanitarian community in Liberia. It is an equal member of the UN Country Team. It has no Mine Action Programme and it has phased out of the Demobilization and Reintegration Programme in February 1997.

Conclusions and IASC-WG decisions:

Of the three humanitarian coordination systems reviewed, Liberia is not involved in any operational activities; Angola should phase out of the Demobilization and Reintegration programmes, and has 1 International Professional staff as an IDP Monitor; and Afghanistan considers Logistics/Communications activities as essential elements of its coordination functions.

The IASC-WG is requested to:

1. Seek agreement that IDP monitoring is not considered operational and could therefore continue under UCAH.
2. Agree to divest demobilization and reintegration activities by UCAH to UNDP with IOM as implementing partner. IOM has agreed to this arrangement on the condition that funding is secured.
3. Endorse the continuation of the Logistic/Communication support functions under UNOCHA's management.
4. Endorse the continuation of the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan under UNOCHA management and advise the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator to enter into discussions with DPKO to agree on the best arrangements for the management of the programme.