

Working in partnership

The United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Humanitarian Assistance Appeal Process

Since its creation in December 1991, the United Nations Consolidated Inter-agency Appeal Process (CAP), led by the Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), has developed mechanisms to facilitate co-ordination between UN agencies and its partners in the field. Its primary purpose is to act in complex humanitarian emergencies in three areas:

- strategic planning: the consolidated appeal document reflects the joint assessment and presentation of the situation, identified needs, policies and plans by sector and by agency;
- co-ordination: the process leading up to the consolidated appeal document, and its implementation, provide a valuable framework for bringing United Nations staff and other partners, such as donors and NGOs, together to help build common agreement and mutual clarification of respective roles and responsibilities. The inter-agency appeal is therefore a framework for joint situation analysis, policy formulation, planning, resource mobilisation and co-ordination in complex humanitarian emergencies.
- fund raising: the combined financial needs of the United Nations partners working together in the emergency are presented to donors in one document – the CAP.

The CAP is led in field operations by the United Nations Humanitarian Co-ordinator for the country and is usually based on the Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP) established by the Inter-Agency Country Team and its partners. The situation analysis, policies, scenarios and concrete activities proposed by participating agencies (called “projects”) are described, costed and presented in a country document, drafted at the country level, cleared by the participating agencies and subsequently, published by OCHA. The annual presentation of the upcoming year’s CAPs, simultaneously in several donor countries during the month of November, is a worldwide event to which Heads of Agencies lend their authority. A growing number of donors wish to be assured, through the inter-agency process and the country appeal documents, that assessments, strategies, projects and financial requirements are the result of an inclusive process. They want to know that UN agencies, the

government, NGOs and bilateral donors participate to co-ordinate, co-operate and avoid overlap. Some donors base their funding decisions on CAP documents and on the agency plans and budgets contained therein.

Today, CAP remains the only co-ordination mechanism that, every year, brings together IASC members, host governments, NGOs and increasingly, donors for shared analysis, and to discuss and set common strategies, objectives and principles for humanitarian assistance in a country or region. This is particularly significant for regional consolidated appeals as their preparation



Providing international protection to refugees in today's complex world requires co-operation with many national and international actors: helicopters provided by the Swiss Government to transport food.
UNHCR / R. Chalasani

may provide one of the few or only fora for inter-agency discussion at a regional level.

As in past years, UNHCR continues to be fully involved in the planning and preparation of CAPs. While the Global Appeal described UNHCR's budgetary requirements for all its operations, this year, the requirements of the various UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Humanitarian Assistance Appeals are also shown in the annex – with a clear indication of UNHCR's component of the consolidated requirements.

Transition

The development of the CAP over the past twelve years has to be considered alongside much wider changes in thinking about international aid. One of the most significant conceptual shifts over this time has been in the under-

standing of the relationship between relief and development activities, and how to work most effectively in “transition” contexts. The co-existence of relief, rehabilitation and development work has inevitably led to the corresponding proliferation of agencies with different mandates, not only UN agencies and NGOs, but also international funding institutions. The challenge of working effectively in “transition” countries is made more difficult by the “compartmentalisation” of different sources of funding. Most donors still retain sharp institutional divisions between “relief” and “development” funding, and very seldom are prepared to make both forms of resources available simultaneously in a country affected by a complex humanitarian emergency. This institutional separation can leave “transition” countries particularly vulnerable in their first critical stages of emerging from conflict.

