

**INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP
52nd MEETING**

12-13 March 2003

**FAO Headquarters, Rome
Philippine Room (C277)**

IDPs : Strengthening IDP Response & Update on IDP Unit

Circulated: 26 February 2003

Background

In late August 2002, the High Commissioner for Refugees Ruud Lubbers addressed a letter to the Emergency Relief Coordinator Kenzo Oshima outlining UNHCR's present and future involvement in situations of internal displacement. In a meeting held in NY, Mr. Lubbers and Mr. Oshima agreed to share this correspondence with key operational agencies working on behalf of IDPs in order to promote complementarity of efforts and address possible gaps in the response to the protection and assistance needs of the displaced. The Internal Displacement Unit took the lead to organize a series of informal discussions among IASC partners to gauge reactions to the letters and agree on possible follow up.

From the discussions, a consensus emerged on the need to further a common understanding on the institutional arrangements governing the international response to crises of internal displacement

In this light, a number of follow-up actions were agreed upon: (a) the mapping out the activities of all IASC members in regard to IDPs the undertaking of an IDP Protection Survey, and (b) the elaboration of a Guidance Note on the Collaborative Approach

The IDP Response Matrix and Protection Survey

The Unit has initiated two projects aimed at gaining a more comprehensive picture of the UN's response to internal displacement at the field level.

The Protection Survey, being jointly undertaken by the Internal Displacement Unit and the Brookings-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement aims to highlight, through a series of field visits, challenges and best practices in UN operations addressing protection issues as well as to encourage States to respect their obligations towards the internally displaced.

The IDP Response Matrix focuses more on institutional issues in the international response to internal displacement and the identification of gaps.

Both projects were endorsed by the IASC-WG in November 2002.

With regard to the IDP Response Mapping, the Unit has worked on developing the methodology of exercise: the mapping will be undertaken by means of a questionnaire to be compiled by actors on the ground.

The questionnaire will include questions aiming to:

- Map the involvement of IASC members in their response to internal displacement in all countries affected by internal displacement.
- Examine the use of essential IASC policies which support the collaborative approach in the response to internal displacement.
- Identify possible institutional gaps in the response to internal displacement and develop appropriate recommendations to fill those gaps.

A draft questionnaire has been developed and shared for comments with the Inter Agency Network on internal displacement. It is envisaged that the finalised questionnaire be sent to the field for completion by the end of March 2003. Field data will be collected and analysed during the months of April and May. Preliminary findings will be presented to the IASC-WG June 2003 Meeting. The final report will be made available at the ECOSOC Humanitarian Segment in July 2003.

Requested Action by the IASC-WG:

The IASC-WG is requested to take note of progress made, and to inform their field offices of the forthcoming questionnaire and to encourage them to collaborate in the data collection phase. The support of the IASC will be crucial in the successful completion of this exercise.

Guidance Note on the Collaborative Approach

As requested by key inter agency partners, the Unit has also taken the lead in drafting a Guidance Note on the international institutional framework for IDPs, namely the collaborative approach.

The Unit has prepared a first draft of the Note, which has been shared with the Inter Agency Network on Internal Displacement for comments.

As agreed, once finalized, the Guidance Note will be sent out by the IASC agencies to their country representatives.

Requested Action by the IASC-WG:

The IASC-WG should express full support for this initiative, aimed at promoting a common understanding of institutional arrangements on behalf of IDPs, and request its members to issue the finalised Guidance Note to their staff, particularly in the field.



Update on the Internal Displacement Unit

December 2002 and January 2003

Extension of the mandate of the Internal Displacement Unit

- The USG for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Kenzo Oshima, confirmed in January 2003 that the Secretary General had agreed to extend the Internal Displacement Unit for another year. The Unit, which will continue to be led by Mr. Kofi Asomani, will retain its inter-agency nature based on a collaborative approach to strengthen the international response to the assistance and protection needs of the internally displaced.
- The Unit's 2003 Project Proposal has been prepared and made available to donors. The proposal outlines objectives, priorities and planned activities for 2003, as well as funding requirements.

Current activities and priorities

Country specific support:

- Democratic Republic of Congo

Two Unit officials travelled to Kinshasa and Eastern DRC from 1 to 7 December 2002 to prepare for a wider inter-agency mission being fielded from 26 January to 8 February 2003 to assist the DRC Country Team in preparing strategic plans for addressing the different internal displacement situations across the country. Unit officials also developed a capacity building program for national and local authorities. The program, which is to be implemented in collaboration with the Norwegian Refugee Council training project, is expected to start in the first quarter of 2003, subject to the availability of funding.

- Indonesia

A Unit official, jointly with the OCHA desk officer for Indonesia, travelled to Indonesia from 20 to 30 January 2003, to participate in the annual OCHA-Indonesia Retreat and to follow up on the Unit's May 2002 mission to the country. Discussions focussed on the critical issue of when displacement ends, and how to contribute to voluntary return/reintegration/resettlement and ensure durable solutions for the estimated 1.2 million Indonesian IDPs. This was particularly relevant in light of the Government of Indonesia's policy on Internal Displacement, which sets out to resolve the issue of internal displacement by June 2003.

A five-day field visit to Central Sulawesi allowed the Unit to assess the Government's notable efforts to assist in the return of IDPs. However, some challenges remain, including the availability of reliable and accurate data on IDPs, the need for reconciliation and economic recovery activities and the monitoring of conditions of returnees to ensure sustainability.

System wide issues:

- IDP Protection Survey

The IDP Protection Survey was launched in December 2002. The Survey Team began a series of field visits to examine how UN country teams and other relevant actors support States in discharging their responsibility for the protection of internally displaced persons or, in some cases, more directly provide protection to IDPs. The Survey Team visited the Russian Federation in December 2002 and Somalia, Burundi and Liberia in January 2003. Upcoming field visits include Angola and Nigeria.

- IASC Training on Internal Displacement

The 2003 IDP training strategy, which reviews accomplishments of 2002 and sets priority for 2003, was finalized. In 2003 emphasis will continue to be on awareness raising and implementation of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement among country teams and governments. Efforts to promote the incorporation of the Principles into national legislation in specific countries will also continue. A more intensive capacity building program for DRC is also envisaged.

The 2003 strategy was discussed with over 25 inter agency partners in the course of a training review, held in Geneva on 27-28 January 2003. Participants included inter agency IDP focal points as well as officials who had participated in the 2002 IDP Train of Trainers and had assisted in the training deliveries.

Inter Agency Collaboration:

- IDP Protection Coalition

The IDP Protection Coalition met on 8 December 2002 and again on 16 January 2003. Discussions focused on follow up to the Sierra Leone and Liberia mission (8-18 November 2002) undertaken to strengthen IDP protection. The Coalition agreed that a protection expert be fielded to Liberia for a two to three month period to support the establishment of a Protection Action and Funding Plan. An appropriate candidate has already been identified and OCHA is considering funding for an initial period of two months

Following a request for support from the HC, the Coalition also discussed ways to best support protection efforts in the Russian Federation. An inter agency mission focusing on protection issues is envisaged to take place in February 2003.

- Participation in Vienna Meeting

The Director of the Unit and the Unit official seconded from the office of the RSG Deng participated in an symposium on “The Mandate of the Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons: Taking Stock and Charting the Future”, held in occasion of the ten-year anniversary of the mandate of the RSG. The Symposium took place in Vienna on 12 -13 December 2002 and was hosted by the Governments of Austria and Norway in collaboration with the Brookings Institution-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement. Topics discussed included the normative framework i.e. the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, institutional arrangements for IDPs as well as awareness raising of the IDP-issue. The report on the Symposium is to be published by The Brookings Institution.

Other News:

- Status of Funding

The Unit’s financial requirements for 2002 amounted to USD 2.03 million. As of December 2002, contributions paid to the Unit amounted to USD 2.1 million, while, based on provisional financial figures, expenditures and obligations amounted to USD 1.9 million. The Unit’s financial requirements for 2003, as outlined in the OCHA CAP 2003, amount to 2.38 million. During the month of January 2003, the Unit received contributions from Denmark and Japan.

Unit priorities for the coming months:

- The inter agency mission to the Democratic Republic will take place from 26 January to 8 February 2003.
- The IDP Protection Survey will continue its field assessments, visiting Afghanistan, Angola and Nigeria.
- IDP Training workshops are scheduled to take place in Amman (Jordan), Kosovo (FRY) and Congo Brazzaville.

For more information on the activities of the Internal Displacement Unit and to view our background documents and mission reports, please visit our website at <http://www.reliefweb.int/idp>.