

Providing International Protection

Within the broad goals of the **Agenda for Protection**, UNHCR's objectives in 2005 will focus on:

- Strengthening implementation of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol of 1967;
- Protecting refugees within broader migration movements;
- Sharing burdens and responsibilities more equitably and building local and regional capacities to protect and receive refugees;
- Addressing security-related concerns, especially those of refugee women and children, more effectively; and
- Redoubling the search for durable solutions.

UNHCR will implement and build upon the Agenda for Protection in three broad areas:

1. The Agenda will continue to provide the planning framework for field-based activities aimed at improving the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers. The country chapters of this year's Global Appeal again reflect how the goals and objectives of the Agenda are being adapted and applied in practice in field operations worldwide. Initiatives common to many field operations include plans of action to address sexual and gender-based violence; strengthening legal and community-based frameworks for the protection of women and children; building protection capacity in refugee-hosting countries, especially in refugee status determination and resettlement; improving registration and documentation of asylum-seekers and refugees; highlighting the need to protect refugees in mixed migratory movements and to ensure that refugee protection remains at the forefront of discussions on such movements; and redoubling the search for durable solutions, notably for protracted refugee situations brought to the attention of UNHCR's Executive Committee and the High

Commissioner's Forum in 2004. Partnerships for protection with NGOs and other components of civil society will also be pursued.

2. Follow-up to the Agenda for Protection will take place at Headquarters, through the work of the Executive Committee (ExCom) and its Standing Committee. Following consultations with the Standing Committee, follow-up activities have been scheduled until the end of 2005. ExCom Conclusions planned for 2005 include: *Complementary forms of protection* and *Local Integration*. A study will be undertaken in early 2005 related to the latter conclusion. Additional consultations will be needed to agree on a schedule of activities for 2006 and later years.

UNHCR will complete an analysis of the difficulties States have in acceding to, or in implementing the 1951 Convention, continue its ongoing assessment of the impact of refugees on host countries and will initiate an annual update of protracted refugee situations aimed at drawing attention to opportunities for finding durable solutions and encouraging more robust cooperation in bringing long standing refugee situations to a close. Moreover, UNHCR will develop guidelines, procedures and standards, inter alia, for the preservation of the civilian character of asylum and on voluntary repatriation.

The Office will seek to ensure that the protection needs of refugees and asylum-seekers are properly met in the broader context of the migration management efforts of States. It will continue to work with other UN agencies and with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to deepen the system-wide understanding of the nexus between asylum and migration and to intensify cooperation with institutions and programmes with a bearing on migration-related issues.

3. The third element might loosely be termed "tools development", either by UNHCR or within the framework of the High Commissioner's *Convention Plus* initiative. In 2005, UNHCR will explore with States, ways to build upon and buttress the 1951 Convention, with the dual objective of encouraging more effective responsibility and burden-sharing with States hosting and protecting refugees, and finding durable solutions for affected populations. The Convention Plus Unit, established on 1 January 2004 to assist the High Commissioner in spearheading this important initiative, will be phased out by 31 December 2005.
 - (iv) Participate in the work of Headquarters administrative and management bodies to ensure that protection priorities and adequate protection resources are properly reflected in their processes;
 - (v) Represent UNHCR on protection-based issues in external fora and with external actors that include: regular contacts with senior government officials and members of the diplomatic community; ExCom; academic and research institutions; and inter-agency processes such as IASC; and the NGO community.

Priorities and activities of the Department of International Protection (DIP)

The activities of DIP in 2005 will be guided by the protection objectives set for 2004/05. The Department will:

- (i) Oversee and monitor UNHCR's protection strategies for the implementation and/or mainstreaming of the main outcomes of the elements of the Global Consultations and the Agenda for Protection;
- (ii) Contribute regular protection policy and advice to the High Commissioner, regional bureaux and field offices on operations as required, such as Iraq, Afghanistan and in Sub-Saharan Africa, and to significant developments within regions such as the European Union (EU harmonization processes, EU prong) and Australasia (Pacific Solution);
- (iii) Contribute to the development of UNHCR's policy and operational responses in relation to themes such as: the nexus between asylum/refugee protection and migration; inter-agency collaboration in dealing with Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs); and the substance and work of the Convention Plus Unit, notably the Resettlement Framework;

UNHCR is committed to working with other agencies through the "Collaborative Approach" in order to help **internally displaced persons**. To provide more consistent and effective responses, it will work with the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), particularly through the Inter-Agency Internal Displacement Division, with other partners such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, IOM and NGO partners.

The extent to which UNHCR will be engaged in specific IDP situations will be informed by its response criteria, identified broadly by the General Assembly in 1998 and the Office's operational guidelines of 2001. In addition, the Office will be informed by the Policy Guidance approved by the IASC in September 2004 and by the Office's internal decision-making procedures introduced by the High Commissioner in August 2004. At the same time, the Office will continue to inform the Secretary-General and the ERC on an annual basis, of its activities in relation to IDPs.

In order to make the Collaborative Approach more effective in field operations, UNHCR will work as part of the Country Team under the overall coordination of the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator. The objectives should be combined approaches which lead to a clearer division of labour between agencies, better planning, faster operational deployment and improved funding.

With regard to **statelessness**, the Office will increase its efforts to promote and implement its mandate concerning statelessness in 2005. It will use the results of its global survey on States'

practices as a basis for promoting new accessions to the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions, and will reinforce its efforts to assist concerned States to bring to an end protracted situations of statelessness. The Office will provide technical support and practical advice to States on issues related to the protection of stateless persons and the prevention of statelessness. In this context, the Office recognizes that the resolution of statelessness requires not only proper identification of stateless situations, legal advice on citizenship laws and their implementation, but also support for integration programmes that enable concerned States to progressively integrate whole communities who have been living on the margins of the society for generations.

In this broader context, UNHCR and the Inter-Parliamentary Union intend to publish a Handbook on *Prevention of Statelessness and Citizenship* which will be launched at the Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference in Manila in April 2005. This will be followed by national initiatives that aim to bring the attention of national parliaments and civil society to unresolved situations of statelessness in their countries.

Within the overall objectives of the Agenda for Protection, the **Protection Operations Support Section (POS)** has identified the following objectives for 2005:

- enhancing monitoring and oversight capacity with a view of promoting a consistent global approach to the implementation of UNHCR's protection mandate and policies;
- providing legal support to operations through the dissemination of good practices, relating in particular to refugee women and children and vulnerable groups;
- ensuring that protection staffing levels are adequate to deliver effective protection for persons of concern to the Office;
- organizing and facilitating protection management workshops; and
- increasing the efforts to promote and implement UNHCR's mandate concerning Statelessness as complementary to UNHCR's mandate for refugees.

UNHCR established the **Protection Information Section (PIS)** in 2001 to provide comprehensive and objective information to UNHCR and Governments, NGOs, international organizations, academics, decision-makers in national refugee status determination procedures practitioners and members of the judiciary. With a Refworld subscription list of over 2,000, in 2005, PIS will



focus on improving the quality, quantity and access to information available on the UNHCR website. PIS will introduce RefWorld on DVD. The Section will conduct and coordinate country of origin research, provide advice and support to users on sources of information, and run a traineeship programme for countries that have only recently established their own country of

origin information units. The Section will serve as the focal point for contacts with country of origin information units of States party to the 1951 Convention and relevant inter-governmental fora such as the Intergovernmental Consultations Working Group on Country Information and the European Commission's European Network for Asylum Practitioners (EURASIL).



A ceremony was held in memory of staff killed in the bombing of the UN Office in Baghdad in August 2003, at the UN Headquarters in Geneva. UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan spoke about the increasing importance of staff safety and security. *UNHCR / S.Hopper*