

**INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE WORKING-GROUP
XXXX MEETING**

Rome ~ 17-18 February 2000

IASC Policy on the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International response to crises of internal displacement has tended to focus on material assistance. Agencies now recognise the importance of an agreed, integrated strategy for protection and assistance to IDPs. However, the situation of the internally displaced varies from country to country. Strategies must be adapted to the comparative advantages of agencies on the ground and the willingness and capacities of national authorities to fulfil their responsibilities towards the internally displaced.

The IASC Policy, endorsed on December 6 1999, acknowledges that both International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law contain provisions for protection against forced displacement and against abuses during displacement. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement of 1998 spell out these provisions in detail.

The IASC emphasises that the protection of internally displaced persons is a shared responsibility of humanitarian/development agencies. It identifies fourteen strategic areas for agencies to focus on in order to build a protective environment and to integrate protection features into operational response and remedial action. The Policy addresses the need for advocacy, prevention and preparedness, including the promotion of the Guiding Principles, integrated training and the strengthening of national and local capacities. It calls for systematic programming in order to support community-based protection, to develop protection strategies for women, children and other vulnerable groups, and to ensure adequate protection in the search for durable solutions. Furthermore, the Policy emphasises the importance of coordinated programming, monitoring and reporting.

With regard to responsibilities for action, the IASC reiterates that protection and assistance to internally displaced persons is, first and foremost, the duty of national authorities. The IASC therefore calls on agencies to adhere to a collaborative approach adapted to the specific context of each crisis, in consultation with national and local authorities. In situations where national authorities are unable or unwilling to contribute to the effective protection and assistance to the internally displaced, arrangements for coordination of the international response will be established with the participation of local authorities, as appropriate.

The IASC reaffirms that the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator is responsible for assessing the situation and, where necessary, establishing institutional arrangements for addressing the needs of the war-affected population. For this purpose, he/she consults with the UN Country Team with national and local authorities. He/she ensures that the Country Team develops, and adheres to, a joint plan for responding to the needs of internally displaced persons, which integrates measures for assistance and protection. The plan also

clearly identifies the agreed division of responsibilities among governmental bodies; international agencies and NGOs based on their respective comparative advantage and capacity. Where appropriate, the plan may provide for the appointment of a lead agency for internally displaced persons.

The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator presents the joint plan developed by the Country Team to the Emergency Relief Coordinator and through him/her to the IASC. The Emergency Relief Coordinator reviews the proposed plan recommends it to the IASC. The Emergency Relief Coordinator and the IASC keep under constant review the institutional arrangements in countries faced by crises of internal displacement, in order to make sure that they remain adequate.