

**FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION
BETWEEN UNHCR AND THE GOVERNMENT
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FOR THE YEAR 2005**

This Framework for Cooperation is undertaken by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (hereinafter referred to as UNHCR) and the Government of the United States of America (hereinafter referred to as the United States or U.S.). It is understood that this document, in its entirety, constitutes policy commitments by UNHCR and the U.S. Government. While not legally binding, it is a serious document and departures from principles agreed to should be exceptional. This Framework for Cooperation reflects the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship, to which the U.S. and UNHCR subscribe. In the interest of transparency, it will be posted on the U.S. and UNHCR websites. This document also reflects the objectives that are part of the 2005 Performance Assessment Rating Tool on UNHCR required by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

The United States recognizes the steps UNHCR has taken in the areas of enhancing its resettlement capacity, developing and implementing "Project Profile", and developing quantifiable standards and indicators as indicated in the Framework for Cooperation for 2004. Continued progress in these areas is expected in 2005. UNHCR and the United States agree that additional effort is necessary in other priority areas. These include: (1) ensuring rapid and effective emergency response to refugee crises globally, (2) increasing the number of experienced protection staff in the field, (3) implementing policy priorities on refugee women/gender and refugee children at the operational level, (4) increasing the number of U.S. national staff in the organization, (5) carrying out real needs assessments as a key element in formulating its budget request, and (6) increased information sharing and consultation. UNHCR and the U.S. will closely consult on these issues during 2005, and will pay particular attention to those objectives that are part of the 2005 Performance Assessment Rating Tool.

The United States, recognizing UNHCR's core mandate activities of protection and durable solutions, believes that the highest priority should be given to these activities.

A. Protection

(i) Refugee protection, as enshrined in the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, is the core function of UNHCR. UNHCR and refugees must often depend on police and other national security elements to provide the humanitarian space in which UNHCR can provide legal and physical protection. The United States, recognizing that effective protection can only be delivered with the full support and co-operation of States, commits itself to be a strong advocate for corresponding State support.

(ii) The U.S. and UNHCR agree on the vital importance of addressing the full range of legal and physical protection needs of refugees, particularly of refugee women and refugee children. UNHCR agrees to engage with the U.S. and other interested member states on how to increase the number of protection-related positions. The goal of U.S. funding for additional protection positions

is to increase the actual number of trained and effective protection officers in the organization.

(iii) The U.S. agrees with UNHCR on the need to build protection capacities in partnership with countries hosting refugees, and supports UNHCR's work in this regard.

(iv) The U.S. and UNHCR agree that there will be zero tolerance of sexual exploitation or abuse of refugees by humanitarian workers, and that UNHCR will continue to focus on the prevention of and the response to sexual and gender-based violence in its operations worldwide. UNHCR will also continue to ensure strict adherence to the Code of Conduct, the United Nations Secretary-General's Bulletin, and to the six core principles defined by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, by its staff and those of its implementing partners and will hold them accountable for any misconduct.

(v) The U.S. welcomes the steps taken to launch the new gender and age mainstreaming project. UNHCR agrees to operationalize its 2005 action plan as quickly as possible, taking into account the results of the evaluation of the pilot in 2004, and to report back to the Standing Committee on the impact of the plan on programs in the field.

B. Registration

The U.S. and UNHCR agree on the importance of an effective and reliable standardized registration system as a key protection and assistance tool. UNHCR agrees to commit adequate resources to ensuring the rollout of "Project Profile" to an additional 30 countries in 2005, in accordance with the project's established timeline. Performance against this objective will constitute the key measure of effectiveness of this vital UNHCR function.

C. Management, Oversight and Accountability

(i) In order to prevent cases of fraud, mismanagement, and abuse, the U.S. and UNHCR agree that comprehensive management and oversight responsibilities, as well as accountability, need to be strengthened to ensure the integrity of its operations. UNHCR agrees to continue its reporting on such actions to the Standing Committee in 2005.

(ii) The U.S. urges UNHCR to increase the independence of the Office of the Inspector-General, as highlighted in recent JIU/ACABQ reports.

(iii) The U.S. and UNHCR agree on the need to make every effort to minimize the number of critical findings in the financial audits of the organization in 2005 and to continue to respond promptly and appropriately to the auditors' concerns.

(iv) The U.S. and UNHCR agree on the need for priority setting across regions within UNHCR's unified annual budget, in order to ensure that core mandate activities are fully funded at the global level. The U.S. encourages UNHCR to establish an annual review of priorities across regions as part of the budget process. The U.S. believes that streamlining certain operations in order to maximize the use of limited resources is important and, therefore, encourages UNHCR to move forward on consolidating certain of its field offices in Western Europe.

(v) The U.S. and UNHCR agree on the vital importance of UNHCR moving forward quickly, in coordination with the UN Department of Safety and Security/UNSECOORD and other agencies, with the implementation of its plan to improve staff security and on the need to establish effective performance measures in this regard.

D. Emergency Preparedness

(i) The U.S. and UNHCR agree on the importance of maintaining a strong emergency preparedness capacity and especially the ability to respond quickly and effectively to new refugee crises wherever they might be. The U.S. urges UNHCR to initiate the Emergency Security Management Initiatives, especially of mandatory preparedness activities, with the aim of ensuring full implementation as soon as possible. The U.S. is particularly concerned that these include the deployment of adequate senior-level personnel to manage crises, as well as experienced and qualified technical experts in key sectors, and press and public information specialists as part of its emergency response team.

(ii) UNHCR agrees to review carefully the duration of the deployment of its emergency teams with a view to avoiding frequent rotation of staff. UNHCR further agrees to identify constraints and better define mechanisms to address them in order to expedite the replacement of emergency team members with staff appointed to regularly established posts.

(iii) UNHCR further agrees to continue to draw upon the International Professional Roster on a regular basis and as needed in order to accelerate staffing deployments for new operations. The measure of effectiveness will be the ability to deploy competent staff from the International Roster for new operations as required rather than waiting for the next Compendium.

(iv) Acknowledging its emphasis on partnerships, the U.S. urges UNHCR to make use of existing international organizations' mandates and expertise for support in all relevant emergency relief sectors.

(v) The U.S. encourages increased use of interactive participatory workshop training both prior to, and during emergency operations. The thrust of such training should be directed towards both internal and external coordination, teambuilding, reconciliation of responsibilities, and the dissemination of information.

(vi) The U.S. and UNHCR agree on the importance of providing adequate support to staff, particularly in remote and difficult regions. The U.S. encourages UNHCR to establish a stand-by arrangement to provide subsistence support for UNHCR personnel, including suitable accommodation, essential utilities (such as water, electricity, and sanitation), meals, and storage.

E. Resettlement

(i) The U.S. recognizes the efforts that UNHCR has made to give added emphasis to resettlement as a key protection tool and a real durable solution and urges continued effort to incorporate a culture of resettlement into the already existing protection culture at UNHCR. Such an approach would favor resettlement for protection reasons regardless of the status of other durable solutions, and would use resettlement as a durable solution regardless of region.

(ii) The U.S. agrees to continue to provide support to UNHCR to increase its resettlement capacity and encourages further efforts to ensure that additional resources are focused on improving the identification and processing of cases in need of resettlement. UNHCR agrees to continue to make every effort to meet the agreed referral target. The U.S. will closely monitor the use of its funding in support of UNHCR capacity building for resettlement and progress made towards the referral target. The U.S. will make every effort to ensure the timely admission of cases moving through the resettlement system. The measure of effectiveness is UNHCR's referral performance against agreed terms of U.S. funding.

F. Partnerships

(i) The U.S. and UNHCR agree on the importance of input from all key actors - representatives of beneficiaries, host governments, donors, and non-governmental organizations in the planning workshops at the country level.

(ii) UNHCR agrees to continue working closely with the World Food Program (WFP) and to jointly and actively monitor food baskets and food pipelines to ensure that breaks in feeding programs for refugees are kept to a minimum and that refugees are receiving up-to-standard food rations. UNHCR agrees to increase its advocacy role and public information resources to highlight the need for donors to adequately support WFP.

(iii) The U.S. and UNHCR agree on the vital role of NGO implementing partners to UNHCR's capacity to carry out its mandate and meet the needs of refugees worldwide. The U.S. and UNHCR agree, therefore, to hold regular trilateral consultations with U.S.-based NGO implementing partners with a view to enhancing coordination and eliminating any constraints. The U.S. conditions its direct funding of any NGO on that NGO's full cooperation with UNHCR and its actions being supportive of UNHCR's plan of action for a particular operation.

(iv) The U.S. will continue to provide to UNHCR, on a quarterly basis, a list of UNHCR's NGO implementing partners that also receive bilateral funding from the U.S. Government, as well as other U.S.-funded NGOs contractually bound to work in full consultation with UNHCR. UNHCR agrees to inform the U.S. as soon as possible when funding reductions will affect co-funded NGO projects.

G. Other Priorities

In addition to the above priorities, the U.S. wishes to highlight the continuing priority it affords to the areas that follow and looks forward to establishing effective performance measures for these areas:

- achieving internationally accepted standards of care for UNHCR's beneficiaries, particularly in Africa;
- deploying the Management Systems Renewal Project (MSRP) to the field;
- taking concrete steps to increase the percentage of American staff in UNHCR to 13% of all professional staff, by more active recruitment of Americans; in that regard, the U.S. appreciates UNHCR having hired Americans to fill 25% of new protection-related posts in 2004;
- enhancing training opportunities for UNHCR staff, including senior staff, and induction training for newly-hired staff;
- equitable access to procurement opportunities for U.S. suppliers; and

- the reduction of morbidity and mortality rates among refugees, and the importance of inter-agency health assessments and UNHCR's programs to address refugees affected by HIV/AIDS.

UNHCR and the U.S. understand that:

1) UNHCR will be accountable for the implementation of the annual program approved by the Executive Committee, subject to the provision of adequate funds by the donors. The U.S. will monitor the implementation of the annual program closely as well as of all Supplementary Programs launched during the course of the year.

2) While the U.S. agrees to accept the standardized reporting agreed to by the Executive Committee on the implementation of the program, UNHCR and the U.S. agree to maintain a regular dialogue on programs and policy issues of particular interest, as reflected in the framework. In this regard, UNHCR agrees to provide information on progress made on these issues on a quarterly basis, including in letters at the end of the first and third quarters of the year, through the joint report at the end of the mid-year consultation, and the review meeting at the end of the year. UNHCR is committed to consulting and sharing information with the U.S., as well as other donors, on operations, including where UNHCR is intervening beyond its traditional mandate. Providing this information to donors early in the planning stages of a potential operation allows them to prepare to support it and to coordinate bilateral activities with UNHCR.

3) The U.S. confirms its commitment to remain a strong supporter of UNHCR and will continue its partnership with UNHCR to protect and find solutions for the millions of refugees and other persons of concern around the world. The U.S., however, believes that UNHCR should strive for more balanced and broader-based donor support and should continue to point to the U.S. high contribution as leverage to encourage other donors to contribute their fair share multilaterally through UNHCR.

4) UNHCR will facilitate U.S. monitoring of the use of its funding and the implementation of UNHCR's programs and policy priorities through U.S. Mission Geneva interface, through monitoring visits by the U.S. regional and country refugee coordinators and by Washington-based program officers, as well as through donor missions to field operations.

5) UNHCR/U.S. cooperation to achieve shared objectives received a 96 percent rating in the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), a tool required by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The U.S. and UNHCR agree to cooperate to maintain this high rating in 2005.

6) UNHCR will hold consultations with Member States, including workshops at the country level, during the formulation of the 2006 budget, scheduling these sessions within timeframes that allow for consideration of input from Member States in the development of the 2006 budget. UNHCR will keep Member States fully apprized during the course of the year of any reductions and other changes to the program and budget.

7) UNHCR is committed to continue undertaking missions and holding consultations with donors to review field operations.

8) UNHCR will continue to collaborate closely with its UN family partners, and other relevant international organizations, especially with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the World Food Program (WFP), including in the UN Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP), and conclude or revise specific partnership agreements where necessary. When UNHCR programs benefiting from U.S. contributions are included in UN Consolidated or Flash Appeals, UNHCR will ensure that OCHA is notified of such contributions, so that these are credited to the U.S.

9) Recognizing the need for early and predictable funding, the U.S. will provide a large and early contribution to UNHCR. Subject to the availability of funds, the U.S. will strive to maintain its funding level for the year at between 22-25% of the annual program budget for 2005.

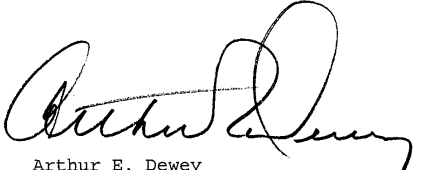
10) In the event of new and unforeseen large-scale refugee crises that may occur during the year, the U.S. will consider special appeals for supplementary programs that cannot be accommodated within the resources available in the Operational Reserve.

11) UNHCR will continue to ensure visibility for all funding support received, regardless of levels of earmarking, ensuring that U.S. contributions are widely acknowledged.

12) The U.S. and UNHCR agree to hold bilateral consultations at mid-year on the implementation of this Framework for Cooperation and to meet again at the end of the year to review 2005 and preview the coming year.


Done in two originals in the English language.

This Framework for Cooperation shall remain valid until 31 December 2005.



Arthur E. Dewey
Assistant Secretary of State for
Population, Refugees, and Migration
United States Department of State

May 18, 2005



Wendy Chamberlin
Acting United Nations High
Commissioner for Refugees

May 10, 2005