



Refugee Task Force Meeting

Minutes

5 July 2017

- The meeting began with an update by UNHCR on the South Sudan Situation. Over the last few weeks the arrival trends of refugees have decreased. The relocation to Gure-Shembola is ongoing. Concomitantly, UNHCR has also documented the arrival of refugees to Dimma as well as in the Omo region. To an extent, these movements are seasonal and have been documented before. UNHCR is planning to undertake the registration of the affected population.
- An overview of the Multi-Year Multi-Partner (MYMP) initiative was provided by UNHCR. Since 2007 UNHCR has sought to develop a comprehensive approach to transition from the traditional yearly planning cycle. In this regard, a selected number of UNHCR operations are developing the MYMP to increasing efficiency in planning and resource mobilization. The strategy being developed by Ethiopia is in line with UNDAF and both run until 2021. The practicalities related to the arrangements for implementation, including the duration of the Project Partnership Agreements (PPAs) remains to be defined but UNHCR hopes to revise PPAs in line with MYMP planning. Needs assessments would also be conducted in a multi-functional and multi-partner fashion. The planning process is expected to be more focused. Current tools such as FOCUS are being adapted accordingly.
- The newly arrived CRRF Coordinator at UNHCR noted the need to increase knowledge across the humanitarian-development nexus, with needs assessments normally focused on either refugees or host communities. Hence, they could be improved with a view to addressing both humanitarian and developmental aspects.
- The discussion turned to the food ration cuts that started on 1 July 2017 as a result of WFP funding shortfalls. In Sherkole Camp, the scene of violence demonstrations at the end of June, the cuts came with a reduction of the cash-grant. Refugees received 15 ETB, as opposed to 50 ETB previously. As a result, some refugees threatened to leave and return to their country of origin. The UNHCR office was vandalized and two cars were damaged. Sixteen refugees were subsequently arrested and three were wounded. No staff were injured nor were casualties reported. ARRA, UNHCR and partners are making concerted efforts to normalize the situation and resume humanitarian activities in the camp. Invited participants from the Donor community noted that as a general principle if cuts have to be made at all, the preference may be to target the food component in the first instance, as opposed to cash. Cuts affect the most vulnerable persons. The modality chosen should be cost-effective and, as a general rule, cash should be the last component to be reduced. UNHCR concluded by noting that the overall food assistance distribution is proceeding well in other locations across Ethiopia. The impact of food cuts is particularly strong because most refugees reside in camps where livelihoods and income generating activities are limited.
- UNHCR and ARRA provided an update on the CRRF. UNHCR and ARRA recently attended the IGAD meeting on the Nairobi Declaration which focuses on Somali refugees. UNHCR and partners are in the process of furthering their understanding of what the local integration process entails for refugees, with a view to developing specific indicators to measure CRRF

implementation in Ethiopia. In this regard, a vision document will be developed to inform the implementation of the pledges. ARRA noted that the pledges focus on social integration and livelihoods, with naturalization not yet contemplated in Ethiopia. The importance of documentation cannot be overemphasized. Documentation allows persons of concern to enjoy greatest social and economic rights. In this regard, the out of camp policy is to be expanded once the conducive legal environment is in place. Opportunities to facilitate integration should be created including the issuance of permits. At the moment the proclamation has been endorsed by the Council of Ministers but the Parliament's approval is pending. It will now be discussed after the Parliament's recess. The Prime Minister himself informed the United Nations High Commissioner, Mr. Filippo Grandi, that the proclamation will be approved.

- An update on the mid-year review was provided. Three processes are ongoing: (1) mid-year report; (2) mid-year review and (3) mid-year review with ARRA. Partners have been asked to submit their reports by 10 July 2017. This report is a donor requirement. As relates to the review with ARRA, progress against the targets set in the PPAs are being assessed. This process will inform the assessment to be completed in 2018 on the retention of partners. UNHCR is planning to conduct joint monitoring in the field to facilitate a comprehensive review. The outcome of which will help UNHCR decide how to improve partnerships and what corrective measures may be taken. After the mid-year review, HQ conducts a review to verify the implementation and the expenditure rates. If the office is able to show a high implementation rate, more funding can be secured. While UNHCR conducts desk reviews each year, partnership arrangements are reviewed every four years. The purpose of the review is to establish that partners chosen are best suited to deliver on the specific services to refugees.
- An update on the other operations in Ethiopia was provided. UNHCR continues to register Somali refugees. Since 1 January 2017, 5,931 Somali new arrivals have been registered as refugees by the Government of Ethiopia and UNHCR. Four suspected cases of AWD have been reported as of 5 July in Jijiga camps. They were confirmed by rapid test but not by culture. All treated and well and discharged. Eritrean refugees continue also to enter Ethiopia. Between 26 June and 2 July, 75 individuals have entered Ethiopia on a daily basis.
- Finally UNHCR has received reports noting that Sudanese officials has discussed with authorities in Beneshangul-Gumaz the return of refugees to Sudan. UNHCR is not currently organizing voluntary return from Ethiopia to Sudan. It was also noted that the Regional Government does not have the authority to negotiate voluntary return to Sudan, remaining under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government.