

# **DISCUSSION PAPER**

## **2010 Annual Consultations between UNHCR and NGOs**

### **Africa Regional Session**

30 June 2010

#### **Moderator:**

Mr. Mark Leverer, Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service

#### **Speaker:**

Mr. George Okoth-Obbo, Director Regional Bureau for Africa

#### **Panel:**

Ms. Marie Christine Bocoum, Deputy Director, West Africa and Great Lakes

Mr. Raouf Mazou, Deputy Director, East and Horn of Africa

Mr. Steven Corliss, Deputy Director, Southern Africa, Policy & External Relations

#### **Rapporteur:**

Ms. Gina Snyman, Lawyers for Human Rights

#### **Discussion topics:**

The Africa Regional Session will be an open dialogue and exchange of information and views between the NGO participants and the Director of the Africa Bureau and his management team. The Bureau proposes that the debate be structured around the following four subjects:

- Overview of the Bureau's 2011 Plan
- Realizing the potential of results-based management, financial due diligence and accountability;
- Strengthening prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence;
- Coordinating advocacy to promote the African Union Kampala Convention on the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa; and

#### **Introduction**

At 1 January 2010, some 10.2 million people of concern to UNHCR were living in sub-Saharan Africa, including more than 2.1 million refugees and 6.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). While the overall statistics do not reflect a significant change from last year, large numbers of people were newly displaced during 2009, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia, while others have returned home, most notably in Uganda. Millions of people depend on the protection and assistance provided by UNHCR and its government and non-governmental partners, as well as by sister UN agencies.

#### **Strengthening results-based management**

UNHCR's structural and management reforms have impacted the management of protection and assistance programmes, and have created a new environment and given rise to new expectations of our operational and implementing partners.

The strengthening of results-based management (RBM) in UNHCR programmes has been accompanied by the introduction of new processes and tools, including the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) approach, the four-pillar budget structure and new RBM programme planning and management software, *Focus*.

During 2010, UNHCR is working to resolve the inevitable “teething problems” and technical glitches associated with *Focus* and these other new processes and approaches. The Africa Bureau is conscious that the rollout within UNHCR’s own field structures must be followed by concerted efforts to extend training and familiarization to our partners in 2010 and 2011.

The Bureau places great emphasis on strengthening financial due diligence and accountability, both within UNHCR and in projects implemented by our partners. UNHCR’s accounts for 2009 were qualified by the UN Board of Auditors, in part because of deficiencies in the auditing of projects. The qualification of UNHCR’s accounts has very serious implications, as it may cause donors to question the quality of management within UNHCR and its partners and undermine our ability to mobilize resources for protection and assistance programmes we implement together.

The Bureau would like to discuss:

- The challenges and opportunities for UNHCR and its partners arising from the strengthening of RBM and the introduction of related systems and tools; and
- Ways to improve financial management and accountability in our programmes.

### **Preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence**

Strengthening prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is high among the Africa Bureau’s non-negotiable priorities for 2011. SGBV continues to affect many displaced women and girls in Africa. In Chad and the eastern DRC, rape is still used as a weapon of war with impunity. SGBV problems persist in many of UNHCR’s operations, including in several stable camp-based situations. This is not acceptable.

UNHCR and its partners have achieved substantial progress in improving mechanisms to counter SGBV. Nearly all of UNHCR’s 39 operations in sub-Saharan Africa have Standard Operating Procedures for SGBV prevention and response, although gaps remain in some locations. Many staff members have also been trained on how to respond to SGBV. These steps forward have prepared the ground for a strengthened, coordinated and consistent approach to SGBV that goes beyond process and procedures and focuses more acutely on prevention, improving services for survivors and fighting against impunity.

The Bureau would like to engage NGO partners in a discussion on ways to improve SGBV prevention and response, including enhancing direct services to survivors.

### **African Union Kampala Convention on the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa**

The African Union (AU) adopted the Kampala Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa in October 2009.

The Convention will enter into force once ratified by 15 AU Member States. To date, 26 Member States have signed, and Uganda became the first country to ratify the Convention in February 2010.

The groundbreaking Kampala Convention:

- Is the world's first legally binding international instrument on the protection and assistance of internally displaced persons with continental scope;
- Offers a comprehensive legal framework encompassing various causes of displacement, including conflict-related displacement, displacement resulting from natural disasters and large-scale public projects;
- Affirms the primary responsibility of States to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of their internally displaced citizens and to find solutions for them;
- Calls for regional and national action to prevent displacement and for States to cooperate with each other and with international organizations and civil society in ensuring internally displaced persons are protected and assisted; and
- Sets forth a comprehensive set of rights and standards.

UNHCR is working with the African Union Commission, civil society organizations, including the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), and through such bodies as the Inter-parliamentarian Union to promote the prompt ratification and implementation of the IDP Convention. UNHCR considers that national NGOs and civil society actors have a crucial role to play as advocates and a constituency for the Convention, which provides a framework of rights and protection for citizens.

The Africa Bureau would like to discuss strategies for engaging NGOs and building national civil society platforms to support advocacy for the Convention.

*RBA,  
9 June 2010*