

**UNHCR COMPREHENSIVE
POLICY ON URBAN
REFUGEES**

Geneva, 25 March 1997

(i)

Note

A Working Group was established in February 1996 under the auspices of the Assistant High Commissioner to define UNHCR's global policy regarding urban refugees. This Working Group came into being following the issuance in October 1995, by the Inspection and Evaluation Service of a discussion paper on the subject and the receipt of comments thereon from the field. The results of the Working Group's discussions are reflected in a report, submitted by the Assistant High Commissioner to the Senior Management Committee for discussion on 15 August 1996.

On the basis of the discussions in the SMC, two actions were taken. Selected field offices were requested to comment on the Working Group Report and its proposed policy. In parallel a "high level decision sheet" was distributed to and approved by the SMC of 19 September 1996. Any detailed comments subsequently received from SMC members and the consulted Field Offices, as well as Field Offices that have spontaneously offered their comments, have been, to the extent they were consistent with the 19 September summary of decisions, incorporated in the final policy document. The Working Group expresses its thanks to all those who, through their constructive contributions, have helped to shape the UNHCR policy on Urban Refugees.

This policy sets a framework, describing leading principles that should underlie all UNHCR action with regard to urban refugees.

It is anticipated that the policy will require, in a number of locations, a reorientation of the assistance programme for urban refugees, away from long-term care and maintenance and towards durable solutions. It is intended that existing caseloads will be subject to systematic review to rationalise protection and assistance activities and to bring them progressively in line with the new policy. This policy is likely to result in a more restrictive approach to the provision of care and maintenance assistance than hitherto and requires a more active approach to durable solutions, including containment of future irregular movement. It is furthermore anticipated that the full implementation of the policy will demand the improvement or introduction of specific tools, such as a generic global IC database system, a needs assessment tool for urban settings, and the adoption and resourcing of an income-generation assistance policy.

It is also true that the policy as a whole will not be readily applicable in all locations, simply because some present realities will not accommodate its implementation. It is expected that in this kind of situation the field office will engage in a medium term effort to progressively create the conditions that will make the application of the policy a reality. In the meantime, such a field office will apply itself to implement the policy to a maximum extent possible and will report on progress achieved and explain planned actions in its annual country operations plan.

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Executive Summary

POLICY OBJECTIVES

(1) The principal objectives of the UNHCR Policy on Urban Refugees are to ensure protection and to maximise access to solutions, both for individual refugees and for groups, and to make the best use of scarce resources. To achieve this, UNHCR requires a clear, rational, and comprehensive policy, based on principles which are valid on a global basis, and development, application and maintenance of the tools required for implementation. Implementation of the policy in the short term will, however, involve adaptation of certain elements to regional or sub-regional conditions.

(2) For the purpose of practical implementation, the typical urban refugee caseload has been broken down into three sub-groups and specific actions are proposed for each group: irregular movers, refugees belonging to a *prima facie* caseload and the "legitimate urban caseload".

IRREGULAR MOVERS

(3) With due regard to the 1989 Executive Committee Conclusion, as well as the reports of a series of regional meetings which covered irregular movers (Harare, May 1994; Kuala Lumpur, May 1995; Santo Domingo, December 1995), the following working definition is applicable:

An irregular mover is a refugee/asylum seeker who leaves a country where he/she has found or could have found and enjoyed basic protection, to seek asylum in another country, unless doing so for compelling reasons. Such compelling reasons include a threat to physical security of self or accompanying close family members, or family reunion with immediate family members who are not themselves irregular movers in the current country.

(4) Refugees who are irregular movers have a right to effective and adequate protection. This is inviolate and is therefore not affected by irregular movement. However, in view of the various push and pull factors causing irregular movement, including UNHCR's involuntary contribution to the development of the phenomenon, material assistance - from basic care and maintenance to assistance with higher education, resettlement, etc - should legitimately be denied by UNHCR to irregular movers.

(5) The issue of the return of irregular movers to their country of first asylum (or *country where basic protection was available*) is addressed in this new policy paper. The applicable considerations to ensure that refugees receive effective and adequate protection in a country of asylum are also specified. A policy objective of promoting the drawing up of (sub-) regional readmission agreements through UNHCR's active mediation and where appropriate, by assisting the receiving state in responding to its obligations is proposed. As corollaries of the above, the issues of return travel assistance and the discouragement of future irregular movements are addressed.

PRIMA FACIE CASELOADS

(6) As a general principle, no assistance should be provided to members of a *prima facie* caseload in urban areas in the country of first asylum, where a UNHCR assistance programme exists in a rural camp or settlement. This approach has already been successfully adopted by a number of field offices over the years with regard to certain caseloads either as a result of government policy or of a policy decision by the UNHCR offices concerned. It is acknowledged that certain exceptions will apply: protection/security problems, education, medical care, family reunion. Regarding the case of a person (member of a *prima facie* caseload) who appears in a country outside the region where the *prima facie* status is applied, UNHCR offices should undertake first of all to determine whether or not the individual is a refugee, and if so, ascertain the reason for moving from the first country of asylum.

DEFINITION OF AN URBAN REFUGEE

(7) UNHCR has hitherto had no consistently applied definition of an urban refugee. A pragmatic approach to the issue is therefore proposed. By itself, life in urban areas does not constitute an answer to a refugee's problems and may well be significantly *more* difficult than in a rural settlement, where appropriate community support can more easily be generated and where UNHCR often has programmes. Also, for the purposes of UNHCR, the decision of a refugee to live in an urban area is his, to the extent that (a) the host government accepts his presence in an urban area and (b) the refugee is able to look after himself and his family. In the light of the above, the definition of an urban refugee is only relevant for refugees in need of assistance in an urban area. Consequently, the proposed definition reads as follows:

For the purposes of being considered for assistance in an urban area, an urban refugee is an individual of urban background in the country of origin and who is not part of a *prima facie* caseload. A refugee of rural background - for whom, in the country of asylum, the option of a rural settlement which offers an opportunity for self-sufficiency does not exist, may exceptionally be considered for assistance in an urban area. Irregular movers do not qualify for consideration for assistance in urban areas.

(8) The above definition, in the context of a globally coherent and consistent policy with the above-mentioned objective of solutions-oriented assistance, determines who *might*, after a rigorous needs assessment, be considered for assistance.

SOLUTIONS FOR LEGITIMATE URBAN CASELOAD

(9) The UNHCR policy on urban refugees and asylum-seekers is based on the presumptions of state responsibility for protection and assistance, and refugee self-reliance. Strenuous and continuing interventions should be made with host governments to encourage them to grant recognised refugees access to employment, hospitals, schools and other social services (at rates equivalent to those paid by nationals) and the naturalisation process. Where temporary assistance is, nevertheless, provided, this should be strictly time-limited and given, from the outset, with the objective of supporting a refugee's efforts towards self-sufficiency. Such assistance should be administered through qualified implementing partners in a manner that promotes insertion of refugees

into existing activities for nationals. In a number of locations this can, however, only be achieved if accompanied by considerable targeted political lobbying.

TRANSITIONAL MEASURES

(10) In a later chapter of this Policy Paper, transitional measures for the existing caseload are discussed. After a thorough case review of all active cases, distinct appropriate measures should be introduced for each category: irregular movers, individuals from *prima facie* caseloads, and the legitimate urban caseload.

VIOLENCE

(11) Chapter 10 deals with managing violence, outlining the links between aggression and frustrated expectations, often due to ambivalent practices in the absence of a clear policy. Acts of violent protest such as demonstrations, hunger strikes or threatening behaviour against UNHCR or its partners' staff or property are issues of law and order and should be dealt with accordingly by the local authorities. When violent protest is conducted in response to legitimate protection concerns, it is, of course, incumbent on UNHCR to intervene. In any other circumstance, however, when the protest is in response to the *legitimate* denial of refugee status, assistance or resettlement, it is not appropriate for UNHCR to intervene.

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

(12) For the effective implementation of this new policy, it is indispensable that at the earliest possible stage a single global IC database be introduced that can be applied by all field offices which can "interact" with a single central database. Other requirements are a needs assessment tool for urban settings, and the adoption and resourcing of an income-generation assistance policy for which the Policy Paper also provides outlines.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

(13) In line with the Delphi approach, implementation of the Urban Refugee Policy should, where possible, be refugee situation-based. The Situation Manager would have responsibility for (urban) refugees anywhere in the world that originate from the refugee situation for which he/she bears responsibility. However, differentiation in treatment of various refugee groups in a given location is undesirable. Therefore, for coherent results, full coordination between Situation Managers and Representatives and across refugee groups must be assured.

(14) It is suggested that initially, efforts should be focused on ensuring that after a transitional period the policy is globally and constructively applied. Various organizational models to do this can be envisaged. It is clear that a one-year temporary coordination function is required, either through a temporary post or through a fresh mandate for a new Steering Group on Urban Refugees.

1. POLICY OBJECTIVES - THE RULE AND SPECIFIC EXCEPTIONS

Objectives

(15) The principal objective of the UNHCR Policy on Urban Refugees is to ensure protection and maximise access to solutions, both for individual refugees and for groups of refugees of which they may form part. Generally, this can be best achieved by ensuring that individual refugees and groups remain as close as possible to their country of origin, if not their own community of origin, or at least in a culturally and/or linguistically familiar environment.

(16) A second important objective of the UNHCR Policy on Urban Refugees is to rationalise assistance policy in order to make the best use of scarce resources. This objective is clearly reinforced by the first in terms of the primary focus on solutions.

(17) Notwithstanding the fact that situations differ and constantly evolve, UNHCR should seek to ensure a globally consistent and equitable approach to the protection and assistance of urban refugees and asylum-seekers. In order to do so, UNHCR should maintain a clear, rational, and comprehensive policy, based on principles which are valid on a global basis, and develop, apply and maintain the tools required for the implementation of its policies. Implementation of the policy, however, will necessarily involve adaptation of certain elements to regional or sub-regional conditions, according to variations in socio-economic, political and security factors, as well as conditions of asylum. The policy will therefore establish basic rules from which specific justified exceptions will be made where required by local conditions. To ensure consistency, it is desirable that such exceptions will be made in consultation with a focal point at Headquarters.

2. OVERVIEW OF ISSUES

A global problem

(18) While urban refugees are protected and assisted by UNHCR in all regions of the world, in the mid-1990s two main regions (or sub-regions) stand out in terms of the numbers involved: Western Europe and the CIS. The former primarily from a protection point of view, since governments and NGOs generally cover the material assistance needs of refugees and asylum-seekers. The issue of urban refugees is also, however, currently a focus of concern to UNHCR in Africa, South-West Asia and the Middle East, South and South-East Asia, and Central and South America. In most locations, urban caseloads registered with and assisted by UNHCR number in the hundreds rather than the thousands. However, a number of programmes cater for caseloads in the thousands, including Moscow, New Delhi, Islamabad, Cairo, Rio de Janeiro and Athens.

Particular nationalities

(19) Particular nationalities tend to dominate the urban refugee caseloads, even in programmes outside their regions of origin. These include Afghans, Angolans, Eritreans, Ethiopians, Ghanaians, Iranians, Iraqis, Liberians, Nigerians, Somalis, Sri Lankans, Sudanese, Zairians and more recently Burundians and Rwandans. Some of these groups have a long history of migration related to trade, and/or a nomadic tradition. In other cases, the groups have a history of economically-driven migration, in many cases starting in the

1980s, or have been involved in aliens trafficking. Such groups tend to have well-established links worldwide, a factor which inevitably facilitates their inter-regional movement. Such movements are also linked to the broader global phenomenon of movement from rural to urban areas, which in some instances has been exacerbated by significant differences in the treatment of urban and rural refugees.

Available data of questionable quality

(20) Urban caseloads tend to comprise predominantly young, single (or separated) males. Inadequate or incomplete registration of urban caseloads, however, makes it difficult to distinguish between active and non-active or closed cases, assisted and non-assisted, making comparative data and statistics unreliable.

Disproportion between numbers and allocated assistance

(21) Urban refugees, while constituting less than 2% of UNHCR's refugee caseload (and less than 1% of the total caseload of concern to the High Commissioner), demand a disproportionate amount (estimated at 10-15%) of the organization's human and financial resources. This becomes an issue of concern if one observes that donors have become increasingly selective in terms of the programmes they support. They typically prefer activities focusing on local integration or voluntary repatriation and show little enthusiasm for long-term care and maintenance of urban cases, including upper secondary and tertiary education.

Avoid creating dependencies

(23) Long-term care and maintenance is considered undesirable for urban refugees as it keeps them dependent rather than supporting their capacity to look after themselves. It undermines their coping mechanisms, leading to marginalization, frustration and often violence. It also favours unjustly the individual treatment of urban cases compared to those in rural settlements and camps.

Investment and anticipated dividends

(24) To successfully implement its policy, UNHCR must equip itself with the necessary tools and competencies, among which are a global individual case registration system, qualified (implementing partner) staff, and resources to promote genuine durable solutions in urban contexts. It is anticipated that the required initial investment would soon start paying dividends and - in the timespan of two to three years, would amount to a significant reduction in care and maintenance expenditure. In a number of locations this could, however, only be achieved if accompanied by considerable targeted political lobbying and building of "alliances". These points are elaborated below.

3. DEFINITION AND TREATMENT OF IRREGULAR MOVERS

Brief history of irregular movers

(25) In a significant number of locations, where data are available, a majority of urban cases have been found to be "irregular movers". The issue of irregular movers was first implicitly addressed in Executive Committee Conclusion No. 15 of 1979 on Refugees without an Asylum Country. The term "irregular movers" was first explicitly used in the 1985 Note on Irregular Movers submitted by the High Commissioner to the Sub-Committee on International Protection (SCIP) (30 September 1985 EC/SCP/40/Rev.1). In 1989, a specific Executive Committee Conclusion of Irregular Movement was adopted (No 58 (XL) - 1989). The conclusion describes irregular movers as:

"refugees, whether they have been formally identified as such or not (asylum-seekers), who move in an irregular manner from countries in which they have already found protection, in order to seek asylum or permanent resettlement elsewhere".

In paras (f) and (g) of Conclusion No 58, it was accepted that a refugee/asylum-seeker may be returned to the country of first asylum if the person:

- can enter and remain there;
- is protected there against refoulement and is treated in accordance with basic recognized human rights standards for the treatment of asylum-seekers and refugees;
- will not be subject there to persecution or threats to safety and liberty and is granted effective and adequate protection; and,
- has access to a durable solution.

Evolution of irregular movement

(26) In order to preserve the institution of asylum, UNHCR has an interest in adopting measures to reduce irregular movements. With due regard to the 1989 Executive Committee Conclusion, as well as to the reports of a series of regional protection meetings that dealt amongst others with irregular movers (Harare, May 1994; Kuala Lumpur, May 1995; Santo Domingo, December 1995), the following working definition is applicable:

An irregular mover is a refugee/asylum seeker who leaves a country where he/she has found or could have found and enjoyed basic protection, to seek asylum in another country, unless doing so for compelling reasons. Such compelling reasons include a threat to physical security of self or of accompanying close family members, or family reunion with immediate family members who are not themselves irregular movers in the current country.

Push and pull factors

(27) Irregular movement is caused by various push and pull factors, sometimes both at the same time. Push factors are intolerance, insecurity, poverty without prospects for improvement, and breakdown of law and order. Pull factors include better economic conditions, higher levels of care and maintenance assistance, access to upper secondary

and tertiary education, better resettlement possibilities, inconsistent refugee status determination and aliens-trafficking.

Protection is inviolate, assistance not an automatic right

(28) Taking into account these push and pull factors and the associated problems, it is herewith reaffirmed that the right of refugees to effective and adequate protection is inviolate and is therefore not affected by irregular movement. However, in view of the various pull factors identified, material assistance from basic care and maintenance to higher education, resettlement, etc - can legitimately be denied by UNHCR to irregular movers, irrespective of the practicality of return to a first asylum country.

Return of irregular movers

(29) As mentioned above, UNHCR has an interest in the adoption of measures to reduce irregular movements. With regard to the issue of the return of irregular movers to their country of first asylum (or *country where basic protection was available*), the considerations listed apply below:

(30) UNHCR's primary concern is to ensure that refugees receive basic protection in a country of asylum. Consequently the fundamental consideration is whether a government will allow re-entry of a refugee or asylum-seeker and provide basic protection. Because of both the risks of refoulement and creating orbit situations, UNHCR should closely observe unilateral action by States returning asylum-seekers to countries through which they have passed. In the absence of a formal agreement, field offices may adopt a pragmatic approach. A state's practice of accepting returning asylum-seekers and refugees can be ascertained through an assessment of the following factors, among others where relevant, which include aspects of the practice of the government concerned, and formal aspects:

- the state's willingness and practice : to readmit asylum-seekers and refugees; to provide basic protection; and to consider their claims in a fair manner (if appropriate);
- the state's readiness to permit asylum-seekers to remain while their claims are being examined;
- the state's adherence to recognized basic human rights standards for the treatment of asylum-seekers and refugees;
- the state's ratification of and compliance with international refugee instruments, in particular the principle of non-refoulement; and,
- the state's ratification of and compliance with international human rights instruments.

(31) **It should be remembered that many irregular movers are not 1951 Convention refugees but "extended definition" "persons of concern". For them, return to a country where refugee status determination procedures are in place is not only less important but, if they were applied to them, could in fact could be a distinct hindrance if the refugee status determination procedures employ exclusively the 1951 Convention definition. They would be screened out!**

"First-Asylum" countries and readmission agreements

(32) For some time now, UNHCR has taken the view that it is legitimate and useful for states to establish parameters to identify the countries where asylum applicants could

request asylum and which could assume responsibility for them. A country of first asylum can be considered the first country where the asylum-seeker has stayed longer than the time strictly required for mere transit and in which he did apply or could have applied for asylum. Should an asylum-seeker have consecutively travelled through several countries on account of personal security considerations, the first country in the series responding to the above criteria should be considered as the first country of asylum. As mentioned above, UNHCR has indeed an interest to see irregular movements diminish. Furthermore, UNHCR has no objection to the idea of safe, or first, country of asylum which constitutes a useful basis for readmission agreements between states. Such agreements provide for the return of refugees and asylum-seekers to countries where they have had or could have sought asylum and where their safety would not be jeopardized, either within that country or by an act of refoulement.

(33) Following the example of the European Union, such agreements could be drawn up within the framework for intergovernmental cooperation and coordination established by various sub-regional organizations throughout the world, which are taking an increasing interest in humanitarian, migration and social development issues. Where such agreements do not yet exist, UNHCR should periodically examine whether and how it may promote their setting up through its active mediation and by assisting the receiving state in responding to its obligations.

(34) For such a sub-regional system to be effective, due consideration should also be given to absorption and integration capacities of host countries in a spirit of international solidarity and responsibility-sharing. It will require considerable harmonization efforts among states, in which UNHCR must play a useful role. As regards promotion of readmission agreements, a framework for cooperation could be drawn up in the form of agreements at (sub-) regional level providing for:

- (a) allocation of responsibility for the adjudication of an asylum claim among countries in the sub-region;
- (b) modalities for the readmission of irregular movers to the country responsible for examining their asylum claim (country of first asylum);
- (c) promotion of regional resettlement for urban cases who cannot find suitable durable solutions in their country of first asylum; and,
- (d) creation of a special fund to build up deficient absorption and integration capacities of first asylum countries.

Return travel assistance

(35) In respect of possible UNHCR assistance for travel when the country of first asylum has agreed to readmit an irregular mover, or, in the absence of such a formal agreement, where such travel is deemed feasible, the guiding principle is that refugees should not reap any advantage from their irregular movement. As a general rule, no financial assistance for travel should be provided in instances where it could be abused to move on to the next country. However, there may be cases where irregular movers are indeed ready to return to their country of first asylum. In such instances, if it is determined that the person concerned is in need of assistance to travel, UNHCR may provide it. However, modalities of assistance and conditions of travel should be designed to minimize possibilities for abuse (e.g. any tickets should be non-refundable except to UNHCR, and valid for one specific journey with the least possible number of transit stops. During transit stops, efforts to abscond should be contained through appropriate monitoring

arrangements with immigration services). Such travel assistance should therefore be refused if the above modalities and conditions are not being met.

Discouraging future irregular movements

(36) In order to further discourage future irregular movement, the following steps should be considered (as a means to address some of the factors identified as encouraging such movement):

- no further issuance of "attestations" or "to whom it may concern" documents to individuals who could/should have obtained refugee status in a safe country of first asylum unless for compelling protection reasons . For cases in which such attestations would very exceptionally be provided, the following model should be used :

the bearer of this attestation whose personal details are shown below has addressed him/herself to UNHCR BO requesting international protection. His/her case is under examination.. The validity of this attestation is 1 month from its day of issuance.

- further elaboration of a system to monitor the refugee status determination process by UNHCR field offices to ensure regional or sub-regional consistency, completion of the process within a maximum of three months and enhanced dissemination of country of origin information and guidelines on specific caseloads; Representatives and Regional Legal Advisors should annually draw up of plans to ensure consistency among countries under their responsibility
- consistent application of UNHCR's guidelines on resettlement, but excluding irregular movers. This will require periodic comprehensive briefings on the issue to resettlement governments to elicit their cooperation;
- establishment of clear guidelines on the provision of assistance to the legitimate urban caseload, specifically excluding irregular movers;
- establishment of consistent regional (or sub-regional) policy for the provision of assistance in general and more specifically secondary or tertiary education grants, and again, the specific exclusion of irregular movers from such assistance; and,
- further development of a generic global IC database for urban cases (eg. Registration of Individual Cases System (RICS)) permitting access between regional databases to track individuals from groups frequently travelling beyond their region of origin; all necessary measures should be taken to ensure that confidentiality of such information is respected.

When return of irregular movers proves impossible

(37) When return proves impossible, UNHCR, on account of the fact that protection is inviolate, should assist the refugee to regularize his situation in the country concerned but should, however, try to exclude these refugees from material or educational assistance, resettlement, etc.

4. TREATMENT OF PRIMA FACIE CASELOADS

No assistance for *prima facie* caseload in urban areas

(38) Individual refugees who are part of a *prima facie* caseload for whom a UNHCR assistance programme exists in a rural camp or settlement in the asylum country, but who have moved independently to an urban area in the same country should, as a general principle, not be provided with assistance. The same principle applies to individuals from a *prima facie* caseload who move irregularly to other asylum countries.

(39) This approach has already been successfully adopted by several field offices over the years with regard to certain caseloads (Liberians, Sierra Leoneans, Afghans, and Mozambicans) either as a result of government policy or of a policy decision by the UNHCR offices concerned. The result has been a limit to the drift of destitute individual refugees into urban areas, while at the same time leaving the option open - in countries where the host government does not object, for those who have the means to survive independently.

Exceptions: protection/security problems, education, medical care, family reunion

(40) Individual refugees choosing to reside in an urban area under such circumstances must be clearly and consistently informed that *no* assistance will be available. Those in need of assistance should be referred to a camp or rural settlement in which there is an active assistance programme. An exception to this rule are individuals from a *prima facie* caseload who face specific protection or security problems in the camp or settlement. Other rare exceptions might include individuals from rural settlements who are sent temporarily to an urban centre for the purpose of education or medical care, or permanently, for family reunion. Any such exceptions can only be granted to refugees who individually meet applicable refugee criteria.

(41) It is vital that valid exceptions do not multiply and thus undermine the general rule. To counter the movement from rural to urban settings UNHCR and implementing partners should strengthen their presence and operations in the field for easy access to refugees instead of operating from urban centres which may be one of the pull factors.

Outside the *prima facie* status region

(42) In the case of a person (member of a *prima facie* caseload) who appears in a country outside the region where the *prima facie* status is applied, (for practical reasons) the UNHCR office should first determine whether or not the individual is a refugee. If he is not, no action is required. If he is, he should be treated according to the reasons which led him to the second asylum country (i.e. if there are compelling reasons, he should be treated as a direct arrival; if there are no compelling reasons he should be treated as an irregular mover).

5. DEFINITION OF AN URBAN REFUGEE

No consistently applied definition

(43) UNHCR has hitherto no consistently applied definition of an urban refugee. While in many parts of the world, being of urban origin is a key criterion, in some regions, such as northern Africa and Central Asia any refugee living in an urban area is considered by UNHCR field offices as an urban refugee, regardless of his or her origins. In a number of countries the option of settling in a rural settlement is hardly feasible, given current government policies. Definitions used vary, not only from region to region, but even between staff members who tend to apply subjective rationale to their personal definitions. In many of the smaller offices, individual cases are typically left to junior staff, often on their first UNHCR assignment, who are required to deal with difficult problems and receive insufficient guidance.

(44) Perhaps the most commonly used definition of an urban refugee is that of an individual of urban origin, usually a student, former politician or civil servant, a professional, a trader or a skilled, non-agricultural labourer. Other definitions add people with rural backgrounds seeking work or education, one-parent (female) families, sick and disabled people who have been referred from camps and rural settlements for treatment or rehabilitation, or refugees who have left the country of first asylum. Many individual cases among these groups may indeed have special needs, over and above those of a *prima facie* rural caseload. However, by itself, life in urban areas does not constitute an answer to their problem and may well be significantly *more* difficult than in a rural settlement, where appropriate community support can be generated. In the case of medical referrals, these should normally be temporary, lasting only for the duration of treatment. The Working Group concluded that self-selecting irregular movers who already had access to protection and assistance elsewhere, but have chosen to move on in search of something "better" (see chapter 3) should be excluded from UNHCR assistance.

A solution-oriented approach

(45) In fact, with due regard to the various aspects of the issues raised above, for UNHCR, the decision of a refugee from a *prima facie* group to live in an urban area is his, to the extent that (a) the host government accepts his presence there and, (b) the refugee is able to look after himself and his family. The acceptance by the host government effectively satisfies UNHCR's basic protection concerns, with the exception of individual cases whose physical security cannot be assured. In the light of the above, the definition of an urban refugee is only relevant for refugees in need of assistance in an urban area. Consequently, the proposed definition reads as follows:

For the purposes of being considered *for assistance* in an urban area, an urban refugee/asylum-seeker is a person of urban background in the country of origin and who is neither an irregular mover, nor part of a *prima facie* caseload, and, if of rural background, for whom in the country of asylum the option of rural settlement which offers an opportunity for self-sufficiency does not exist.

(46) This definition, in the context of a globally coherent and consistent policy with the above-mentioned objective of solutions-oriented assistance, determines who *might*, after a rigorous needs assessment, be considered for assistance following a positive status determination, at least by UNHCR. Ad hoc emergency assistance to new individual asylum seekers should be administered with utmost caution to exceptional cases where there is no alternative.

6. SOLUTIONS FOR LEGITIMATE URBAN CASELOAD

State obligation and refugee self-reliance

(47) Whereas the durable solutions of repatriation and resettlement are recognized as valid in their own right, the third durable solution of local integration is directly relevant to the question of assistance to the legitimate urban caseload. The UNHCR policy on urban refugees and asylum-seekers is based on the presumptions of state obligation for protection and assistance and refugee self-reliance. It is acknowledged that these presumptions are not always accepted by states, yet they are fundamental to UNHCR's dealings with sovereign states. It is also acknowledged that a Government's ability to facilitate refugee self reliance is dependent on the host country's absorption capacity. In the light of the above, material assistance should be kept to a minimum and a continuous balance must be struck between providing UNHCR assistance as a last resort and actively encouraging states and refugees to assume their respective obligations. UNHCR assistance should not be an impediment to UNHCR's broader protection objectives, by effectively becoming a substitute. Strenuous and continuing interventions should be made with host governments (particularly, but not exclusively, those which have signed the Convention and the Protocol) to encourage them to grant recognized refugees access to:

- employment/the labour market;
- national hospitals, schools and other social services (at rates equivalent to those paid by nationals); and,
- the naturalisation process.

Inserting refugees into existing activities for nationals

(48) Where temporary assistance is nevertheless provided, it should be strictly time-limited and given with the objective of supporting a refugee's efforts towards self-sufficiency. In view of UNHCR's limited success in this area, new approaches must be found; for example, looking at what has succeeded for the urban poor in the same country, and seeking to insert refugees into existing activities for nationals, such as small credit schemes and micro-projects. UNHCR will have to boost its capacity in this domain, through association with qualified implementing partners and staff training, as well as programme resources to promote genuine durable solutions in urban contexts. The required initial investment will no doubt soon start paying dividends and, within two to three years, amount to a significant reduction in care and maintenance expenditure. In a number of locations this can, however, only be achieved if accompanied by considerable multi-level targeted political lobbying.

Solution-oriented assistance to the legitimate urban caseload

(49) Once existing urban caseloads have been thoroughly reviewed, it will be possible to identify those individual refugees and asylum-seekers who are not irregular movers or part of a *prima facie* caseload, and who have valid reasons for remaining in an urban area in the country of asylum concerned. This population will be referred to as "the legitimate urban caseload". The following recommendations for the provision of assistance to this caseload would also be applicable to new arrivals who are not irregular movers or part of a *prima facie* caseload, and who have valid reasons for seeking UNHCR protection in the urban area concerned:

CAPACITY-BUILDING

(a) It should be recalled that UNHCR's mandate is to protect refugees and seek solutions to their problems. Assistance, therefore, is not an objective. As a first step, every effort should be made to encourage the support of host governments and other concerned institutions to refugees. Rather than automatically providing assistance, UNHCR's focus should be on institution and capacity building in a country of asylum, to strengthen the national social services in order to facilitate the integration of refugees. The activities associated with capacity-building, though considered important, are hitherto often not really seen as priorities for earmarking UNHCR's resources.

(b) Asylum-seekers in need of emergency assistance, prior to refugee status determination, should be directed to local institutions. Every effort should be made to avoid the provision of assistance to asylum-seekers directly by UNHCR. Where such local institutions do not exist or are weak, UNHCR's efforts should be focused on the development or strengthening of national capacity in which emergency assistance to needy asylum-seekers would be incorporated in broader programmes for nationals with similar needs.

(c) However, where the host government's assistance is not forthcoming or is inadequate, the steps elaborated below should be considered.

SOLUTION-ORIENTED ASSISTANCE

(d) Assistance should be considered *only* following a positive status determination which has been endorsed by UNHCR (ie. if a field office does not support a positive government determination, assistance should not normally be provided). Assistance following positive status determination should be directly linked to solutions and efforts made from the outset to identify potential for economic insertion; individual refugees should be given the necessary support, training and guidance at this stage.

(e) Assistance to urban refugees should *never* be embarked upon from the perspective of automatic "care and maintenance"; the solutions-based approach might include job placement schemes, apprenticeships, micro-projects, etc., the nature and scope of which would be determined on the basis of an economic analysis of the location concerned and a pragmatic rather than strictly formal approach.

(f) Assistance will be provided, if needed, on the assumption that the individual concerned already has the necessary profile and skills to successfully integrate in an urban setting. In principle, those who lack such profile and skills would be excluded from this kind of assistance in an urban area.

(g) Where individuals prove unable to achieve self-sufficiency in the urban environment, consideration should be given to transferring them to a rural camp or settlement in the same country, where there is a UNHCR programme. Where there is no such programme, resettlement within a country in the region with such a rural camp or settlement, where feasible, may have to be considered. Continuing open-ended assistance in an urban setting is not a solution and should be excluded.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

(h) Assistance should *only* be provided following a thorough needs assessment, including home visits, which indicates that an individual refugee/asylum-seeker not only requires time-limited assistance but will use the period of assistance towards finding a solution. In support of this important aspect of the assistance policy, guidelines for needs assessment for urban refugees are elaborated in Chapter 7.

PEOPLE-ORIENTED APPROACH

(i) Where emergency or solutions-oriented assistance is provided, this should be done in such a way as to ensure that:

- certain groups are not discriminated against and will not suffer from a lack of adequate or appropriate protection;
- services provided are appropriate and take into account existing refugee resources;
- the resources and services provided reach those who need them; and,
- the systems established for allocating and distributing resources and services do not put certain groups at a disadvantage.

TIME-LIMITED

(j) Following needs assessment, time-limited and solution-oriented assistance may be provided to individual refugees to support their efforts to achieve self-sufficiency. Time-frames will depend on the solutions attempted, but should normally not exceed one year. Exceptional extension of any assistance beyond this period requires documented for each case justification on file.

COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORT

(k) In assessing needs and designing appropriate solution-oriented assistance measures, UNHCR should take account of the support available to individual refugees from family members, the refugee community, the host government and charitable institutions in the host country; where such support is inadequate, UNHCR assistance should be channelled through an appropriate national body, or through the refugee community, rather than given directly to individuals.

SPECIAL NEEDS

(l) In the exceptional case of an individual refugee who is eligible for assistance in an urban area, but who is unable to provide for him/herself because of physical or other incapacity and who lacks family support, special measures may be required; in such cases, efforts should be focused on family reunion elsewhere as the best solution. Where this is not feasible, efforts should be made to identify appropriate national or community structures into which the individual may be integrated.

IMPLEMENTING ARRANGEMENTS

(m) UNHCR should avoid direct provision of assistance to recognized urban refugees; where limited emergency assistance is required (normally for no more than three months, being the average period required for new arrivals to orient themselves and for UNHCR to reach a decision on the request for asylum and the best durable solution), this should be provided on the basis of a needs assessment and through a local implementing agency. The agency will be responsible for the provision of solution-oriented assistance to those with identified needs to achieve self-sufficiency. (See further "Achieving economic self sufficiency" under Chapter 7.)

(n) The local agency would provide the training, equipment and support required, bearing in mind the skills of the individual concerned. This assistance should be provided on the basis of a contractual arrangement between the refugee and the assisting agency, for a maximum duration of twelve months. The advantage of such an arrangement would be the establishment of a reciprocal relationship in which the obligations of the refugee are clearly articulated. It would also set the stage for a more effective, periodic and less stressful (joint) review of progress towards the achievement of self-sufficiency.

REGIONAL CONSISTENCY

(o) In order to deter irregular movements, levels of emergency assistance to needy new arrivals following positive status determination, whether in kind or in cash, should be established in a compatible and rational manner in each region or sub-region, under the responsibility of the relevant Director of Operations. This could be based on a compilation of basic costs (rental, food, transport, etc. to be fixed by region) which would be reviewed (regionally or sub-regionally) at least annually in the context of the country operations plan to keep pace with inflation or to respond to significant currency changes.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

(p) To ensure consistent application of the policy, urban programmes will be subject to systematic monitoring, focusing on progress made towards achieving solutions;

(q) As this policy is implemented, the Inspection and Evaluation Service will formulate criteria for successful urban programmes in line with the policy objectives so that individual programmes can be evaluated rationally.

7. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Initial, rapid assessments in emergency situations

(50) UNHCR's two main documents to provide information and guidance on needs assessment are: (i) the Emergency Handbook and, (ii) the recently issued manual *Needs Assessment : A Practical Guide for Field Staff*. In both documents, needs assessment applies mainly to situations of large-scale refugee influxes into rural areas. The need, therefore, remains to look more closely at the specificities of needs assessment in an urban context.

Needs assessment in an urban context

(51) The aim of this type of needs assessment, is to arrive at a systematic and consistent UNHCR approach. This is essential to help reduce the impact of the individual assessor's bias, and to ensure that the same approach is used worldwide, producing similar and comparable outcomes. At the same time, it should ensure that the results of the needs assessment, while being appropriate to each local situation, do not create imbalances which may provoke irregular movement. For this reason, these needs assessment guidelines are not limited to methodology and process, but include concrete ideas on the contents and levels of any subsequent assistance measures.

(52) The more general methodological concepts applied to needs assessment (as referred to in the documents mentioned above, in particular the Manual) would also apply to needs assessment in an urban context. In addition, in order to identify the immediate needs and determine the appropriateness of UNHCR assistance to any refugee in an urban context, it is worth underlining the following facts and principles.

(53) Asylum-seekers in an urban situation have often travelled long distances, using organised transportation (as opposed to travelling on foot). They have paid for their transport, food and lodging needs en-route. It should, therefore, not be assumed that when the asylum-seeker presents him/herself at the UNHCR office, he/she is necessarily destitute. Needs assessment should take into account the resources the person brings with him; it should identify to what extent assistance is really required and what the appropriate nature of that assistance should be. Assistance in these situations should not be automatically offered. Also, it does not necessarily cover an entire package but can be limited to accommodation only, for example, if that is what the person is unable to cover him/herself.

Care and maintenance assistance

(54) Upon detailed needs assessment, initial assistance may be composed of any one or a combination of the following items:

Food: Preferably an in-kind package; composition in accordance with local food habits at the place where assistance is provided, but taking account of any religious prescriptions on the part of refugees. In each programme, in principle, similar packages for all nationalities. The food package should, for those who would be entirely dependent on this form of assistance, be in accordance with basic emergency standards (see both documents quoted above).

Water: UNHCR should ensure that the water supply at the local temporary accommodation (hostel, etc) offered to asylum-seekers is in accordance with basic standards regarding quantity and quality (see the Emergency Handbook).

Non-Food: Mainly kitchen sets, blankets, clothing/footwear (all in-kind).

Housing: For accommodation, arrangements through local implementing partners should be pursued which provide assistance along the lines of existing urban programmes for the homeless.

Health: According to local standards, along the lines of existing programmes for nationals.

Education: UNHCR, through an implementing partner, may assist in the enrolment of primary school children.

(55) In-kind assistance may not always be feasible or preferable to cash allowances. The latter can be conducive to the empowerment and increased responsibility of refugees, in particular where a link with achieving economic self-sufficiency is expressly made from the start.

8. ACHIEVING ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Facilitating access to employment

(56) Achieving economic self-sufficiency presents more difficulties and challenges than care and maintenance, but is the best way for refugees to retain their dignity, of integrating them or preparing them for repatriation, and of ending continued dependence on external assistance which is increasingly limited. UNHCR and its implementing partners can do much to facilitate access to employment for refugees, or their self-employment, in particular within the framework of legal constraints imposed by conventions in host countries.

Refugees should be seen as an “asset”

(57) A focus on employment is also critical in changing the attitude of both the international and local communities from one in which refugees are seen as ‘the problem’ to one in which refugees, through their hard work, initiative and skills, are seen as an “asset” and part of the solution to both their own and the host country’s economic problems.

Employment reduces the dependence refugees have on the international community and the burden they exercise on the local community. It also provides new services, skills, products, and ideas for the host economy; assistance to refugee employment programmes will act to stimulate the local economy.

Overcoming disadvantages in the workplace

(58) Most refugee employment is initiated by the refugees themselves, whether through the creation of their own business or through finding employment in local firms. Refugees, especially women, face many disadvantages in the workplace, including discrimination, lack of skills, and lack of knowledge about the local economy.

Focus on women

(59) Women in particular, therefore, need assistance in assuming their often new roles as *de-facto* heads of household. They constitute a prime channel for reaching the most vulnerable members of society who are usually entrusted to their care: children, disabled adults, and the elderly - and for educating the new generations. They are often more family-oriented than men and more responsible in their consumption and savings patterns, and have proven better at repaying loans. Women should, therefore, be the preferred target of income-generating activities. Careful attention must be given to the impact of local mores on the achievement of income-generating objectives.

Moving at the earliest possible stage from grants to credit

(60) An employment strategy must be planned and implemented at the earliest stage to avoid the trap of the "assistance mentality". Moving as soon as possible from grants to credit is one way of achieving self-sufficiency and programme sustainability. Even though failures at starting a business are unavoidable, credit is nonetheless preferable to care and maintenance because at the very least, refugees acquire valuable training and experience. Credit also helps set the framework, and gears refugee assistance towards sustainable development from the outset.

"Buying into" the existing programmes for the urban poor

(61) As stated above, UNHCR should seek to "buy into" existing programmes for the urban poor, so refugees and nationals are treated in the same way, rather than run its own programmes separately. Such programmes might need to be adapted to accommodate the refugee population. Also, it is important to view these programmes in terms of their cost effectiveness - the question to be asked is whether the cost is justified in terms of the employment, the training, and the income generated. Such an evaluation should take into consideration both monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits, including long-term costs that can be avoided in helping refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency.

(62) A detailed set of guidelines for income-generating activities is under preparation in PTSS and is expected to be issued shortly. This manual explains clearly to UNHCR and its implementing partners "How to do it" when executing a strategy and resulting programmes for both waged employment and self-employment. Besides cooperating with local initiatives, UNHCR will have to enhance its own technical capacity and expertise for effectively planning and implementing refugee employment programmes aimed at economic self-sufficiency and (re)integration.

9. TRANSITIONAL MEASURES FOR EXISTING CASELOAD

Introducing appropriate measures for each category

(63) As a first step, a thorough review of all active cases should be conducted to classify the existing caseload so that appropriate measures can be taken for each category.

Irregular movers

(64) For existing irregular movers registered with UNHCR, steps should be taken to promote their return to the country in which they are considered to have found protection or, where appropriate, to the country of origin. Pending return, no further assistance should be provided (with the possible exception of life-saving medical care) other than to facilitate travel to the agreed destination. The support or at least tacit acceptance of governments in both first and second countries of asylum (and/or the country of origin) is clearly a prerequisite.

Individuals from *prima facie* caseloads

(65) For individuals from *prima facie* caseloads receiving UNHCR assistance within the same country of asylum, steps should be taken to wind down individual assistance in the urban centre whilst promoting return to the rural area. For individuals preferring to remain in the urban centre, if the government does not object, a final assistance payment could be considered to consolidate their integration, on the understanding that no further assistance will be provided at that location.

Individuals sent from rural settlements

(66) For individuals sent from rural settlements to an urban area for medical assistance, every effort should be made to promote their return to the rural centres as soon as essential medical treatment has been completed. Similarly, for students sent from rural settlements to an urban area for the purpose of study, every effort should be made to promote their return to their communities once their studies are complete and if they are unable to find employment or become self-sufficient in the urban area. Those moving temporarily to an urban area should be required to sign an undertaking to return to the rural area before travelling to the city for the stated purpose. If they then stay in the city they will not be eligible for UNHCR assistance.

Legitimate urban caseload

(67) Once appropriate action has been taken to deal with individuals who do not fall within the new definition of "urban refugee", consideration may be given to assisting those remaining on the basis of recommendations given in relation to the legitimate urban caseload, in Chapter 6.

10. VIOLENCE

Aggression and frustrated expectations

(68) As already noted, it is often those individuals who succeed in moving from one country to another in the hope of gaining a better standard of assistance or access to resettlement, who become aggressive and violent if their expectations are not met. This phenomenon has become a feature of urban refugee programmes in all regions of the world. Hunger strikes, demonstrations, physical assault towards UNHCR and operational partner staff, damage to and/or occupation of office premises and/or vehicles, and suicide threats are now commonplace.

Giving in to violent forms of protest does not pay

(69) Irregular movers are often among the most vehement of protesters, although rejected cases, those refused assistance, as well as the psychologically disturbed might all, at times, prove violent and dangerous to themselves or to staff. When violent protest is conducted in response to legitimate protection concerns, it is, of course, incumbent on UNHCR to intervene. In any other circumstance, however, when the protest is in response to the legitimate denial of something (whether this be refugee status, assistance or resettlement) it is not appropriate for UNHCR to intervene. Giving in to violent forms of protest does not pay, but, on the contrary exacerbates long-term problems. Acts of violent protest such as demonstrations, hunger strikes or threatening behaviour against UNHCR or its partners' staff or property in such circumstances are issues of law and order and should be dealt with accordingly by the local authorities. Mindful of the specific nature of UNHCR premises as spelled out under the Privileges and Immunities of the Organization covered in the Inter-Office Memorandum No. 80/96 -- Field-Office Memorandum No. 90/96 of 13 November 1996, UNHCR staff should not hesitate to seek the intervention of the local authorities against refugees or asylum-seekers who break the national laws. Experience has shown that clear messages, such as closing down the Branch Office and calling in the local police at the beginning of a violent protest, is the most effective way in bringing it to an early and peaceful close.

(70) It should be remembered that occasionally violent behaviour of an individual can reveal a history of torture, but UNHCR rarely commands the necessary professional skills *to diagnose this in a timely manner*. If in doubt, seek professional advice from a psychologist or psychiatrist for the individual(s) in question. If this is not handled appropriately, others may attempt to exploit the situation.

Violent protests must be prepared for

(71) It is nevertheless acknowledged that implementation of the proposed policy will inevitably encounter substantial resistance from the targeted caseloads who will find their expectations disappointed, and what they consider a "right", taken away. Protest, including violent protest, is an inevitable phase in the establishment of a new policy which reverses long-standing practice. Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) for Vietnamese Asylum-seekers continues to bear testimony to this, seven years after its adoption. Violent protest cannot be avoided, but it can and must be prepared for, and the risks to staff limited. An important lesson from the CPA is the necessity for absolute consistency in implementation. The Staff Security Section should be invited to develop a Plan of Action for the many field offices responsible for implementation of the policy.

11. DATABASE

Incomplete, incompatible and sketchy data

(72) Various efforts have been made to ascertain the total number of urban refugees registered with UNHCR. A "simple" exercise such as this has proved to be almost impossible. The annual Statistical Overview of Populations of Concern to UNHCR does not make a distinction between urban and non-urban caseloads. While raw data submitted by field offices to the Food and Statistical Unit each year *do* differentiate between urban and

non-urban refugees, these figures are not always complete, and tend to be mutually incompatible.

(73) Confusion generally arises between four types of figures:

- the total urban caseload (which tends to be a very loose estimate);
- the total registered caseload (which may be a cumulative figure, not distinguishing between active cases and those who have left the programme);
- the total assisted caseload (which is sometimes inflated by double counting of individuals who receive more than one type of assistance); and
- the total caseload (rural and urban), registered or not.

(74) This confusion also gives rise to a fundamental question: what is the appropriate criterion by which to count urban refugees, assist them and seek durable solutions in a manner that does not create more problems than it solves ?

Supporting the implementation of the new policy guidelines

(75) For the successful implementation of the new policy guidelines on urban refugees, it is indispensable that the current RICS (Registration of Individual Cases System) be considerably improved. The broad objectives of the required enhancements are:

- to deal effectively with:
 - the pursuit of solutions as suggested above based on adequate protection, educational and occupational information;
 - improving monitoring of the status determination procedure;
 - record keeping on actual assistance provided;
- containment of irregular movements in the future; and
- to create a capacity for analyzing caseload patterns and regularly updating detailed statistics for policy initiatives.

Single global IC Database Design and interface with FBARS

(76) UNHCR needs a single global IC database design that can be applied by all field offices and can "interact" with a single central database (possibly at Headquarters) which holds the basic information, including a unique identification, on all ICs known to UNHCR. In addition it would be highly desirable that an interface could be created between the Registration of Individual Cases System and the Field Based Registration System (FBARS) for mass registration. Such an interface would allow monitoring of in-country movements, as well as movements between countries.

Data Protection

(77) Obviously such an enhanced IC Registration System must be developed and data exchange procedures put in place in a way that guarantees the protection of the individual refugees registered in the database.

Modular Structure

(78) The Registration System design must comprise modules that complement each other and together form a complete record of an individual case. Generally, only the basic module would need to be uploaded to the central IC database. This facility should permit the identification of individual refugees and contain a reference to the field office that was keeping a full record. Modules could be used by FOs according to their needs. A first outline of required modules would be:

- basic information (e.g. biodata, photographs and another digital identification device);
- status determination, including causes and conditions of flight;
- educational history;
- professional / occupational profile;
- health records for vulnerable persons; and,
- assistance record.

Data analysis

(79) The database should provide both qualitative and quantitative data, the latter in the form of cross-tabulated and time-series statistical tables, charts, graphs, etc., from which, according to the accuracy of the input data, valid inferences about the characteristics, needs, behaviour, etc. of refugee and other populations of concern could be derived. This contrasts with those data sources that only provide "head counts" of refugees by age, sex, ethnic identity, and country of origin, but offer little or nothing in the way of inferential statistics. The analytical reports (containing trends, detailed statistics by nationality/ethnic group/reasons for and conditions of flight etc, multiple applications/irregular movers, assistance records by type of and average expenditure, etc) would enable UNHCR to develop and implement empirically- based policies and programmes.

Development management

(80) Given the complexity of the issue, it is proposed that the database design process be managed by a small group of persons representative of the end users of the system and a focal point in ICSS. This group should draw up a detailed requirements definition along the lines above, including the specific contents of the modules. The group should be assisted, where necessary, for the field testing of the modules before they are finalized. ICSS should be appropriately resourced or the project outsourced to be able to achieve results within a six months time-frame.

Introduction of System

(81) Introduction of the improved Individual Cases Registration System requires:

- a preliminary analysis of field office hardware/software requirements and dedicated resource allocations;
- listing of countries by priority;
- extensive staff training in use of database;
- the establishment of a temporary on-line HelpDesk function for the database; and,
- special attention for the transition from existing multiple IC data formats to single global format.

12. IMPLEMENTATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

Implementation

(82) No policy can stay at the level of a paper statement of intent. Field Offices will need to implement the policy, tools will need to be developed and introduced, FO and implementing partner staffs must be trained and equipped, and the implementation will need to be regularly evaluated and measures taken to address problems which arise. Besides promotional initiatives with host government and NGOs, at least three working instruments need to be put in place as soon as possible, a global IC database system, a needs assessment tool, and the adoption and resourcing of an income-generation assistance policy.

(83) Also, widespread implementation should, within two-three years, generate a significant reduction in UNHCR's expenditure on care and maintenance. The actual percentage reduction will, however, vary according to location, because opportunities for rendering refugees self-sufficient are diverse and convincing reluctant Governments to cooperate with UNHCR in its new policy will take time to produce results. Once governments subscribe to the idea of curbing irregular movements and making refugees contribute through their work, rather than be maintained in dependency on international aid, more resources can be devoted to promoting genuine solutions for refugees and the number of abusive claims and irregular movements should come down.

Coordination between Situation Managers and Representatives

(84) In line with the Delphi approach, endorsed by the Senior Management Committee on 15 May 1996, it has been suggested that the Urban Refugee Policy implementation should, to the extent possible, be refugee situation-based. The Working Group acknowledges that such an approach does indeed provide an answer to some of the practical aspects of dealing with irregular movers and multiple applications for asylum, as well as the need for consistency in dealing with a specific refugee group. The Situation Manager would have responsibility for any (urban) refugees anywhere in the world that originate from the refugee situation of which he is in charge. In practice, however, there are operational considerations, both in the domains of international protection and assistance, which plead for an approach that leaves Representatives "in-charge". Differentiation in treatment of various refugee groups in a given location is inconceivable. Therefore, for coherent results, full coordination between Situation Managers and Representatives and across refugee groups must be assured.