

other organizations, both within and outside the UN system, and bilateral aid programmes may be able to help affected nationals. Recalling the principle that the assistance available to the refugees should take account of the conditions of nationals in the area, there may be circumstances in which a flexible approach will be in everyone's interest. For example, if a large number of refugees are located in a previously sparsely populated area, and have health services that are not available locally, these could be offered to nationals on the assumption they would represent a small proportion of the patients. Conversely, financing the construction of a hospital in the local town, where it was clear that a substantial proportion of the beds would be reserved for nationals, would not be within UNHCR's mandate. Headquarters' advice should be sought when in doubt.

6. The problem of corruption may arise in an emergency, when large sums of money and quantities of attractive relief supplies are being spent or distributed. Every effort must be made to prevent the diversion or misappropriation of funds or goods intended for the refugees. UNHCR has an obligation to ensure that what is paid for actually reaches the refugees; careful monitoring and control, including of quality, is essential. As different attitudes to the problem exist, this task will be made easier if all concerned with the provision of assistance know clearly UNHCR's policy and principles with regard to UNHCR-funded assistance. In other words, no one should be in doubt as to

what practices UNHCR regards as proper and of UNHCR's intention to have them respected.

7. The question of political activities may also arise. Responsibility for security and public order at the refugee site always rests with the government. The refugees have obligations to conform to the laws and regulations of the country as well as to the measures taken for the maintenance of public order. UNHCR's responsibility is clear: "the work of the High Commissioner shall be of an entirely non-political character; it shall be humanitarian and social ..." (paragraph 2 of the Statute). No general guidelines can be given on political activities within the refugee community. The matter may be extremely delicate and Headquarters' advice must be sought immediately on any specific problems.

8. Finally, mention should be made of religious activities among the refugees by outsiders. Organizations active in the delivery of emergency relief may also have a religious aspect in their normal work. Some are traditional partners of UNHCR, with the separation between these two roles long established and well understood, but for others it may be useful to recall the basic principle. Religious activities by those outside the refugee community, where permitted by the authorities, must be clearly dissociated from the delivery of assistance and services to refugees. In particular, no proselytizing should take place in association with the provision of such general community services as education, health and social welfare.

Further references

International Disaster Institute (1981)	<u>Disasters Volume 5 No.3</u> <u>Medical Care in Refugee Camps</u>	IDI
Oxfam (1980)	<u>Field Directors' Handbook</u>	Oxfam
UN (1977)	<u>A Guide to Food and Health Relief</u> <u>Operations for Disasters.</u> (Also in French and Spanish)	Protein-Calorie Advisory Group of the UN.
de Ville de Goyet C. Seaman J., Geijer U. (1978)	<u>The Management of Nutritional</u> <u>Emergencies in Large Populations</u>  (Also in French and Spanish)	WHO

All the above cover considerations relevant to the management of refugee emergencies.

### 10.0. Elements of a Co-ordinating Body (1)

No two relief efforts are identical. Nevertheless, it is possible to list many of the issues that will require consideration in the course of initiating co-ordination mechanisms. Each of the factors listed below would need to be evaluated against the particular context and the policy of the host government.

#### I. Membership

The nature of the co-ordinating body and its services will be determined by decisions on the composition of the membership. These decisions will be based on the degree of agency participation in the provision of services. Furthermore, these decisions must identify an appropriate role for organizations excluded from full membership.

##### a. Eligibility criteria for full membership

- (1) full-time representation in country
- (2) provision of direct services
- (3) minimum size of programme
- (4) attendance at co-ordination meetings
- (5) compliance with service guidelines
- (6) approval of host government
- (7) regular financial contributions to co-ordination mechanism
- (8) inclusion and considerations of indigenous agencies

##### b. Associate status for organizations without full membership

- (1) external organizations (UNHCR, unless a full member, etc.)
- (2) voluntary agencies which may choose not to become members
- (3) funding organizations
- (4) public interest groups

#### II. Services provided by co-ordination mechanism

The following services should be selected according to their ability to facilitate the increased effectiveness of the collective services provided by voluntary agencies. Meetings provide the forum for both the formal and informal exchange of information that results in complementary programming, elimination of waste, prevention of duplication and the sharing of technical information. This co-ordination will occur to various degrees depending upon the needs and on the willingness of the participating agencies.

##### a. Meetings

- (1) committee of the whole
- (2) working sub-committees

##### b. Administrative services vis-a-vis host government offices

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(1) Abridged from "Associations and Committees Serving Voluntary Agencies at the Country Level: A Study of Eight Organizations in Five Countries", by Clifford Olson, March 1981 (prepared for the International Council of Voluntary Agencies).

c. Information collection and dissemination

- (1) description of agencies
- (2) periodic reporting of services
- (3) personnel lists
- (4) newsletters
- (5) collection and dispersal of technical information

d. Conferences

e. Representations to external organizations

f. Identification of needed services and soliciting of voluntary agencies to assume responsibilities for the provision of these services

g. Co-ordination of emergency responses

h. Allocation of donated commodities and financial contributions

i. Guidelines for the provision of services

j. Orientation of newly-arrived agencies

k. Orientation of incoming voluntary agency employees

l. Research and documentation

m. Support for settlement co-ordination committees

n. Co-ordination with agencies outside the country

o. Fund raising.

III: Relations with host government

Voluntary agencies are guests of the host government. It is important to build into the co-ordinating body, mechanisms which encourage co-operation and communication with appropriate levels of that government.

Consideration should be given to relations with officials:

- at the central level;
- at the provincial levels;
- at the local level;
- who are technical specialists (education, public health, etc.) in the civil service and academia;
- who are camp administrators, and
- who are in the military forces.

IV. Governing procedures

Governing procedures will describe the mechanisms through which representatives of member agencies choose to come to decisions. In some cases representatives meet frequently and are actively involved in all types of decision-making. In other instances, representatives delegate certain responsibilities to a smaller executive committee, sub-committee or staff.

- a. Voting procedures
- b. Election of Officers
- c. Selection of Executive Committee
- d. Frequency of meetings

V. Source of funding

The source of funding will predict better than any other single parameter, the beneficiaries of the services provided by the co-ordinating body.

Agencies will make best use of opportunities provided by the co-ordinating mechanism if they are assured of control over the decision-making process within that mechanism. The degree to which that mechanism depends financially upon member agencies is a measure of that control. Secretariats with independent sources of funding are at times subject to temptations to develop in directions independent of the desires of member agencies.

- a. Willingness to accept external support
- b. Portion of expenditures covered by member contributions
- c. Assessment by size of agency involvement in relief effort versus equal contributions
- d. Provision of exemptions or partial exemptions from required contributions.

VI. Staffing

The number of staff must be both large enough to provide the required services and small enough to be paid by available funding. The authority and supervision of the staff should be clearly delineated. Three sets of alternatives should be considered:

- a. Personnel seconded from member agencies versus professionals employed by the co-ordinating body
- b. Expatriates versus host country nationals
- c. Generalists (co-ordinators) versus technical specialists.

Again, the specific site context is a determining factor in designing the co-ordinating mechanism. Individuals working at the site and representing participating agencies are best able to determine which organizational structure will achieve a co-ordination that will result in increased effectiveness and efficient use of resources.

Example of a Standard Situation Report

1. In emergencies, it is essential that regular situation reports reach Headquarters. The frequency of such reports will be determined by the characteristics of the situation; more frequent reports will be necessary in the initial stage of an emergency. Situation reports should give an overall view of the situation with sufficient factual content and explanation of changes since the last report to answer rather than raise substantive questions. By indicating progress achieved, problems encountered and steps being taken or planned to overcome these, the reports should give a cumulative picture of how the needs of the refugees are being met.

2. A suggested format is given opposite. Major headings should as a rule be the same in each report, indicating "no change" if appropriate. Depending on the situation, headings E through K may either be presented as shown, with locations covered under each sector of assistance, or alternatively by locations, with sectors of assistance covered under each location. In either case, the information under each sector of assistance and for each location should cover as applicable:

- (1) Current situation;
- (2) Particular problem areas, remedial action planned or necessary,<sup>(1)</sup> with time frame;
- (3) Any variation from overall implementing arrangements in DDD;
- (4) Personnel and facilities available.

3. The reports should be sequentially numbered, copied to RO New York and to other UNHCR field offices as appropriate. The report may be used as the basis for any wider situation report issued from Headquarters.

4. A similar format may be useful for situation reports to the Representative by field officers at the site level.

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(1) Specific action requested of Headquarters should be the subject of a separate cable, which could of course make reference to an earlier sitrep. Where relevant, reference should be made to such requests in the sitrep.

HICOMREF GENEVA INFO HICOMREF NEW YORK (and other offices concerned)  
SITREP (number) COVERING PERIOD (date) TO (date)

A GENERAL SITUATION

PRIMO (Summary of major developments including protection, assessment  
SECUNDO of situation generally and by refugee location, and field deploy-  
etc. ment of UNHCR staff.)

B REFUGEE STATISTICS AND REGISTRATION

(By location, country of origin or distinct groups if not self-evident, with explanation of changes since last report, and indicating source, e.g. government, UNHCR, etc.)

C CO-ORDINATION

(Government departments, UN system, NGOs, both at capital and field levels. Arrangements for briefing diplomatic corps.)

D OVERALL IMPLEMENTING ARRANGEMENTS

(Role of authorities  
Operational role of UNHCR (if any)  
Role of UNHCR's operational partners  
Other sources of significant assistance)

E SUPPLIES AND LOGISTICS

(Including information on internal transport arrangements, arrival of major consignments of multilateral or bilateral relief supplies, outstanding needs, etc.)

F SHELTER

(Site layout, housing, etc.)

G HEALTH

H FOOD AND NUTRITION

I WATER

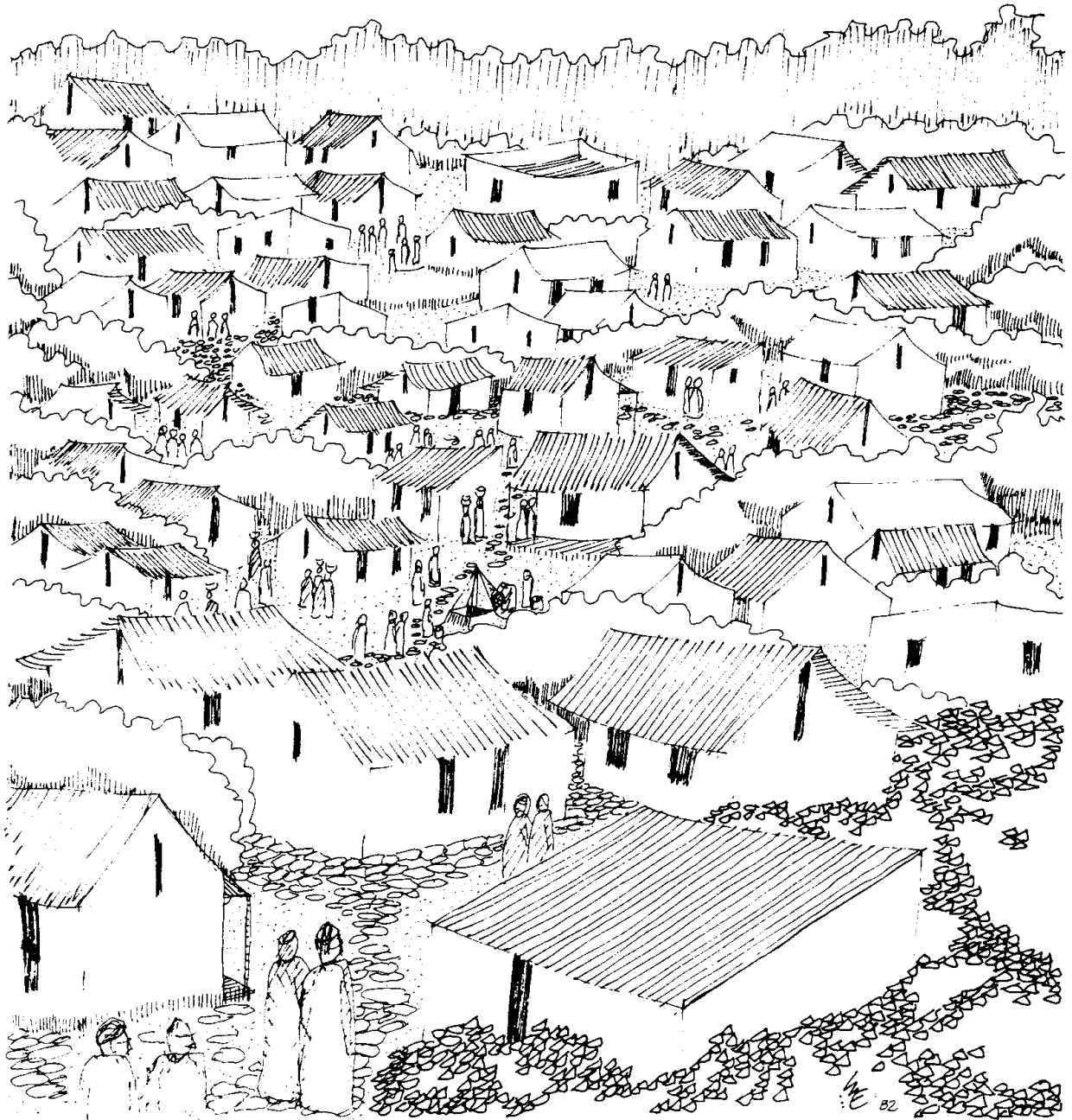
J SANITATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

K SOCIAL SERVICES AND EDUCATION

(Including disabled refugees, unaccompanied children, and tracing etc. as applicable.)

L PUBLIC INFORMATION

(Significant events/media coverage.)





## INDEX

If you are seeking general information on a subject, you may find it easier to look at the first page of the relevant chapter, which gives an annotated list of contents.

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