

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

**Rome ~ 17-18 February 2000**

**IASC Policy on Protection of Internally Displaced Persons**

**OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE TO  
RESIDENT/HUMANITARIAN COORDINATORS<sup>1</sup>**

**1. Responsibilities**

- 1.1. At headquarters level, the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), as chairman of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), is the focal point for the inter-agency coordination of protection/assistance to IDPs.
- 1.2. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee<sup>2</sup> (IASC) is the inter-agency forum for consultations on all matters regarding IDPs.
- 1.3. At the field level, the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC)<sup>3</sup> is responsible for the strategic coordination of assistance to and protection of IDPs, in full consultation with the UN Country Team. In particular:
  - the RC/HC ensures that humanitarian needs are met, taking into account the contribution of all relevant partners on the ground.
  - the RC/HC recommends to the ERC a division of tasks and responsibilities among agencies. He/she may also recommend to the ERC, in consultation with the UN Country Team, a lead agency to assume responsibility for IDPs.
  - the RC/HC serves as an advocate for protection/assistance to IDPs.

**2. Coordination Mechanisms at the Outset of a IDP-Crisis**

- 2.1. The RC/HC reports to the ERC on any evolving situation of internal displacement. The ERC shares relevant information with the IASC.

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<sup>1</sup> The Operational Guidance is based on Section III and Section IV of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Policy on Protection of Internally Displaced Persons, endorsed on 6 December 1999.

<sup>2</sup> The IASC mechanism consists of the Committee at the level of heads of agencies, its Working Group, and Reference Groups for specific issues.

<sup>3</sup> The term Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) is used to reflect the fact that in most countries in crisis the two functions are carried out by one official. In countries where the Secretary-General has designated an overall lead agency for humanitarian action, the Country Director of that agency takes is the responsible and accountable official. In those countries where the RC and HC functions are separate, responsibility for activities related to internally displaced persons is vested in the HC.

- 2.2. The ERC recommends to the IASC the appointment of a senior official responsible for the UN's response to the needs of the IDPs. This official will normally be the RC/HC or, when deemed appropriate, the Country Director of a lead agency for IDPs.
- 2.3. The RC/HC, or the IDP lead agency, initiates consultations with the UN Country Team and other international organisations and establishes in-country task forces on IDPs.
- 2.4. The RC/HC, or the IDP lead agency in consultation with the UN Resident Coordinator, conducts consultations with national and local authorities to assess the willingness and capacity of the government to respond to the crisis and to fulfil its obligations with regard to protection/assistance in situations of internal displacement and in order to establish a joint understanding of the measures required to respond to the crisis.
- 2.5. The RC/HC, or the IDP lead agency, takes into account the availability of expertise related to the protection of IDPs from the OHCHR, the ICRC and agencies with a special experience or responsibility in protection matters.
- 2.6. The RC/HC, or the IDP lead agency, leads the Country Team in developing an integrated plan for responding to the assistance/protection needs of IDPs, ensuring that such plan takes account of the policy guidance provided in the IASC Policy Paper on Protection of IDPs.
- 2.7. In developing the integrated plan on IDPs the RC/HC, or the IDP lead agency, may call upon the ERC to send an expert mission to assist with the process.
- 2.8. The RC/HC, or the IDP lead agency, presents the integrated plan on IDPs to the ERC, and through him/her to the IASC. The ERC reviews the proposed plan and recommends it to the IASC.
- 2.9. The RC/HC, or the IDP lead agency, may encourage the development of *Memoranda of Understanding* or other institutional arrangements between key partners (governmental, non-governmental and international organisations) in the humanitarian response to displacement situations in order to clarify roles and responsibilities.

### **3. Coordination Mechanisms in Ongoing IDP-Crises**

- 3.1. The RC/HC, or the IDP lead agency, supervises the in-country task forces on IDPs, ensuring that the Country Team maintains an integrated plan on IDPs that is updated according to the evolution of the crisis.
- 3.2. The RC/HC, or the IDP lead agency, reports regularly to the ERC on the situation of IDPs, with input from the UN Country Team and other international organisations, highlighting gaps and other problems in assistance and protection measures, as well as lack of access or resources.

- 3.3. The RC/HC, or the IDP lead agency, also advises the ERC on possibilities for the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons<sup>4</sup> (RSG) to intervene with national authorities in the country in question and with the international community in support of protection/assistance to the IDPs.
- 3.4. The ERC reviews the reports from the field and shares relevant information with the IASC in order to provide support and address problems, e.g. through inter-agency consultations, negotiations of access, advocacy with donors.
- 3.5. Where required the ERC, in consultation with the RC/HC or the IDP lead agency and with IASC agencies, field's expert missions in order to review the coordination needs on the ground and determine adequate measures in support of the RC/HC and the Country Team.
- 3.6. The ERC keeps the IASC regularly informed on situations of internal displacement by providing detailed updated accounts on the institutional arrangements for the provision of protection/assistance in each affected country.
- 3.7. The IASC reviews country arrangements with regard to IDPs and monitors the follow-up to field visits by the ERC, inter-agency missions or country-visits of the RSG.

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<sup>4</sup> The Representative of the Secretary-General on IDPs is a member of the IASC.