

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)

Support to NEPAD

Period of Report: July 2008 to June 2009

Collaboration with UN agencies

During the reporting period, UNHCR as part of the comprehensive UN system support for NEPAD played an active role in supporting and strengthening the activities of the Peace and Security Cluster, in particular through the leadership of the Sub-Cluster on Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) comprising 15 UN agencies. It continued to focus on the activities to implement relevant priorities of the AU-UN 10-Year Capacity Building Programme. UNHCR continued to use the AU priorities of peace and security, forced displacement in the Continent, recommendations of the 9th Regional Coordination Mechanism as well as the specific mandates and expertise of the sub-cluster members as a framework to implement activities in collaboration with other UN agencies.

As per the adopted work plan of the sub-cluster for 2008-2009, UNHCR focused on supporting the development of a draft AU convention on internal displacement; assisting the AU in organizing the first AU special summit on forced population displacement; and engaging in efforts to strengthen collaboration and cooperation between the UN Peacebuilding Commission, UN Peacebuilding Support Office and the AU Peace and Security Council to achieve the AU post conflict reconstruction and development related objectives.

Financial and Institutional Support

UNHCR continued to support the Division of Humanitarian Affairs, Refugees and Displaced Persons in the Department of Political Affairs of the AU Commission through the secondment of one P4 staff member and one G2 support staff member. In addition, UNHCR dedicated one senior consultant to support preparatory activities by the African Union Commission for the first AU Special Summit on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons. Staff of the UNHCR Representation to the African Union and UNECA well as staff from the Policy Unit at Headquarters worked routinely with concerned departments of the AU Commission and other partners.

In addition, monetary contributions of USD 170,000 to support the development of a draft AU convention on internally displaced persons and USD 350,000 to support the organisation of the first AU Special Summit on forced displacement were made to the African Union and the host country, Uganda.

During the reporting period, UNHCR also engaged in activities to raise awareness of the AU Special Summit and its objective to address the root causes of forced displacement in

Africa. UNHCR has produced documentary videos on displaced populations in Africa for screening during the AU Ministerial Conference held in November 2008 and the Special Summit in October 2009. The videos were intended to draw the attention of AU Member States to the challenges facing refugees, returnees, IDPs and other displaced populations as well as the countries hosting them.

Assistance was also provided through the printing of information notes on the Special Summit's theme and objectives. Numerous efforts were also made to raise awareness about the special summit including by holding a side event in the form of a panel discussion on the margins of the Annual UNHCR Executive Committee Meeting in October 2008. The High Commissioner for Refugees has repeatedly informed of the upcoming Special Summit at many of his engagements including a briefing he made to the UN Security Council. UNHCR also posts relevant information about the Special Summit on the UNHCR RLO website.

Advocacy work in support of African Development

UNHCR continued to focus on the following main areas to contribute to Africa's development:

- 1) Awareness rising of the root causes of forced population displacement in Africa through the organisation for a first AU Special Summit on refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons. UNHCR is working closely with its partners and sub-cluster members to support this AU initiative. The Special Summit to be held in October 2009 at Kampala, Uganda aims to address the root causes of displacement, prevent forced population displacement and create increased opportunities for durable solutions. The Summit is also expected to adopt the AU draft Convention on the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons.
- 2) Strengthening the emerging collaboration between the Sub-cluster and the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) to support the activities of the AU in the area of post-conflict reconstruction and development. In this regard, the meeting with the former head ASG McAskie of the UN PBSO in Addis Ababa with the sub-cluster and the AU Peace and Security Council marked progress on the creation of synergies between the two institutions.

Other advocacy activities included collaboration with the AU and other regional organizations through participation in AU Ordinary Summits and conferences, African Development Forum VI, informal interactions with member states' representatives, support to AU organs, the AU Technical Task Force on the Special Summit on Refugees, Returnees and IDPs, preparation of publications, documentary videos, publication of a quarterly newsletter "Highlights from Addis", publication of relevant information on the UNHCR RLO website (<http://www.unhcrro.org>) as well as the electronic compilation of the 11 post conflict country assessment reports on CD ROMs. UNHCR also participated in efforts to further build the AU Continental Early Warning System, attended the first AU meeting of Ministers in charge of Social Affairs to adopt the AU Social Development

Policy held in Namibia which makes important provisions in the areas of education, health care, employment and livelihoods, HIV/AIDS and gender which are relevant to mitigating the challenges faced by displaced populations in Africa.

Impact of UNHCR's support activities to NEPAD

The advocacy and support activities of UNHCR and the Sub-Cluster it chairs has helped advance various initiatives of the African Union, in particular the development of a draft convention for IDPs on the Continent, the organisation of a first AU Special Summit on forced population displacement in Africa to bring to the forefront the challenges faced by these vulnerable populations. The developing synergies between the AU Peace and Security Council, the UN Peacebuilding Support Office and the Sub-Cluster on Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development are also strengthening support for the recovery of countries emerging from conflicts.