4 REGISTRATION IN EMERGENCIES

4.1 OVERVIEW AND FUNCTION

Registration of new arrivals is one of UNHCR's primary activities at the onset of an emergency, in addition to identifying and assisting persons with specific needs (PSNs) who require targeted interventions, including protection support. Emergency registration should be conducted as soon as possible, as this forms the population baseline for the delivery of protection, targeted assistance, programming and planning, and provides for the efficient use of resources.

These guidance notes provide an overview on camp, rural and urban emergency registration procedures, including instructions on information and population data management. The steps for camp-based or urban emergency registration are the same unless otherwise specified under specific sub-headings of these guidance notes.

4.2 HOW-TO GUIDE: EMERGENCY REGISTRATION STEPS

4.2.1 Objectives of registration in an emergency

"Registration of refugees and asylum-seekers is, first and foremost, a key protection tool. It can help to protect refugees from *refoulement* and forcible recruitment. It can ensure access to basic rights and family reunification, help to identify persons in need of special assistance, and provide information crucial to finding appropriate durable solutions," according to the *UNHCR Handbook for Registration* (UNHCR Geneva, Provisional Release, September 2003, pg. 5).

While setting the scope of registration activities in an emergency, ensure that registration activities appropriately match the needs of the population to be registered. The objective of registration in an emergency should be to register the population at the household level, provide a foundation for the establishment of basic distribution lists, identify and record PSNs, and issue documentation or ration cards at the household level to facilitate delivery of life-saving aid and services.

Level 1 registration consists of collecting household or family-level data for age cohorts broken down by sex; location or physical addresses of household or family; names of household or family representatives (male- and female-headed household representatives); country of origin of the family; and any specific needs within the family.

A unique identifier number will be provided to each registered individual or household. Household-level registration should lay the foundation for individual-level registration, which will need to follow as soon as possible in the later phases of an emergency, around three to six months after the initial Level 1 registration.

4.2.2 Time frame for emergency registration
As capacity permits, emergency household-level registration must be conducted within the first month of a population influx. However, as a target to aim for, emergency registration should be conducted within three to seven days of an initial influx. Since populations increase over the course of days, weeks and months, registration procedures and infrastructure should continuously support household registration throughout an emergency. Refer to the Rapid Population Estimation Techniques section (Section 5) of this Toolkit for guidance.

4.2.3 Shared roles and responsibilities

UNHCR: To ensure that individuals are registered, to facilitate individual protection and the delivery of emergency assistance. UNHCR may assist the host Government's planning, conduct registration on behalf of the host Government as required, or conduct the registration itself. The UNHCR Representative will need to hold a meeting with the host Government and key partners such as WFP, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to ensure their involvement and cooperation in registration activities. If a Government is not capable or willing to engage in an emergency registration, UNHCR may assist the Government by either planning or carrying out the registration in collaboration with the Government or on behalf of the Government. The Information Manager will need form the RIM WG, which should consist of representatives of the host Government; UNHCR protection, programme and sector leads (where deployed); and key partners working with UNHCR on the overall emergency response, which will operate as per the RIM WG's terms of reference. Refer to the Information/Data Management Strategy section (Section 2) for the RIM WG terms of reference.

Host Government: Registration of asylum-seekers and refugees is a Government responsibility. If not conducting the registration directly, Government counterparts should participate in registration planning and activities, including camp managers (were available) and government security forces.

Partners: Key partners (WFP, UNICEF, ICRC, etc.) should participate in the emergency registration and the RIM WG. UNHCR's capacity on the ground to conduct an emergency registration will vary. Therefore, a partner capable of sharing the responsibility under the guidance of UNHCR may be identified to conduct the emergency registration.

Population of concern: Must be informed and consulted about registration plans and objectives.

Resources and budget: Estimates and needs based on scope of planned registration and context of the registration to be conducted. A sample registration supply list and budget has been included in the annexes of this section.

4.2.4 Pre-registration process
The registration officer is responsible for the design and delivery of an emergency registration plan of action, which must take into account any emergency contingency planning and will need to include the following elements.

Planning documents prepared by the registration, field coordinators and protection officers (noted below) should be endorsed by the UNHCR Representative. After endorsement but prior to the start of the emergency registration, the UNHCR Representative will need to present the plan of action to partners in the first RIM WG for discussion and consensus.

After the host Government and partners are consulted and the emergency registration plan of action is drafted, the registration, protection, community services and external relations officers will need to meet with representatives from the population of concern. During these meetings, they will need to inform them about and consult on registration activities, as well as gather lists of persons whom the community has identified as particularly vulnerable. (For more information, see details below under Referral Mechanisms.)

These lists will need to include the following information: name, sex, age or date of birth, marital status, place of origin, date of arrival, family size, ration card number, camp address, specific needs, national ID numbers. Indeed, these lists should include as much information as possible. Once gathered, this information should be entered into a spreadsheet list and, once the registration has begun, uploaded into the registration database. Information on vulnerable individuals may inform a first wave of prioritized assistance to particularly vulnerable persons, before the start of registration.

After the start of emergency registration, the Information Manager will need to call RIM WG meetings to discuss activities and issues requiring consensus. A final RIM WG meeting should also be held at the end of the emergency registration, with initial baseline population figures presented for discussion and agreement. Keep in mind that baseline population figures must always be triangulated with other sources of population data, the sources of which will need to be recorded and presented during the RIM WG. For the tracking of population statistics, including recording baseline population registration data, use the population reporting template included in the Population Statistics section (Section 3) of this Toolkit.

Once agreed upon at the RIM WG level, the registration officer will need to present the outcomes of registration activities and population figures to the UNHCR Representative, who in turn will have to present this information for final endorsement by the Government and the senior managers of key stakeholders.

Note: It should be understood by all stakeholders in the registration that household-level registration data will remain the baseline data for around three to six months, until an individual-level registration is conducted.

4.3 EMERGENCY REGISTRATION PLAN OF ACTION

The emergency registration plan of action should include the following elements, in parallel
• Emergency registration objectives (as pre-defined above, while taking the situational context into account);
• Background analysis and situational overview (define the population to be registered and situational considerations in the host country, identify possible constraints and gather existing population statistics, including information on who collected the data and when);
• Define staffing requirements;
• Create a standardized list of place names and codes that all parties involved in the registration agree on (including standardized registration names/labels, place names, country of origin location names) before the start of registration. Once standardized, this list will need to be referenced on site during registration;
• Map current registration system (if any); and
• Include a time frame and budget for required resources based on the scope of planned registration activities.
• Refer to the Preparing for Registration Checklist, included in the annexes of this section.

4.3.1 Security and site selection

Emergency registration must be conducted only if it is safe to do so for staff and persons of concern, conforming to the following procedure:

The Representative will need to request security officers from UN/UNSECOORD, UNHCR or Government authorities to access the proposed registration sites and develop a security plan as required.
The Representative will then need to discuss the nature and aim of the emergency registration with central and local authorities and with security forces, and ensure their understanding, support and, if necessary, presence at the registration site to provide security.

The registration officer will need to select the registration site, based on considerations for location, space, waiting areas, security and crowd control, electricity, and water and toilets. Consider selecting a site that, given its location and ease of access for refugees, may also be used after the emergency registration for aid distribution. When selecting the site, be sure to include any site upgrade requirements that may be needed in the registration budget.

4.3.2 Procuring supplies and registration infrastructure
Once the registration plan of action, budget and supply list have been agreed upon internally by the UNHCR Representative, the registration supplies and infrastructure will need to be procured and set up, respectively. To save on time and costs, basic supplies, equipment and infrastructure should be procured in the local market, to the extent possible.

A registration stockpile of specialized registration supplies for over 500,000 individuals is maintained at UNHCR HQ in Geneva, which can be used for emergency registration needs. Refer to the Registration Stockpile Supply List, included in the annexes of this section. Normally, the material can be released and shipped from the stockpile within a day, but the shipment may take more time depending on the destination, customs procedures, etc.

4.3.3 Preparation of data sets and forms
If not already in place, an electronic registration database (ProGres) will need to be set up and functioning at the UNHCR office. The use of standardized UNHCR registration categories and codes must be ensured throughout the registration and beyond, a list of the UNHCR standard registration codes has been included in the annexes. Standard household registration forms are recommended for use and included with these guidance notes.

Note: UNHCR data-entry formats, such as dates of birth and specific needs categories, should not be amended.

4.3.4 Hiring staff and training
As much as possible, try to use partner staff who have worked with UNHCR in various capacities and who should be familiar with UNHCR protection principals, including working with vulnerable persons. A session on the UNHCR Code of Conduct will need to be conducted by the registration and protection officers prior to the start of registration (*UNHCR Handbook for Registration*, pgs. 121-122). Training will also need to be provided by the registration officer, to cover the various roles and jobs within the registration process and what is expected of whom (*UNHCR Handbook for Registration*, pgs. 68, 120).

4.3.5 Information campaign
Prior to the start of registration, a thorough information campaign, undertaken collaboratively by the registration, protection and external relations officers, will need to be conducted. This process should explain the reasons for registration, the locations of the registration and the desired outcomes of the registration activities. The Government, operational and partner staff will also need to be briefed on key registration messages.

The information campaign should include detailed information on the following:

- Purpose of the registration;
- Location of registration;
- Confidentiality and sharing of data gathered;
- Basic steps for registration;
- Specific procedures for PSNs;
- Registration opening hours and interview scheduling;
- Pre-conditions for being registered;
- Procedures for absentees and others;
- Procedures for reporting misconduct by staff and other difficulties in assessing the UNHCR office or registration premises; and
- Outcome of registration activities. For example: "Explain to the community how the registration system is intended to ensure that each individual and each household will have an accurate and lasting record, a means of identifying themselves, and a full and equitable share of benefits" (From UNHCR Handbook for Registration, pg. 87).

For additional details on each of the above steps, refer to the UNHCR Handbook for Registration, pgs. 131-135.

There are many types of information campaign techniques to consider – SMS messaging, the use of local radio stations, poster campaigns, information leaflets, using the Internet, etc. However, keep in mind that in the context of an emergency, verbally informing community leaders of key registration-related messages will likely be the most effective approach.

In an urban emergency registration context, conducting an information campaign over local radio stations will be particularly important for mass communication. Consider setting up a telephone hotline where registration information is pre-recorded for playback, and where individuals can be assigned registration slots. Also, meet with community leaders and inform them of the registration, and leave posters and leaflets in key locations where persons of concern have congregated.

4.3.6 Fixing and scheduling interviews
"Fixing" a population is when only persons of concern are provided with a UNHCR token or wristband (one to each individual to be registered at the household level in an emergency) or by marking individuals' fingertips with invisible ink. Fixing a population works to ensure that only persons of concern are registered.

However, it will not always be possible to fix the population before beginning the registration. In camps, fixing can be conducted through the use of wristbands, fixing tokens or invisible/indelible ink (examples of fixing tokens have been included in the annexes of this section). The wristbands are then removed or fixing tokens collected during the registration, and/or hands marked with ink once registration is completed (double check whether individuals have been previously marked with invisible ink, in order to prevent double registration).

Tracking fixing tokens will help to ensure the integrity of the eventual registration process, and will assist UNHCR in maintaining current statistics on the population of concern. When scheduling interviews, divide the populations into smaller groups based on residential locations/addresses, token numbers, etc.

Although for a number of reasons biometrics (fingerprinting, iris scanning, etc.) are not yet systematically used for emergency registration, UNHCR is increasingly looking towards using this approach as a standard component of emergency registration. The UNHCR registration section in HQ may be contacted for additional information regarding the use of biometrics in emergency registration.

In an urban emergency registration, fixing may not be required or may not always be possible. When considering a scheduling system, first take into account the projected time frame for emergency registration as noted in the registration plan of action. Break down the city by district or by GIS-gridded location while leaving more time for areas believed to have higher densities of persons of concern. Using GIS to grid a location is covered in the Mapping section of this Toolkit under Annex 5: UNHCR Addressing Guidance. Also, develop a schedule list in a spreadsheet, which can be populated by collecting names by call-in, etc.

4.3.7 Access and verification

If it is unclear whether a person presenting him- or herself for emergency registration should be registered, grant that individual access to registration procedures. Registration of non-refugees is likely to be identified during Level 2 registrations, which generally follow six months or less after an initial Level 1 registration.

Depending on the context, any of the following screening techniques may be used by UNHCR protection staff to establish whether a person presenting him- or herself should be registered:

• Establish a set of targeted questions about the country of origin: History, geography, customs and other features that only a native would know (update regularly depending on the length of the registration exercise).

• Visual clues: Clothes and body language may provide initial indications, but should not be the sole determinant.

• Language differences: To the extent possible, registration and verification teams should include people who may identify country or area of origin through differences in language.

• Knowledge of locations and conditions in country of origin: Interviews should include questions to verify knowledge of the stated area of origin. Resource persons with knowledge of those areas should be consulted, and maps and lists of events should be gathered by the team to facilitate cross-checking.

• Assistance from the refugee population: The population of concern will normally cooperate in identifying verification techniques, such as knowing specific geographic and linguistic details, and should be consulted.

4.3.8 Referral mechanisms

As protection objective of registration, the recording and tracking of persons with specific needs will also need to be built into the emergency registration process.

Individuals with special needs are "prioritized" for registration, meaning they are physically moved to the front of the registration list or line. Additional identifying information/details that will result in the further targeting of assistance are also collected for prioritized individuals.

Examples of persons to be prioritized for emergency registration include:

• Unaccompanied and separated children (a Standard Referral and Registration Form for Unaccompanied or Separated Children, has been included in the annex of this section);

• Child-headed households;

• Single parents with small children;

• Elderly persons, particularly unaccompanied ones;

• Persons with disabilities and their families;

• Persons with specific protection concerns and their families;

• Single women in certain circumstances; and

• Persons with specific medical needs.

A full list of persons to be prioritized for registration, including ProGres codes has been included as an annex in this section.

The protection officer will need to provide training to all registration staff on identifying and working with persons with specific needs, prior to the start of registration.

A key aspect of protection monitoring is a prioritized list based on vulnerability broken down by age, sex and camp/settlement. This will need to be produced on a regular basis for targeted interventions and ongoing analysis, and should be provided to partners and concerned colleagues. Deciding on what type and level of registration information to share outside of UNHCR must be carefully considered by senior managers and agreed to by the Representative.

4.3.9 Data elements to collect and data entry
Data elements to collect will be as specified in the standard UNHCR registration forms included as annexes within these guidance notes (Sample Control Form, Sample Counting Form, Sample Registration Layout Form). Data will be handwritten on the standard registration form and may be entered electronically at the registration site, with data later uploaded into the registration database at the UNHCR office. The physical registration record will also need to be filled out and maintained at the UNHCR office.

Adding extra questions or fields to the UNHCR registration form is generally discouraged, unless extra questions or fields serve to collect information that may be linked to lifesaving emergency response, such as, "Who within your family is trained as a community health worker" (if Yes, give name) or "Has everyone in your family received a measles vaccination?" (Yes or No).

For both an urban and rural population, ensure that at least one or more telephone numbers is collected for each family, and possibly an e-mail address, so that UNHCR has the ability to locate the family in the future.

4.3.10 Issuing documents and producing distribution lists
During the registration, each household will be issued a ration card, which will allow the household to receive assistance. The ration card number will be recorded in the registration database and/or on the registration form.

4.3.11 Population data agreement and management
Final agreement on registration figures will need to be reached first within the RIM WG. Agreement will then need to be reached on the type and frequency of distribution lists as well as population demographic breakdowns to be produced by the registration officer as required. (Do not include individually identifiable information in these lists, unless the partner has signed a confidentiality agreement and as directed by the protection officer.) If a partner collects the data, individuals will not be officially registered until UNHCR and the host Government accepts the data, according to the *UNHCR Handbook for Registration* (pg. 36).

The Representative should present the results of the RIM WG discussion to both the host Government and the management of partner organizations that have participated in the emergency registration. The Representative will then need to present agreed upon registration figures and outcomes to the Government for official endorsement.

Once this process is completed and agreed at all levels, the Information Manager should disseminate population baseline figures and, later, updates to population figures (as a result of ongoing registration, i.e. new arrivals, departures, births and deaths) to partners through standard information management and coordination structures outlined throughout these guidance notes.

4.3.12 Continuous updating of records

After the completion of the registration, the Information Manager will need to ensure that procedures are in place to continuously update registration records. Recommended approaches to continuously updating registration records include the following:

• Share lists of individual households that have missed distribution with refugee leaders, to ascertain whether households should remain active.

• Obtain lists of newly arrived persons of concern from refugee leaders, and use these lists to conduct mobile verification/registration.

• As a final verification, UNHCR and partners should conduct random spot checks in camps/homes, etc. to confirm the presence of registered refugees.

4.4 A TEMPLATES

• Annex 1: Checklist for Preparing a Registration Plan of Action (referred to as the Registration Strategy in the Registration Handbook)
• Annex 2: UNHCR Control Sheet
• Annex 3: Sample Registration Strategy and Budget
• Annex 4: Standard UNHCR Categories and Codes
• Annex 5: Standard Data Set for Registration
• Annex 6: Standard UNHCR Household Registration Form
• Annex 7: Level 2 Registration Form
• Annex 8: Standard Registration Materials
• Annex 9: Standard Entitlement Documents
• Annex 10: Standard Referral and Registration Forms for Unaccompanied or Separated Children
• Annex 11: Sample Registration Layout
• Annex 12: UNHCR Community Vulnerability Collection Form
• Annex 13: Guidance on the Use of Standardized Specific Needs Codes
• Annex 14: ProGres Data Warehouse Instructions
• Annex 15: ProGres Data Warehouse Tool

4.5 B REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

• UNHCR Handbook for Registration, Procedures and Standards for Registration, Population Data Management and Documentation, Provisional Release, September 2003, Annexes 1–15. Accessed online at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/3f967dc14.pdf (19 November 2012).

Note: An updated version of the Handbook for Registration is anticipated in 2014.