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**Afghanistan: The Internally Displaced in Afghanistan: Towards Durable Solutions  
Report of the Inter-agency Mission, May 2003**

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## 1 Introduction

The Inter-agency mission was deployed at the request of UNAMA and as a follow-up of an assessment mission by OCHA's Internally Displacement Unit undertaken in March 2002. The purpose of the mission was basically threefold, namely:

- to review the prevailing IDP situation in order to identify outstanding gaps in the response to the needs of IDPs and to recommend how such gaps should be addressed;
- to examine the linkages between humanitarian and recovery interventions on behalf of IDPs and to recommend how transitional activities could be strengthened; and
- to review institutional arrangements for addressing IDP needs both within the UN system and its partners and between it and the Afghanistan Transitional Administration (ATA).

The mission was composed of representatives of seven UN agencies,<sup>1</sup> IOM and a representative from the NGO community. Following an initial three days of consultations in Kabul, the mission split into two teams for a week - one focusing on Kandahar and Hirat and the second on Mazar-i-Sharif and Maimana. Further consultations and debriefings were undertaken in Kabul for three days at the conclusion of the mission.

This report is to the UN Country Team (UNCT) and should be shared with the ATA and the NGO community in Afghanistan.

## 2 The IDP situation

The current IDP population is estimated by UNHCR at around 300,000 of which some 200,000 remain dependent upon WFP food distribution.<sup>2</sup> Of this total, approximately

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex 1 for the mission composition

<sup>2</sup> Various other estimates of numbers of IDPs exist but this report will utilize the numbers used by UNHCR, and agreed upon with the Government, as the mission was unable to independently verify the actual size of

50,000 are located in the west, some 40,000 in the north, around 50,000 in the greater Kabul area, and the balance of 160,000 in the south. These numbers have been substantially reduced from a peak of around one million at the time of the Taliban's ouster. Return movements are continuing, albeit at diminishing rates, from the Hirat camps and within the north. Those that have returned or locally integrated are considered to have attained at least a minimal level of self-sufficiency.

While the majority of drought-affected IDPs in the north and west were able to return when adequate rainfall was experienced last year and excellent rains occurred this year, in the south and southeast drought conditions continue to prevail and drought-affected IDPs, consisting predominantly of the nomadic pastoralist Kuchi, currently constitute the single largest IDP group. The largest displaced Kuchi population is currently located in the southern Pashtun areas of Kandahar and Helmand provinces. A sizable number of Kuchi are also displaced from the north and northwest and are in the Hirat camps, however, they were not displaced by drought but due to human rights violations. The remaining non-Kuchi IDPs are all protection cases, most but not all being Pashtun, who are unwilling to return to their homes in the north and northwest for fear of retribution for alleged Taliban association and/or due to human rights violations because of their ethnicity. There have been significant IDP returns in the northeast but protection problems remain in the Kunduz area.

The displaced population residing in urban areas has been difficult to define and to address their protection and assistance needs. In the greater Kabul area it is estimated there are around 50,000 persons that can be considered as IDPs. However, a considerable number have returned to Hazarjat and the Shomali plains and UNHCR's current 'active' caseload is estimated at around 15,000. It is difficult to distinguish IDPs from urban poor, economic migrants and refugee returnees who have settled in Kabul and other large towns in search of employment. In order to better understand this phenomenon an analysis of the different waves of displacement into and out of Kabul over the past two and a half decades of conflict would be helpful. While a significant number of IDPs have found at least minimal livelihoods outside of camp-like situations and survive at levels similar to the rest of the urban poor, it should be emphasized that this recent spontaneous local integration remains fragile and many urban IDPs remain vulnerable to further displacement from loss of livelihoods.

Authorities in Kabul, as in most other larger towns, object to the large rural to urban migration in search of livelihoods and in some instances have evicted squatters from abandoned and derelict buildings. A key problem facing IDPs returning to urban areas of origin, as well as returning refugees and the local population, is that of property restitution. The near complete breakdown of the land registration system, together with multiple layers of alleged ownership for many plots of land, will require difficult negotiations and substantial resources to redress.

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the IDP population given the time frame of the mission. Moreover, the issues of 'who is an IDP' and 'how long does one remain an IDP' is a highly complex one that clearly impinges on any enumeration of IDPs and is beyond the scope of this report to address in any comprehensive manner.

Overall, the current IDP situation has stabilized in the sense that international actors and the Afghan authorities are, with only few exceptions, no longer responding to an emergency situation with life-saving interventions. This is mainly due to the end of the four year drought in the north and west, reintegration efforts in some of the drought-affected areas by both the humanitarian and development actors and a gradual improvement of the overall security and human rights situation in some parts of the country over the past eighteen months. At the same time, however, there are still some families fleeing their places of origin in the north and others, who left their place of origin during Taliban times, are still on the move and in search of assistance and/or livelihoods. Elsewhere, Kuchi from the southern drought affected provinces of Nimroz, Helmand and Kandahar, are relocating to areas within the larger southern towns such as Lashkar Gah and Kandahar.

The overall conditions of the IDPs remaining in camps have improved considerably from conditions in early 2002. UNHCR in partnership with UNICEF, WFP and the NGOs have succeeded in ensuring that most camp IDPs now have at least basic shelter, access to potable water and basic healthcare, as well as minimal nutritional standards. However, this has not always been an easy achievement as local authorities have at times been less than cooperative for fear of creating poles of attraction in the camps or because they were intent on dispersing the IDPs elsewhere. UNICEF has been particularly concerned over denial of access to education in some instances for such reasons.

Therefore, given the prevailing security conditions, the current IDP situation is one where the majority of IDPs that have been able to return have done so, leaving a residual population made up primarily of IDPs unable or unwilling to return for the time being. The Government is therefore faced with the challenge of creating enabling environments in areas of origin that will encourage IDPs to return or, alternatively, for creating durable solutions for IDPs in their areas of displacement or elsewhere. In either case, the Government is being encouraged by UNHCR and its partners to shift from a policy that has primarily consisted of care and maintenance of IDPs to one that seeks longer-term and lasting solutions.

However, while the central Government has endorsed a National Reintegration Strategy with the declared objective of mainstreaming returnees and has accepted the overall principle of streamlining the reintegration of IDPs into national development programmes as a declared priority, it appears that finding durable solutions for IDPs is not yet high on the agenda of key provincial authorities. There appears to be little coordinated effort by such authorities to address IDP solutions, despite the continued attempts by UNHCR to engage with representatives of relevant ministries, governors' offices and influential commanders in the various regions, and particularly in the south. Greater priority, understanding and cooperation by national authorities in addressing the gap between agreed policies and poor implementation at the provincial level is, therefore, essential to finding durable solutions. International assistance actors thus need to pay greater attention to such a gap.

### 3 Security

Insecurity and lack of rule of law are major constraints to general long-term development in Afghanistan and by extension to comprehensively addressing the needs of most of the residual IDP population. Throughout much of the country the rule of law is at best weak and at worst non-existent. Presently, all UN activities have been suspended in Uruzgan, Zabul and northern Helmand provinces and restrictions on movements have recently been imposed on southern Helmand and parts of Kandahar province which have seriously reduced access to IDP camps and other informal settlements. In parts of the south and southeast, even NGOs have significantly scaled-back their operations in recent months due to increased insecurity. There is growing concern that international staff is being targeted by radical opposition factions in the south and southeast. Thus, national staff is increasingly being utilized for implementing programmes. However, even they are increasingly at risk of being targeted and their deployment to high-risk areas must therefore be closely monitored. The dramatic growth of poppy cultivation throughout the country has added a further dimension to insecurity and risk.

Insecurity impacts on most dimensions of the international community's support to IDPs. Comprehensive assessments cannot be undertaken in many areas, in turn, constraining planning and project development. Lack of security limits the extent and effectiveness of monitoring IDP needs and providing them with protection. Operations are frequently subject to interruptions or suspension due to security incidents or risks thereof. The limited presence of 'development' actors in many regions is also attributable, at least in part, to insecurity. Hence, both the quality and geographic coverage of support to the authorities for IDP protection and provision of services is seriously compromised in areas of insecurity.

Human rights violations remain widespread and often occur with impunity. Limited access by the international community and inadequate Government mechanisms for challenging impunity by violators means that adequate protection cannot be provided and many violations remain unreported. While traditional conflict and dispute resolution mechanisms are still generally in place, and do indeed often succeed in upholding a degree of rule of law, particularly with respect to competing claims for access to land, these mechanisms are often sidelined with impunity by local commanders.

Until such time when a better trained and unified police force is in place, the judicial reform process runs its course, the Afghan National Army is strengthened and deployed countrywide, and the disarmament and demobilization programme becomes fully operational, it is unlikely that many of the current security constraints will abate. To date, ISAF has not been deployed to areas of high insecurity beyond Kabul. It is also unclear whether the deployment of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) by the coalition forces will have any significant effect on reducing insecurity.

### 4 Options for durable solutions

Any strategy for the international community's continuing support to IDPs and attaining the ultimate goal of durable solutions for the residual IDPs must be underpinned by the principle that the ultimate responsibility for solutions rests squarely with the national authorities. It must also be guided by the fact that a large proportion of the Afghan population is as vulnerable and poverty-bound as are IDPs. While IDPs are supported as a special population when in camps or informal settlements, once they voluntarily return to their areas of origin, choose to resettle elsewhere, or decide to integrate where they are, they should be addressed as part of the greater community through existing recovery and development mechanism. At the same time, recovery and development programmes which embrace IDPs as equal beneficiaries must be implemented in a timelier manner to visibly demonstrate a tangible peace dividend to the Afghan people. Such measures should not, however, prejudice their claims over lands and assets that they were forced to leave behind.

The Government's basic policy on IDPs, as with returning refugees, is that the most desirable solution is their return to areas of origin. The international community has a responsibility to assist the Afghan authorities in attaining this goal for those that freely chose this option. However, most of the remaining IDPs are unwilling or unable to return to their areas of origin in the near future. While there is growing recognition among some Government officials that it may be necessary to consider alternate options such as local integration or resettlement, the dialogue on such alternative options has yet to produce a general acceptance of this principle, especially at the provincial levels. Nor has there been any serious discussion about a fundamental contribution required from the authorities to make alternate options feasible, namely, access to land.

Given that the majority of those displaced at the beginning of 2002 have since returned to their areas of origin, and the fact that only a very small number subsequently returned to the IDP camps, suggests that the returnees have been able to achieve at least a minimal level of self-sustainability on their return. Nevertheless, it remains incumbent upon the international community to closely monitor the conditions of returnees in close collaboration with the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) and the Reintegration Unit in the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development (MRRD). There is a need for the MRRD, and its international partners. This is especially so for returnees who had been displaced by drought in the north and northwest in order to ensure that they develop sufficient safety nets to withstand the next and inevitable cycle of inadequate rainfall.

Every effort must be made to ensure that IDPs have full opportunity to access development initiatives as contemplated by such programmes as the National Solidarity Programme (NSP), National Emergency Employment Programme (NEEP), the National Credit Programme (NCP) and the National Area Based Development Programme (NABDP). However, most of these programmes have been slow to get off the ground and have yet to show any substantial impact on the lives of the Afghan population. Thus, both the authorities and the international community should realize that granting IDPs access to development programmes is a strategic long-term objectives which must be complemented by specifically targeted community-based interventions to support durable

solutions for IDPs. However, until the Government reaches a decision on durable solutions, land access, local integration or resettlement, many components of the development programmes, especially the NSP and NABDP, will remain beyond the reach of the residual camp-based IDPs.

Other IDPs chose to spontaneously integrate into urban communities where some may have been able to access labour intensive employment through the Recovery and Employment Afghanistan Programme (REAP). However, the authorities have been greatly concerned about creating additional pull factors reinforcing already existing urbanization trends. As a result, UNHCR has not been as extensively involved with urban IDPs while donors have been reluctant to support IDP programmes in Kabul. Nevertheless, UN Habitat, in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MHUD), has provided some limited support through community empowerment and some shelter assistance for urban returnees in Kabul, Jalalabad, Kandahar and Mazar. Urban income generating opportunities, albeit meager and unpredictable, appear nevertheless to have permitted most urban IDPs and other returnees to sustain themselves at minimal survival levels.

As will be discussed in the next two sections, the majority of the residual IDPs consists either of persons unwilling to return out of fear for their safety or of persons unable to return as they have no livelihoods to which to return. For the Kuchi displaced from the north both reasons apply. Therefore, local integration or resettlement to other areas are options that need to be promoted. However, there are major constraints to this. In the case of the ethnic minorities displaced from the north and northwest, much resistance to local integration will be encountered from local authorities and communities in the south where many of these IDPs currently reside. Essentially, local integration solutions, if not coupled with proactive measures to create conditions for return to areas of origin, would be viewed by southern authorities as an acceptance of ethnically motivated human rights violations in the north and attempts to create ethnically homogenous regions in the country. With respect to the displaced pastoralists - the Kuchi - as well as other landless displaced, the constraints are both lack of access to land and shelter, even for small housing plots, as well as a widespread reluctance among sedentary communities to having Kuchi integrate among them.

The location of Zahre Dasht camp, far from any settlement, is a good example of the unwillingness of local communities to accept the integration of the IDP population. The provincial authorities first tried to disperse IDPs being relocated from Spin Boldak to a number of villages within Kandahar province. This plan was thwarted, however, by the reaction of the inhabitants of these villages, leading to the creation of the single, large concentration at Zahre Dasht.

Notwithstanding these constraints, it is incumbent upon the MoRR, in close collaboration with the MRRD, the Ministry for Border and Tribal Affairs (MBTA) and local authorities, to develop strategies for local integration or relocation for IDPs that have no intent or ability to return to areas of origin. The international community, and especially UNHCR, UNDP and UNAMA must strongly advocate for the acceptance of such durable

solutions and for the authorities to provide the necessary access to land to make integration feasible while keeping in mind the ‘do no harm principles’. This would primarily address the Kuchi, albeit there are many IDPs from the north and northwest who will never be able to return for fear of retaliation for actual or alleged past political affiliation or crimes.

The mission therefore *recommends that the Government, together with the international community, address the full range of options for durable solutions simultaneously, determine which options are most appropriate for specific IDP groups, and make provisions for access to land where necessary.* It is proposed that the Consultative Group for Refugees and IDPs, together with the Consultative Group on Livelihoods, be responsible for following up on this recommendation. At the same time, the phasing out of relief assistance should be gradual, synchronized, and coordinated with the introduction of these long-term initiatives in order to avoid the oft-noted ‘gap’ between relief and development interventions.

The mission also *recommends that every effort be made to implement the agreed principle to include IDP populations, whether in areas of return or in process of being integrated locally, into national development programmes such as NEEP, NSP, the NABDP and the soon to be initiated National Credit Programme (NCP).* It is suggested that this need be placed on the agenda of the Consultative Group on Livelihoods by MRRD in close collaboration with UNAMA and UNHCR. The Senior IDP Advisor in UNAMA should sustain close working relationships with the project managers of the above programmes to ensure the IDP agenda is being actively addressed by the respective managers while reporting to the UNCT regularly on progress made and/or unresolved issues.

## 5 The protection challenges

An estimated twenty percent of the IDPs remaining in camps and other concentrations cite safety as their primary reason for not returning to their areas of origin. Most prominent among them are the ethnic Pashtuns originating from the north and northwest who have been displaced to the south, the west and within the north. Many more, including some very recently displaced, are found throughout the country, with those displaced within the northern provinces are of particular concern. Some IDPs feel threatened simply because of their ethnicity while others were caught in the crossfire of competing local armed factions. The common denominator among all of these displaced is that their areas of origin are too insecure for them to return.

Clearly, a lasting change in the security and rule of law situation in much of Afghanistan would be necessary to address the valid protection concerns prevailing among IDPs and the humanitarian and development community as a whole. A certain level of instability, insecurity and human rights abuses connected to weak governance and rule of law will remain a fact of life for many Afghans for years to come. Therefore, activities in support of IDPs must be based on the reality of relative levels of risk and vulnerability, as well as on informed and voluntary choices being made by the IDPs.

The principal cause of protection problems in the north is the ongoing struggle for power and land among competing paramilitary factions and warlords. Local commanders operating in the name of larger factions retain near-absolute control over civilian life and continue to actively engage in power struggles and armed conflict. Ethnic and tribal cleavages fuel this competition. Such conflicts affect both the locally displaced IDPs within the north as well as the non-displaced population and seriously threatens the process of normalization and recovery of local communities. For those displaced to the south and west, these ongoing conflicts remain the main impediment for return. Creative and aggressive measures by the Government are required to address these security problems immediately while a longer-term reform process and institution building gets underway.

In the interim, most of these displaced remain in the camps/settlements in Kandahar and Helmand provinces (Zahre Dasht, Spin Boldak, Panjwai and Mukhtar) and to a lesser extent in Hirat province (primarily Maslakh and Shaydayee). There are also some 20,000 displaced at the border between Spin Boldak and Chaman who are not allowed to enter the refugee camps in Pakistan and, as such, remain in limbo.

In the case of the Spin Boldak camp, and the displaced 'stuck' at the Chaman border, the security situation has seriously deteriorated in recent months restricting access to these displaced by international actors. The authorities are considering forcibly relocating these IDPs, possibly to Zahre Dasht camp, for the alleged security risks that they are creating at the border. Should this happen, the IDPs will also lose their access to employment associated with the flourishing border trade. Moreover, access to Zahre Dasht has also become more restricted by growing insecurity in the province. Indeed, the deteriorating security situation if the south in general has serious implications for the overall assistance and protection of all IDPs in the region.

In Hirat, IDP protection in the camps has improved over the situation a year ago. Currently, however, IDPs are facing possible forced relocation from Shaydayee camp to Maslakh camp because the governor is 'restituting' most of the camp lands to the military. Because Maslakh is much further from Hirat town, such relocation runs contrary to the expressed goal of achieving durable solutions as relocated IDPs risk losing their already limited livelihood options and access to urban employment. At the same time food distribution is being phased out and the mission noted that there is much concern among many of the international community that this is occurring without a comprehensive vulnerability analysis being completed and a fuller understanding of the existing coping mechanisms of IDPs being reached. Thus, WFP is encouraged to revisit its plans for targeting assistance to the residual IDPs pending the completion of a planned vulnerability assessment later this summer.

A Return Commission has been established in the north by the three main factions (Jumbesh, Jamiat and Wahdat), the Independent Afghan Human Rights Commission, a representative of the Pashtun community (the predominant group of IDPs), UNAMA and UNHCR. The Commission is negotiating that political environments conducive to return



be re-established by all parties concerned. This exact model may not be replicable elsewhere but presents an interesting example of an Afghan-led problem-solving mechanism that serves a reconciliation function as well. Mazar-based representatives of the Commission have formed a Working Group since August 2002 to jointly assess conditions in places of displacement. They have monitored 129 villages in five provinces and, despite being political representatives, they have shown remarkable candidness in documenting protection problems and other obstacles to return. Their attention now is turning to redress these problems locally. It is also understood that the return commission is expecting to visit the south in the near future for consultations with IDPs from the north.

With respect to the protection cases that are currently in the south and west, it is clear that local authorities are resolute that these IDPs return to their areas of origin. In the west, this is primarily because of their ethnicity. Indeed, the authorities appear to be placing pressure on people to return regardless of the prevailing situation at their places of origin. In the south, where the protection IDPs are of the same ethnicity as the local population, the reason for wanting them to return is to prevent any legitimization of the displacement of predominantly Pashtun communities from the north and northwest. The latter position was strongly reinforced to the mission by the Governor of Kandahar and his senior advisors despite the fact that many displaced from the north have clearly indicated their wish to remain in the south. The implication of this in both the west, and especially in the south, is that local authorities remain reluctant to supporting any moves for local integration of those who are determined not to return to their areas of origin.

Given the above scenario, the mission ***recommends that MoRR, in close collaboration with UNHCR, expedites the systematic re-profiling of existing IDP population and, where necessary, undertake additional screening in order to specifically identify protection IDPs who are unwilling and/or fearful of returning to areas of origin in the current climate.*** Such data will more clearly identify IDPs for whom alternate durable solutions need to be sought while maintaining their rights to return and property and kinship rights. It will also identify IDPs for which continuing assistance will be required pending the Government and the international community finding other means to sustain them as they await return. Responsibility for this task has been allocated to Consultative Group on Returnee and IDP Programmes (see Annex 2 for TORs of this Consultative Group).

While by international standards it is unacceptable for the international community to promote movements to areas where returning individuals will likely be exposed to serious human rights violations, an obligation is still placed on international actors to ensure that any IDPs wishing to return to their areas of origin do so in a well-informed manner and that their return is voluntary. Hence, the mission ***recommends that the humanitarian community continue to provide potential returnees with current and accurate information on prevailing security and livelihood conditions in areas of origin.*** It also ***recommends that as an integral part of any return facilitation all operational agencies and NGOs working in sensitive areas reinforce their responsibility for monitoring the outcome of these returns under the coordination of MoRR and UNHCR.*** As such,

operational UN agencies and NGOs need to ensure their programmes incorporate protection elements and build stronger linkages with UNAMA's human rights monitors and with the Independent Afghan Human Rights Commission. The mission proposes that UNHCR, in collaboration with UNAMA's human rights monitors, be responsible for the increased dissemination of information on conditions in areas of return and facilitates return where appropriate. In order to be able to successfully undertake this role, the human rights monitoring and protection role that UNAMA needs to be strengthened, particularly at the provincial level.

Any return or relocation must be on a voluntary and informed basis. Information regarding humanitarian assistance, about conditions in areas of origin, and related to return or relocation must be provided in a timely manner to those in the camps/settlements. The local authorities and UNHCR must take a lead in ensuring that the rights of IDPs to information is respected.

Given the critical need for the creation of enabling environments for return in the north, it is *recommended that advocacy for, and support to the Return Commission be heightened among the international community, including donors, and that the Commission be encouraged, through its Mazar-based Working Group, to consult with NGOs and broader sections of the community, including women and children, regarding current conditions, return scenarios and community needs.* It is proposed that the Consultative Group on Returnee and IDP Programmes be responsible for mobilizing further support to the commission and broadening its web of consultative partners. UNHCR should follow-up on this recommendation, including with donors, and that UNICEF assists in ensuring that the voices of women and children are heard by the Return Commission Working Group.

## 6 The displaced pastoralists

The displaced pastoralists, and others displaced by drought and loss of livelihoods, are by far the largest of Afghanistan's displaced population, constituting about eighty percent of the current IDP population. There are two Kuchi groups who have been most affected. The first migrate in and around the Registan desert in the southern part of Kandahar and Helmand provinces while the second migrate between the mountainous areas of the interior during the summer and the lower valleys during the winter. The first group are the largest and most vulnerable group as their potential return to the desert is, for the majority, unlikely in the foreseeable future. In addition, they are not regarded by either the local authorities or local populations as part of the communities among which they are currently displaced. Indeed, some authorities claim that many of the Registan Kuchi have closer ties to Pakistan and thus should seek assistance on the other side of the border. Such claims highlight the question of where do nomadic pastoralists have their 'areas of origin'.

Given that the greater majority of the displaced Kuchi have lost all their livestock, and that their traditional livelihoods were wholly dependent upon these animals, any return movements would first require rebuilding their herds. While return to normal rainfall

conditions, the replenishment of water tables and the rehabilitation of wells will be important precondition for a return to pastoral livelihoods in the south, any major restocking programme would be a very expensive undertaking. It might also be a technical problem as some experts suggest that there would not be enough healthy female animals in the region. Thus, unless support and services can be provided to rebuild their traditional livelihoods and return to a nomadic existence, alternate solutions will need to be found so that a large majority of Kuchi not remain 'internally stuck' at their present locations.

The small minority of Kuchi that retain a few animals, and is able to acquire some income with which to rebuild their herds, will likely return to traditional livelihoods, but only if wells and pastures are rehabilitated. Moreover, the task of identifying wells to be rehabilitated is complicated by ownership issues that risk causing conflict between different Kuchi clans. With respect to the Kuchi displaced from the north and northwest much of their pastureland has been confiscated by local commanders that would clearly hinder their return even if they had animals to return with.

In the mission's numerous discussions with Kuchi, it was widely suggested that significant numbers of Kuchi, especially women, would opt for durable solutions in settled areas where access to education, healthcare, permanent shelter and income generating opportunities, particularly in agriculture, are perceived to exist. Having lived at their present locations for a number of years, many have been able to access at least minimal levels of employment and would now prefer to integrate among local communities. Others survive from remittances received from family members working in the larger Afghan towns, who are refugees, or who work as illegal migrants in Iran and Pakistan.

The challenge now facing the local authorities and the international community is one of how best to assist the Kuchi in finding appropriate durable solutions. The mission believes that more expertise is needed among both the authorities and the international actors in order to plan any longer-term solutions for the Kuchi. Moreover, there is still a widely held conviction among many in the local authorities that the only durable solution for the Kuchi is to return to pastoralism and that in the interim they not be provided with anything more than basic humanitarian assistance so as not to alter their 'nomadic-pastoralist way of life'. It is encouraging, therefore, that a special commission has been established within MRRD Kabul to address the Kuchi problem, albeit the commission should play a much more proactive role than hitherto. WFP's renewed deployment of a specialist on pastoralism to MRRD Kabul to assist it with developing a policy for the Kuchi is therefore welcome.

If the Kuchi remain in their present settlements in the south and the west, some will likely continue to be dependent upon at least some level of humanitarian assistance. However, were the authorities to provide them with longer-term guaranteed access to land, even if just for housing, either in the existing camps or in surrounding areas, local integration would become a feasible option. Once given the opportunity to settle, the Kuchi can pursue skills training, seek local employment opportunities or develop their own income

generating activities. Investments in basic infrastructure can also be made for communities with settled Kuchi population.

A recent study of Kuchi IDPs by CordAid/VARA proposed several creative projects for skills development and income generation, as well as reintegration options and activities for those Kuchi who either wish to return to the Reg or be locally integrated. Constraints to the implementation of some of these proposals are the large number of potential beneficiaries that need to be addressed and the provision of the necessary access to land by the local authorities. Unfortunately, the extremely fragile security situation in the south continues to discourage much needed 'development' NGOs from establishing themselves in the region to help address this problem.

The income generating projects currently being undertaken by a private sector agency funded by USAID, some of which are specifically for IDPs, such as the groundnut oil and wool-spinning projects near Zahre Dasht camp, should be replicated where possible. Such innovative private sector agencies should be seen as potential partners for the international community in developing and implementing durable solutions for IDPs in both areas of displacement and areas of return.

Resources for developing and implementing durable solutions for IDPs in general, and the Kuchi in particular, will need to be mobilized. The Japanese should be commended for providing a unique opportunity under the Ogata Initiative (US\$93 million for the first three phases made available to UNICEF, FAO, Habitat, UNDP and UNHCR) to develop integrated strategies for reintegration of returning refugees and IDPs. However, the short time given agencies to submit projects significantly impacted their ability to develop truly integrated and comprehensive approaches that would lead to durable solutions. In particular, the mission concurred with the concerns raised by a recent joint Government and UN mission that reviewed WFP's Ogata Initiative project for the Reg and which concluded that the project objectives should be revisited. The project aims at rehabilitating wells in the Reg at a time when few Kuchi IDPs have the necessary minimum livestock to be able to sustainably return to the desert.

Clearly, the options available for the Kuchi are limited and local integration appears to be a realistic strategy for many of them. To pursue such a strategy, the international community needs to strengthen the capacity of the Afghan authorities at all levels to conceptualize and implement programmes that will mainstream Kuchi into settled Afghan society. As solutions may differ depending upon groups, a variety of approaches need to be flexibly explored combining the re-establishment of traditional, and the creation of new, livelihood options. The mission therefore ***recommends that an expert in pastoralism be fielded to the south as an advisor to MRRD in Kandahar.*** The expert will have extensive experience with sedenterizing nomadic pastoralists into new sustainable livelihoods. This advisor could either be recruited by UNDP or through an NGO, albeit in the first instance UNDP should take responsibility for ensuring that this asset is deployed, irrespective of the recruitment modality.

The mission also *recommends that greater efforts be made to develop and sustain a more integrated approach among UN agencies and their NGO and Government partners to plan and implement a comprehensive strategy towards solutions for this category of IDPs affected by loss of livelihoods.* The Consultative Group and Returnee and IDP Programmes is in the process of establishing a working group to specifically address IDP issues and to work in partnership with the Government to devise an IDP strategy. This will require increased coordination efforts on the part of regional UNAMA offices and a heightened preparedness by all respective agencies to adopt a common strategy for IDPs. UNAMA's Senior IDP Advisor should play a key role in the overall coordination efforts for programming on behalf of IDPs.

Given the reluctance among many local authorities to accept durable solutions for Kuchi other than return to traditional ways of life and given the extremely sensitive issue of access to land in Afghanistan in general and the potential political outfalls of local authorities allocating any land to IDPs, it is *recommended that the international community strengthen its efforts to encourage the authorities to accept alternate solutions for the Kuchi and to facilitate at least some minimal access to land to enable alternate livelihoods to be promoted.* The responsibility for such advocacy rests with all UN agencies and UNAMA especially should take this to the highest levels possible in Government. The forthcoming visit of the RSG on IDPs should take the opportunity to advocate on behalf of local integration and access to land at the highest levels of Government.

It is also *recommended that an international workshop on the needs and future of the Kuchi IDPs be held where the authorities would be exposed to experiences and sedenterization processes in other regions with nomadic populations.* It is suggested that the UNAMA Senior IDP Advisor, in consultation with the relevant line ministries and the soon to be re-deployed Kuchi policy advisor that WFP is placing in MRRD, takes up the responsibility for organizing and resourcing such an event. It is also suggested that the OCHA IDP Unit considers funding this workshop from its 'IDP Fund'.

## 7 Role and responsibility of the Government

Government authorities, especially at the provincial level, need to be more active on resolving internal displacement. Although President Karzai has stated on several occasions that a resolution to the IDP problem is a priority for the Government, and the Consultative Group on Returnee and IDP Programmes has been given responsibility for leadership on IDP issues (see Annex 2 for the TORs of this body), this has yet to translate into pro-active policies or implementation at local authority levels. On the other hand, the work of the Return Commission in the north and recognition of the need to prioritize IDPs within the national development framework do represent important and proactive engagement by Government.

Current discussions within the Consultative Group on Refugee and IDP Programmes are aimed at identifying the appropriate institutional arrangement that would be responsible for developing and implementing longer-term solutions for the residual IDP groups.

Discussion is underway about whether responsibility for longer-term recovery of IDPs, whether in return areas or locally integrated, should be subsumed by MRRD as the main Government counterpart. Alternatively, it is suggested that an inter-ministerial task force be established including such ministries as Agriculture, Urban Development and Housing, Border and Tribal Affairs, Planning, Justice, and Natural Resources. Thus, the *mission recommends that UNAMA engages with the Steering Committee of the Consultative Group process in discussions on institutional arrangements for transitional activities for IDP solutions*. It should also consider with UNHCR, UNDP, WFP, UNICEF, FAO, and UNOPS, and other relevant agencies including NGOs, how to match international support to such a task force if that is the path chosen.

A primary responsibility for Government is that of creating secure environments in which the international community can support programming for IDPs. Certain elements of the police and the militias continue to be perpetrators and instruments of human-rights abuses. This is often at the local-commander level, suggesting the importance of nationwide security reform. The Government, with international assistance, needs to vigilantly respond to reports of human rights abuse and seek creative short-term mechanisms, such as the Return Commission Working Group. The recent extension of the Independent Human Rights Commission to key provinces is a new resource to strengthen protection and security.

As in any post-conflict setting, access to land and property restitution are extremely important yet complex areas for the Government to address. A sizable proportion of the Afghan population is landless, not just the displaced. Indeed, lack of access to land remains a formidable obstacle to refugees returning to the country. While access to land and property restitution issues cannot be comprehensively addressed in the short-term, the Government should consider stopgap measures in the interim that would allow IDPs and other landless access to land. UN Habitat estimates fifty percent of Kabul's population is living in informal settlements or has no supporting documentation and rights of tenure. Similarly, many displaced persons are ineligible for basic livelihood-supporting assistance due to their lack of access to land. Thus, resolution to the land and property rights issue is a crucial step towards durable solutions for the displaced.

The mission therefore *recommends that UNAMA and UNHCR make representations to the appropriate national and provincial authorities on the importance of addressing land issues in general as a matter of priority*. They should draw particular attention to the difficulties of finding durable solutions for both refugee and IDP returnees unless progress on land issues can be secured. For that purpose, the mission suggests that UNAMA, in consultation with other agencies and sources of expertise such as the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, prepares a short paper for submission to the Afghan authorities and considers how – and at what levels - such a demarche should be made. The paper should contain some practical and realistic suggestions as to what can be done, and how the UN system can best contribute.

## 8 Role and responsibility of the international community

UNHCR's role for the past sixteen months has been supporting the ASA in the coordination of refugee and IDP return and reintegration in line with its role as focal point of the Consultative Group on Returnee and IDP Programmes. It has successfully returned, with the assistance of WFP, UNICEF and IOM and many partner NGOs, some 1.9 million refugees, while IDP numbers have been reduced from around a million to some 300,000. Although not all returnees went back to their areas of origin, this nevertheless represents a commendable effort on the part of UNHCR, MoRR and their partners.

While UNHCR remains fully committed to assisting MoRR in IDP care and maintenance and is looking for return solutions for the remaining protection IDPs, it is advocating for a shift to a more comprehensive development oriented strategy for IDPs who remain affected by loss of livelihoods. It has proposed to the Government that responsibility to seek and implement longer-term solutions for the non-protection IDPs - primarily the Kuchi and other drought displaced - be vested with MRRD and supported by UNAMA in close collaboration with the development community. The Government has yet to endorse this shift in policy. Given that large sectors of this IDP population are unable and/or unwilling to return to traditional pastoral livelihoods, and consequently will need to be integrated among local populations, it is necessary that the required 'development' responsibilities are assumed by the development actors - MRRD and relevant line ministries in partnership with UNDP, FAO, ILO, UN Habitat, other appropriate UN agencies and NGOs.

Initial response by MRRD to UNHCR's proposal has been to commit itself to mainstreaming those IDPs unable to return to their traditional livelihoods into national development programmes. It remains reluctant, however, to set up special programmes for local integration of IDPs. Clearly some middle ground must be found since the national development programmes such as NEEP, NSP, NABDP and NCP, are slow to get off the ground and are unlikely to impact areas of Kuchi IDP concentrations for some time to come. In the interim, the Kuchi Commission in MRRD Kabul must broaden its membership to include all actors that can support the integration and mainstreaming of Kuchi into Afghan society.

The mission was frequently advised by informants at the provincial level of the limited visibility of the development community outside of Kabul. UNDP was especially singled out. The mission was pleased to learn that regional advisors are now being deployed by UNDP's NABDP to strengthen the capacities of MRRD, and that NEEP is posting professional staff into each provincial administration. However, it is unlikely that these interventions will have any tangible impact on finding durable solutions for IDPs as part of larger community-based programmes. UNDP's presence is required at the provincial level - in Kandahar especially - in order to galvanize the relevant organizations into an integrated programme approach in support of the provincial authorities' implementation of durable solutions for the displaced. Likewise, UNDP has an important role to play in support of MRRD in other IDP concentrations in the west and north.

The MOUs between UNHCR and UNDP, UNHCR and UNICEF, the current joint initiatives on the 4Rs<sup>3</sup> in other post-conflict countries, and the ongoing discussions of the undg-echa Transitional Working Group, all clearly define the roles that should be assumed by the development community in addressing displacement issues in the broader longer-term recovery context. Therefore, the mission ***recommends that UNDP provides the operational leadership, in close coordination with other development agencies and NGOs, for finding durable solutions for the non-protection residual IDPs.*** Working with MRRD and the Consultative Group on Livelihoods, and linked to the NABDP, UNDP should facilitate the integration of IDPs into host communities through targeted development initiatives to those communities that are willing to have IDPs integrate among them.

While UNAMA remains a non-operational mission, it has a responsibility for advocating for and coordinating UN system programming. However, its attempts at promoting integrated programming, much desired by the donors, have so far met with only limited success. In part this is due to the limited capacity of the office. Hence, based on UNHCR's proposal that UNAMA takes on a more prominent role in the search for longer-term durable solutions for the non-protection IDPs, UNAMA has accepted to promote as a first step the integrated programming of the operational agencies, especially UNDP, UNHCR, UNOPS, UNICEF and WFP. It should also consider including some 'development' NGOs. Consequently UNAMA has proposed that a small task force represented both at the Kabul (policy) and provincial (operational) levels be immediately established to assist the Government develop a policy and operational strategy for durable solutions for all IDPs that are unable or unwilling to return. The mission therefore ***recommends that this task force be immediately established, including representation from the NGO community, to assist Government define a durable solutions strategy for all IDPs, with special reference to those unable or unwilling to return to areas of origin.*** This UN system task force should feed directly into the Consultative Group on Refugees and IDP Programmes and aim at having an integrated durable solutions strategy in place by August. OCHA's Internal Displacement Unit could provide short-term assistance to the task force if this is required. The planning of programmes has, to date, often remained restricted to UN agencies and Government officials. By bringing in the NGOs into planning and design of programmes at an earlier stage, the chances of successful implementation could be greatly enhanced

UNAMA must also continue playing a key advocacy role on behalf of IDPs. The mission therefore ***recommends that UNAMA intervenes at the highest level of Government to ensure that President Karzai's stated aims of solving the country's IDP problem be translated into concrete actions, while ensuring that the rights of IDPs are fully respected.***

One area where the mission believes UNAMA can strengthen its activities is in information gathering and dissemination. There appears to be a widespread consensus that the role of AIMS could be significantly strengthened. While UNHCR, IOM, WFP and UN Habitat, as well as MoRR, all have extensive databases on the IDP situation,

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<sup>3</sup> Repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction



there is a need for these to be integrated, together with other relevant databases such as those from the NGOs, in order to build a clearer and more comprehensive picture of vulnerability, as well as identifying where, who, when and how agencies are addressing IDP needs within communities.. The mission also heard concern about the level of detail and timeliness of UNAMA's dissemination of information, especially at the field level. Therefore the mission ***recommends a heightened level of information gathering and dissemination by AIMS on behalf of the UN system and that UNAMA officers in the field ensure a systematic and proactive dissemination of information that would benefit all UN agencies and NGOs working in camps or areas of return.*** Responsibility for this should rest with UNAMA management in Kabul as well as with the heads of all UNAMA field offices. There should also be stronger linkages established between AIMS and the Central Office for Statistics.

Over the past six months, UNAMA's Senior IDP Advisor has played a key role in monitoring and reporting on the on-going IDP situation. While based primarily in Kandahar, he has also covered the rest of the country where IDPs are located. The mission ***recommends that this post be maintained for another year and that the recruitment of three national assistants be expedited.*** However, in the light of some of the recommendations made in this report, it will be necessary to review and adjust the TORs of the Senior IDP Advisor. It will also be necessary to clearly define the working relationships with UNHCR that the national assistants are expected to assume. The mission concurs that these three assistants will be posted to Mazar, Kabul and Kandahar. With the placement of these assistants, the Senior IDP Advisor will be in a better placed to spend more time in all areas with IDPs. With the proposed shift in responsibility for longer-term solutions for the non-protection IDPs from UNHCR to UNAMA and the development actors, the Senior IDP Advisor will also have an additional responsibility of ensuring that coordination among UN actors and between them and the relevant national and provincial authorities is sustained.

The donor community also has a responsibility for furthering the search for solutions to the residual IDP population. Aside from supporting any proposed programmes that may be formulated for the integration of IDPs unable or unwilling to return, the mission ***recommends that the donor community to use its good offices for strong advocacy on behalf of a resolution of the IDP problem including the IDPs right to choose where they wish to live.*** In particular, the donor community should take every opportunity to impress upon the Government the importance of the provision of access to land for those IDPs unable to return to their places of origin.

## 9 IDP training needs

Virtually every sector in Afghanistan has unmet training needs, including all sectors dealing with the internally displaced. UNHCR has provided a series of training packages to national authorities and has loaned staff in MoRR and MRRD to provide on-the-job capacitation. However, the need for further capacitation of all authorities addressing IDPs is evident at both central and provincial levels. Promotion of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement is important and needs to be undertaken at the earliest opportunity.

In addition, the Government has committed itself to a policy on IDPs, focussed particularly on the search for durable solutions. The intent is that once formulated, such a policy will be implemented through a Presidential Decree. There is urgency in achieving this objective and it is critical that the policy is steeped in the Guiding Principles. The RSG on IDPs is expected to visit Afghanistan later this summer and it would therefore be desirable that he strongly promotes a solutions orientated and rights-based policy with the Government.

The mission therefore *recommends that a three-day workshop on the Guiding Principles on IDPs be provided to Government authorities responsible for IDPs as soon as the Government indicates it is prepared to assume full ownership of such a workshop. Participants should be drawn from relevant ministries such as MoRR, MRRD, MBTA, MHUD, Ministry of Justice, etc., and should also include a number of national programme officers drawn from key UN agencies.* It is suggested that the workshop be organized jointly by the MoRR, MRRD and UNHCR, in collaboration with OCHA's Internal Displacement Unit, which has extensive experience in delivering Guiding Principles based training programmes. The Internal Displacement Unit should be requested to fund this workshop (together with the proposed Kuchi Workshop) from the Unit's IFP Fund. If possible this workshop should be undertaken during the Summer 2003.

The mission also *recommends that the primary objective of the above workshop is a contribution to the formulation of a draft national policy on IDPs.* It is proposed that the MoRR be tasked with responsibility for moving this process and that UNHCR provides whatever support required. The proposed visit of the RSG for IDPs to Afghanistan would substantially contribute to the process of formulating such a policy. It is also suggested, that following this workshop a one-day workshop be held for representatives of UN agencies, select NGOs and the donor community in order to define a strategy for supporting the Government's policy on IDPs.

With the formulation of a national policy, it will be necessary to ensure that training on the Guiding Principles on IDPs be brought to the provinces for both local authorities, including members of the Return Commission, and the humanitarian assistance community. It is therefore *recommended that further training workshops on the Guiding Principles be mounted at the provincial level.* It is proposed that responsibility for this be vested jointly with UNAMA's Senior IDP Advisor and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and that this be undertaken in collaboration with the OCHA Internal Displacement Unit. IOM also has an interest in supporting such training.

## 10 Conclusions

Some eighteen months have elapsed since the refugees and IDPs began returning to their areas of origin and although many refugees remain outside of Afghanistan, most of the IDPs have since returned leaving only a residual group that is either unwilling to return for fear of their security or unable to return due to loss of livelihoods. With respect to the

former, continuing protection needs exist that must continue to be addressed by the UN system, the NGO community, and most importantly by the authorities. With respect to the latter, alternate solutions must be sought alongside continuing efforts to create enabling environments for return, including local integration or voluntary relocation. It is generally understood that, as far as is feasible, IDP's care and maintenance situations must give way to sustainable durable solutions. While the higher levels of Government in Kabul are accepting this principle, it has yet to filter down and be widely accepted by some local authorities. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the international community to take all steps necessary to encourage the central Government to ensure that provincial authorities accept and implement longer-term solutions other than return where such alternate solutions are the most realistic option.

Given this situation, and the fact that the greater majority of the IDPs are non-protection cases arising from prolonged drought in the south of the country, UNHCR must enlist the full and sustained support of UNAMA and the development community, especially UNDP, to assume responsibility in planning and implementing longer-term durable solutions within the relevant Government framework. A limited number of solutions for the IDPs may be found through their inclusion in ongoing or forthcoming development programmes. However, there is also need of some special assistance to the drought displaced that are unable to return in order that they can be mainstreamed into the Afghan population in general. The development community must, therefore, heighten its support to both national and provincial authorities to ensure that enabling environments are created and sustained that will permit the displaced to be fully integrated into the communities among whom they are currently displaced. At the same time, UNHCR and UNAMA must continue to prompt the Government to ensure that security and safety be extended by local authorities so that the protection-related IDPs have the opportunity of returning to their areas of origin.

In order that these solutions can be pursued, the overarching constraint of insecurity in many parts of the country must be more vigorously addressed by the Government and the international community. Without security, access to many IDP populations will remain problematic and a major obstacle to solutions and the ability of the international community to ensure adequate assistance and protection.

An immediate follow-up of this report will be the preparation, in close consultation with UNAMA, of matrix of the recommendations contained in the report that will suggest possible actions on the recommendations. It will also identify some specific tasks that may be required to ensure that the recommendations are implemented and/or establish indicators that would measure progress being made on implementing of the recommendations. It will be of course be incumbent upon the UNCT, in close consultation with the Government through the Consultative Group process, to utilize this matrix as it deems appropriate and to establish the various timeline for implementation.

## **Annex 1: Mission Members**

### **Team 1: Kabul, Kandahar and Hirat**

John Rogge	OCHA/IDP Unit - Geneva	Team and Mission Leader
Marco Roggia	UNHCR - Geneva	
Betsy Lippman	UNDP/BCPR - Geneva	
Luc Chounet-Cambas	UNDP – Kabul	
Maureen Forsythe	WFP - Hirat	
Peter Deck	UNAMA/ Senior IDP Advisor - Kabul	

### **Team 2: Kabul, Mazar, Sherif and Maymana**

Stephen Tull	OCHA/RCB - Geneva	Team Leader
Manisha Thomas*	ICVA - Geneva	
Angela Kearney	UNICEF - Kabul	
Philip LeClerc	UNHCR - Kabul	
Oscar Costilla	IOM – Kabul	
Anne Ancia	WHO – Kabul (participated in Kabul part of mission only)	

\* While agreeing with most of the report, the NGO representative who participated in the mission wishes to note that the report is not fully reflective of the concerns of the NGO community.

## **Annex 2: TORs of the Consultative Group on Returnee and IDP Programmes**

(Pillar 1: Human Capital and Social Protection)

### **Overall Objective:**

In line with the overall strategy of the Government, the overall objectives of the Consultative Group on Returnees and IDPs for the year 1382 (2003) are to:

- facilitate a gradual, voluntary, safe and gender-responsive return of Refugees and IDPs to a sustainable environment that provides returnees with minimum human rights standards;
- ensure that returning refugees and IDPs are provided with basic protection and support for their return and initial re-integration and that they are well-informed on the return process and on the conditions in their intended areas of return;
- establish operational links with socio-economic rehabilitation, reconstruction and developmental initiatives that address the improvement of livelihoods of vulnerable populations and co-ordinate with key actors;
- In line with the UN guiding principles on internal displacement, find long-term solutions for IDPs by facilitating return and local settlement in collaboration with all relevant actors. Pending durable solutions, protection and targeted assistance to vulnerable IDPs will be provided to ensure that minimum humanitarian standards are met;
- create Government Capacity for effective policy formulation, planning and budgeting, mainstreaming and operational engagement to address displacement, protection and reintegration challenges;
- increase effectiveness and efficiency of protection and aid co-ordination in support of the national strategy on returnees and IDPs with a broad-based range of actors under a MoRR-led process.
- support in mobilizing the required resources for the programme.

### **TOR of the CG:**

The Consultative Group on Returnee and IDP Programme is responsible to support the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) in co-coordinating and facilitating the work related to the return and initial re-integration of Returnees and IDPs. The Consultative Group will provide to MoRR at the national and sub-national level capacity, advice and other support for policy development, assessment, programme design, budgeting, implementation and evaluation. The CG also supports MoRR to ensure that programmes related to return and IDPs comply with the agreed policy as set out in the principles of the National Development Framework, the Government Returnee and IDP strategy and humanitarian standards. The Consultative Group will provide support and mobilize other actors to ensure a sustainable reintegration of returnees at the national and sub-national level. The Consultative Group on Returnees and IDPs will meet regularly to ensure co-ordination, problem solving and progress review with other Cogs and with the Cross-cutting Advisory Groups.

In line with the overall objectives stated above, the specific responsibilities of the CG will be to:

- provide advice and support for the preparation, submission and implementation of the MoRR contribution to the national budget and ensure that projects are consistent with the principles of the National Development Framework and linked to fiscal sustainability;
- provide every 3 months updates of progress against output and outcome indicators (e.g. returnees provided with return assistance, percentage of voluntary vs. involuntary return, wells provided to returnee communities, shelter provided to vulnerable returnees)
- ensure that cross-cutting issues of gender, environment, protection, human rights and humanitarian principles are reflected in the return and IDP policies, programmes and budgets;
- closely collaborate with the MRRD-led CG on Livelihoods and Social Protection and other relevant CGs, to co-ordinate the re-integration returnees and to assist IDPs who choose to settle in the areas of displacement;
- mobilize resources and provide an information-sharing forum to enable the effective updating of the existing record of assistance and technical assistance contained in the Donor Assistance Database (DAD)

**Tasks of the CG Focal Point:**

UNHCR in its role as the Focal Point of the Returnee and IDP CG will:

- facilitate the establishment of the CG and assist in the day-to-day management of the relations with donors, UN Agencies, NGOs and other partners.
- make available technical support and advice to MoRR and relevant Ministries in order to ensure that benchmarks and objectives are implemented and adequately monitored;
- together with MoRR organize CG meetings and provide support in providing minutes, documentation and monitoring of the CG performance.
- Regularly report to the CG Standing Committee and provide analytical and issue-oriented presentations to the CG Standing Committee concerning the Returnee and IDP matters and its relations with other CGs.
- through Co-ordination Mechanisms at sub-national level will co-ordinate with and assist the Provincial Directorates of MoRR and other Government counterparts. In close collaboration with the local Government counterparts, the CG at the sub-national level will facilitate and co-ordinate the work of organizations working in the Returnee and IDP Programme.

- Mobilize international and national experts on secondment and provide material resources to the MoRR in the CG and other immediate Government Counterparts in activities related to the Returnees and IDPs.

**Composition of the Consultative Group:**

- Chair: MoRR,
- Focal Point Role: UNHCR
- Other Government Ministries: MRRD, MHUD
- UN and Int. Organisations: UNAMA, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, IOM
- Donor Members: Canada, ECHO, Japan, CH, US, Sweden, Norway
- NGOs: to be represented in plenary group (open participation) steering group (5 members) and special ad hoc working group (to be nominated)

**Structure:**

- Plenary Group chaired by Minister MoRR (to be convened once every month – policy setting and information sharing)
- Steering Group (composed of 10 -15 members including MoRR, MRRD, MHUD, UNAMA, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR, IOM, 7 Donors, 5 NGOs)
- Special ad hoc working groups (e.g. preparation of NDB 1382/1383 [strategy, plan and budget], co-ordination, evaluation, operations co-ordination, etc.)
- Provincial and area based working groups on Return, IDPs, re-integration and protection.

**Comfort Clause:**

*Humanitarian assistance is delivered in accordance with internationally recognized humanitarian principles, which include the provision of assistance according to need and free from discrimination on the basis of religion, ethnicity, political affiliation or gender, and the independence of action.*

- *In the case of Afghanistan, it is recognized that the technical requirements for ensuring coherence and complementarity of programming between humanitarian and longer-term assistance must be reconciled with the importance of maintaining the integrity of humanitarian action.*
- *Humanitarian actors, including donors, international organizations and NGOs, will actively and constructively participate within the Consultative Group process, on the explicit understanding that humanitarian programming will be guided and informed by the Consultative Groups, but not controlled by the Consultative Group process, and may seek alternative mechanisms to engage with the Government-led reconstruction and development process, should this become necessary.*

Kabul, 17 April 2003