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"Challenges and Good Practices in RSD Case Management"

Registration data, process and tools | Systems Interoperability |The potential of UNHCR's ProGres version 4

Discussion Topic #2: Registration and Case Management

In order to guarantee the enjoyment of the right to asylum and the effective protection of asylum-seekers, an adequate and efficient registration system is required. Such a system should contribute to: (i) the protection of asylum-seekers from forced return /*refoulement*, (ii) access to rights, services and assistance, (iii) family reunification, (iv) the prevention of multiple registration, (iv) the prevention of the use of false documents or document falsification, (vi) the implementation and management of assistance projects and adequate distribution of resources, (vii) the protection of asylum-seekers' personal data, and (viii) durable solutions. Such a system is crucial for the correct identification of persons with specific protection needs such as children, women in certain circumstances and the elderly.

Furthermore, efficient registration and follow-up mechanisms are critical for ensuring the system's efficiency both in terms of overall planning, programming and workload organization, time and financial resources for the overall benefit of persons of concern.

Designing and implementing an adequate registration system, the following standards and recommendations should be considered:

a. Registration of asylum seekers and refugees must be a continuous process that seeks to gather essential information from the first moment of contact until he or she is no longer in need of international protection. Therefore, consistent updating and verification of data is necessary;

b. Every person must be registered individually through an individual interview, with special procedures established for children;

c. For each registered person, certain basic information must be included and verified allowing for the effective management of each case, the rapid identification of persons with specific needs and the issuance of documentation evidencing registration;

d. Personnel involved in registration must undergo adequate training in the basic principles of international protection, the purpose of the registration activities and the specific tasks to be assigned to them. This training should also include information on age, gender and diversity mainstreaming;

e. Registration procedures must respect the fundamental principles of confidentiality and data protection principles. Express consent of the individual must be obtained before sharing any kind of information with other parties, including (other) government

agencies. Under no circumstances can confidential information and personal data of the asylum-seeker be shared with the country of origin without consent.

The States of the Region have assumed an active role in terms of improving the quality of registration through their participation in the Quality Assurance Initiative (QAI). They have identified certain shortcomings in their respective registration systems and have implemented good practices, such as the establishment of specialized teams dedicated to registration, modification of their registry forms, the creation of procedural manuals and standard operating procedures, as well as procedures for the identification of specific needs of asylum-seekers and refugees.

Notwithstanding these advancements across the region, there remain certain obstacles to the creation of adequate registration systems and the establishment of proper follow-up procedures:

- Many States in the region have registration systems which have not been upgraded in accordance with the latest substantive standards and technological developments nor do they allow for regular and consistent updating of data and decentralized or simultaneous access to databases;
- Limitations in the interoperability of different registration systems and procedures amongst different immigration and refugee authorities, which also negatively affects the issuance of documents for asylum-seekers and refugees and may affect their continued stay in the country and access to associated rights;
- The need for developing datasets for registration that include the necessary elements for the proper identification of persons with specific protection needs for targeted response;
- The need to train personnel in registration, follow-up and prioritization in order to avoid registration backlogs and to improve a system's efficiency. This may include the development of protocols and procedural manuals for case management.

In view of the above, and in order to improve the management of information needed to guarantee access to and the efficiency of asylum systems, included below is a series of question to consider, reflect upon, and discuss. These reflections may support the identification of solutions to registration challenges:

- Is it possible to replicate existing good practices in terms of registration forms, procedures and follow-up mechanism with a view to ensuring international standards are met, while enhancing the system's efficiency?
- How to strengthen the collection of quality, representative data and leverage the data for improved case management and protection response?
- How can technology support the use of registration and case management tools that are interoperable, decentralized and allow for multiple access?
- How can/should refugee registration be integrated into national registration/documentation systems and/or CRVS systems?