

Co-operation with Partners

From its inception in 1951, UNHCR has worked closely with a wide range of partners: NGOs, UN institutions, international organisations and inter-governmental bodies, as well as donors. In all aspects of UNHCR's work, partnerships are crucial. These have been as diverse as the provision of sector-specific humanitarian assistance, technical support, resource mobilisation and policy advice. With growing demands on UNHCR and increased competition for the financial support of a limited number of traditional donors, co-operation and partnerships among humanitarian actors has become of prime importance.

The growing involvement of NGOs in civic society, including in areas closely linked to UNHCR's mandate, is critical for reintegration activities, the rehabilitation of refugee-impacted areas, the global strategy to combat HIV/AIDS and other thematic issues – often of a development-assistance nature.

One important initiative launched by UNHCR in 2002 was the "4Rs" programme. This initiative is aimed at engaging development actors in joint planning, implementation and resource mobilisation in order to narrow the gap between humanitarian relief and development, and to address the socio-economic impact of refugees. UNHCR's primary role is that of a catalyst and advocate of efforts towards broadening donor support for countries hosting large populations of refugees for extended periods of time. At the same time, UNHCR promotes development activities in refugee-populated areas in order to benefit both the local communities and refugees. Afghanistan, Eritrea, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka are among the pilot countries selected for the launch of this initiative. Similarly, the Zambia Initiative, a pilot project led by the Government and UNHCR, has become a model for co-ordination in addressing protracted refugee programmes and poverty reduction for local host communities. So far, it has been successful in attracting strong donor support for a number of projects in refugee-hosting areas. These include the construction and equipping of schools, transportation, health care, financial support to

develop HIV/AIDS programmes and the agricultural industry.

During the year, UNHCR continued to seek durable solutions for the plight of refugees, particularly in Africa, and to identify complementary sources of funding for selected activities. Through NEPAD and the formulation of the G8 Africa Plan adopted during the G8 Summit in June 2002, UNHCR, together with its partners, advocated for the recognition that good governance, peace and security as well as conflict resolution are prerequisites for sustainable development in Africa. Several donor countries have been approached by UNHCR to consider establishing development assistance budget lines for countries in transition, war-affected populations, and countries which host large refugee groups. These efforts are ongoing.

In the context of co-ordination mechanisms within the UN system, UNHCR was actively involved in the Chief Executives' Board (CEB) and its subsidiary bodies, the High Level Committee on Programme (HLCP) and the High Level Committee on Management (HLCM). UNHCR also participated in the plenary sessions of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), its Working Group and several sub-working groups. Many UNHCR field offices play an active role in the Resident Co-ordinator System and the United Nations Country Team, including in processes such as the Common Country Assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF). The Resident/Humanitarian Co-ordinators' retreat held in November discussed the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) and ways to strengthen it.

The IASC mechanism was made more effective through increased informal consultations on humanitarian co-ordination arrangements and plans of action concerning specific complex emergencies. In addition, a series of reference groups, task forces and sub-working groups were established to focus on: improving the CAP; improving field practices concerning internally displaced



Sudan : UNHCR works in close collaboration with other organisations to implement its programmes. Here, Eritrean refugees are receiving food at a WFP distribution. *UNHCR / P. Stromberg*

persons; developing an inter-agency training module for internal displacement; investigating the humanitarian impact of sanctions; and addressing such issues as small arms, HIV/AIDS, gender and relief-development linkages. UNHCR was fully involved in both the consultations and the issue-specific groups.

Through the efforts of the sub-working group on the CAP and the involvement of various partners, including UNHCR, there was marked improve-

ment in both the preparation and the launch of the 2003 Consolidated Appeals in November 2002.

As in past years, UNHCR participated in the inter-agency mission by the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) to the United Republic of Tanzania to review the situation of refugees and their impact on the surrounding host communities. Gaps and concerns are being discussed with the Government of Tanzania and other interested parties to come up with a plan of action.

UNHCR continued to promote staff security and safety within the CEB and its subsidiary machinery, and to co-ordinate training in this area through the Office of the United Nations Security Co-ordinator (UNSECOORD). At the initiative of UNHCR, the CEB adopted two statements that underscored the need to reinforce safety and security measures, particularly training, and reiterated the responsibilities of member states to ensure the safety of UN and associated personnel. Together with UNICEF and WFP, an MOU on the funding of security adviser posts was signed with UNSECOORD.

ILO and UNHCR joined forces under a partnership through technical expertise to develop a project for the rapid deployment of ILO livelihood experts to support initiatives linking relief to development. A training manual on micro-finance was also developed. UNHCR and WFP are developing joint needs assessment guidelines for food security. The revised MOU between the two agencies, signed in July 2002, provides for a broader focus in food assessments to include self-reliance and food security issues pertinent to refugees and their host communities.

The implementation of co-operation agreements with key operational partners is periodically reviewed through high-level meetings. During the reporting period, such meetings were held with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), IOM, WFP and the World Bank. Though no global co-operation agreement has been signed with the ICRC, annual high-level meetings are held to review common concerns and exchange views on policies and operational modalities.

Throughout 2002, UNHCR placed renewed emphasis on the importance of reviewing and strengthening partnerships in order to increase the level and quality of resources reaching refugees and other persons of concern to the Office. To this end, UNHCR often sought the support of NGOs, often at short notice. NGO involvement frequently made the difference between failure and success. Besides "traditional" co-operation in emergency deployments or in technical areas, such as water or shelter, UNHCR and NGOs have pooled their complementary expertise in the fields of protection, advocacy, social services and other sectors. In a small number of cases, funding constraints meant that UNHCR

was unable to sustain the initial commitments to NGOs (such commitments are generally governed by a clause stating "... subject to the availability of funds"). Whenever possible, the NGOs involved were warned ahead of time so that they could explore possibilities of finding other sources of income or plan to scale down their activities in order not to interrupt important services to needy refugees.

Further to the Global Consultations on International Protection, IOM and UNHCR developed a partnership in the area of refugee protection and migration control. Meetings were held under the auspices of the joint UNHCR-IOM Action Group on Asylum and Migration (AGAMI). In late 2002, it was proposed to extend the collaboration and dialogue to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Collaboration on environmental issues and co-ordination with partners in development and conservation agencies was improved. A joint WWF and UNHCR project "*Early Warning – Towards an improved management system for refugee operations in ecological sensitive regions*" was undertaken – to address the environmental impact of large-scale refugee inflows.

UNHCR and UNESCO's Programme of Education for Emergencies and Reconstruction (PEER) re-oriented the focus of education on the environment by devising broader outreach techniques. This was tested in Ethiopia, Sudan and Zambia.

The Reach Out Project is a refugee protection training initiative targeting mid-level NGO and Red Cross staff and is spearheaded by international NGO networks together with the IFRC. In 2002, eight training events were organised. UNHCR also reinforced its partnership with the ICRC and universities by presenting refugee law sessions for the Namur Course on Humanitarian Law Principles, the UNITAR Fellowship Programme on International Law, the University of Geneva and the University of Lyon.

Further information on UNHCR's co-operation with partners can be found throughout the report and especially in the Headquarters chapter, under NGO Liaison Unit, in the Global Programmes chapter and in various regional and country chapters.