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Agenda item 8

Adoption of the report of the Committee on its forty-fourth session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Hitoshi **Kozaki** (Japan)

Addendum

Proposed strategic framework for the period 2006-2007 Part two: biennial programme plan

(Item 3(b))

Programme 20

Protection of and assistance to refugees

1. At its 16th meeting, on 18 June 2004, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered programme 20, Protection of and assistance to refugees, of the proposed biennial programme plan for the period 2006-2007 (A/59/6 (Prog. 20)).
2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced programme 20 and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the budget section.

Discussion

3. Strong support was expressed for the programme and for the series of activities undertaken, especially those that attempted to reduce the movements of populations and to offer durable solutions. In that respect, support was expressed for the development of the framework for durable solutions, which was aimed at ensuring an integrated approach to repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

4. It was noted that the objectives set out in the programme were critical to the success of the mission of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The emphasis of the programme on the particular needs and capacities of refugee women and children and elderly refugees was also supported. UNHCR was urged to implement in field operations the recommendations from recent evaluations on women, children and community services.
5. The importance of the work of UNHCR in favour of internally displaced persons was underlined. It was recognized that “forced human displacement” was a more generic term, covering refugees and internally displaced persons.
6. The question of local integration was discussed, as well as the concept of self-reliance, which has broader objectives than local integration since it responds also to the issue of the dignity of refugees. Respect for human dignity was highlighted as a fundamental element of the activities of UNHCR.
7. The overall change in orientation of the proposed biennial programme plan for the period 2006-2007 compared with the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 was noted, as well as the emphasis on protection. The view was expressed that the programme should be oriented more towards the issue of repatriation.
8. Concern was expressed that the Office did not have adequate field protection staff. The importance of contingency planning was stressed, as well as the critical role of coordination between actors in the field. The question of UNHCR action in cases where refugees were violent was raised. It was explained that the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees allowed for the expulsion of a refugee on grounds of national security or public order (art. 32). It was stated that everything was done to ensure the civilian and humanitarian character of refugees’ camps and settlements.
9. The roll-out in summer 2004 of the new standardized registration system “Project profile” was welcomed, as well as the first steps in implementing a new financial and supply management tracking system.
10. Concern was expressed that there was no uniform agreement on the interpretation of the Convention Plus initiative. It was stated that the legal regime of refugees was an international regime and that the risk of developing multilateral agreements was fragmenting a universal principle. It was explained that Convention Plus was a pragmatic mechanism which covered a range of interventions (prevention, assistance, etc.) to reach durable solutions for refugees. It was highlighted that all States must apply international norms on the treatment of refugees, especially for the return of refugees.
11. The view was expressed that the logical framework could be expanded through the integration of indicators of achievement at the regional level, as well as through the insertion of a reference to the level of legislation of the UNHCR framework for durable solutions. It was also suggested that elements of the logical framework of the proposed programme budget for the period 2004-2005 should be reinserted.

Conclusions and recommendations

12. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 20, Protection of and assistance to**

refugees, of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2006-2007, subject to the following modifications:

Overall orientation

Paragraph 20.2

At the end of the third sentence, eighth line, after “humanitarian assistance and protection to internally displaced persons”, insert “working in cooperation with the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator (see resolution 58/153)”.

Paragraph 20.5 (a)

Insert “including as and when appropriate” before ““Convention Plus Agreements””.

Paragraph 20.5 (e)

After “into all aspects”, insert “of its protection programmes and”.

Subprogramme 1

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat

Replace the text of (c) with: “Enhanced protection of refugee women and children”.

Indicators of achievement

Insert “(c) (iii) Increase in the number of UNHCR staff trained on gender and children’s policy responses”.

Under (e) (i), after the word “displacement” insert “, in the framework of programmes of voluntary repatriation to the countries of origin”.

Under (e) (ii), replace the words “resettled to third countries” with the words “for whom durable solutions are found”.

Replace (e) (iii) with the following: “An increase in the number of actors involved in activities aimed at promoting the self-reliance of returnees and providing support to host countries and countries of origin in order to promote durable solutions”.

Paragraph 20.7

In the last sentence, insert “including as and when appropriate” before “in the form of ‘Convention Plus Agreements’”.

Subprogramme 2

Objective of the Organization

After “from the outset of an emergency”, insert “until such time as the beneficiaries have been successfully reintegrated in their communities of origin,

or have access to other durable solutions, as appropriate, while at the same time”.

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat

Add “(d) Further improvement of UNHCR levels of emergency preparedness and contingency planning”.

Add “(e) Progress in strengthening local capacity to cope with refugee situations”.

Add “(f) To promote operational cooperation to better assist people of concern to UNHCR, through the provision of sufficient voluntary contributions by the international community, in a spirit of burden-sharing and international solidarity”.

Indicators of achievement

Under (a) (i), replace the words “in refugee camps” with “established by UNHCR, as well as other quantifiable improvements assisted by UNHCR in meeting the basic needs of refugees”.

Under (b), insert the words “coordinated initiatives of relevant” before the words “United Nations” and replace the words “Development Assistance Framework initiatives” with “agencies”.

Add “(d) The number of emergency preparedness arrangements and contingency plans elaborated in response to potential refugee emergencies”.

Add “(e) The number of countries assisted by UNHCR to strengthen their capacity to cope with refugee situations”.

Add “(f) (i) The number of government agencies involved in the support of countries hosting/reintegrating refugees in accordance with the High Commissioner’s strategy of repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction”.

Add “(f) (ii) The achievement of a sufficient increase in the level of voluntary contributions provided by the international community”.

Add “(f) (iii) The number of refugees assisted and repatriated or for whom other durable solutions are found, as appropriate”.

Paragraph 20.9

In the first sentence, replace the words “self-reliance of refugees and returnees” with “self-reliance of returnees and, where feasible, that of refugees”.

In the third sentence, replace the words “will guide the Office’s assistance activities to ensure that they” with “will aim to ensure that the Office’s assistance activities”.

In the fourth sentence, (i), after “the promotion of development”, insert “and humanitarian”.

In the sixth sentence, (iii), replace “, in those cases where local integration of refugees is a viable option, of a strategy of development through local integration” with “of a relevant strategy of development in those areas where local integration of refugees is acceptable to the host country”.

In the last sentence, delete “and, at the country level, by working to have refugee-related issues included in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks” and add the following two sentences at the end of the paragraph: “To anchor the return of those forcibly displaced to their communities of origin, the Office will continue to ensure linkages between broader development efforts and humanitarian assistance. In that regard, UNHCR, when formulating programmes, will work closely with development entities and international financial institutions to ensure a comprehensive approach to programme planning.”

13. The Committee stressed that the assistance referred to in paragraph 20.9 must in every possible case be additional and not entail diversion of any other type of assistance provided to the host country bilaterally or multilaterally.
