

24 April 2014

Dear colleagues

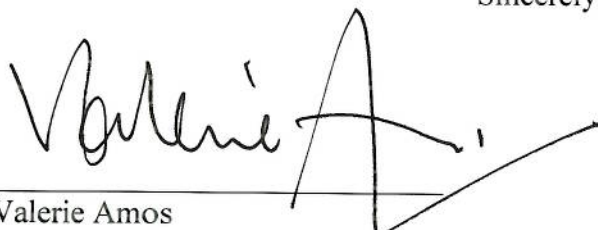
Within the framework of the IASC Transformative Agenda, UNHCR and OCHA have recently been engaged in bilateral consultations to simplify and streamline leadership and coordination arrangements in a complex emergency or natural disaster where a Humanitarian Coordinator has been appointed, and a UNHCR-led refugee operation is also underway.

We are now pleased to share with you a *Joint UNHCR – OCHA Note on Mixed Situations: Coordination in Practice*. This Note provides guidance on how, in ‘mixed’ settings where the populations of humanitarian concern include refugees, IDPs and other affected groups, the leadership and coordination mechanisms should function in practice.


The Note sets out the respective accountabilities, roles and responsibilities of the Humanitarian Coordinator and UNHCR Representative in contributing to the IASC-agreed strategic outputs of coordination. Supporting this, the table provided also outlines the practical interaction of IASC coordination and UNHCR’s refugee coordination arrangements in two contexts: i.e. (1) where refugees are present in the country in a separate geographic area from IDPs and other affected populations, and (2) where refugees are present in the same geographic area as IDPs and other affected populations.

We trust that this guidance will help us to work better together at country level in the most efficient and effective way, while at the same time, respecting the integrity of accountability for mandated responsibilities.

Sincerely,



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Emergency Relief Coordinator and
Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs
OCHA



António Guterres
United Nations High
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Joint UNHCR – OCHA Note on Mixed Situations Coordination in Practice

This note clarifies leadership and coordination arrangements in the situation where a complex humanitarian emergency or natural disaster is taking place, a Humanitarian Coordinator has been appointed, and a UNHCR-led refugee operation is also underway.

The detailed accountabilities, roles and responsibilities of the Humanitarian Coordinator and the UNHCR Representative are outlined in their respective Terms of Reference. This note describes how leadership and coordination mechanisms should function in practice. The objective is to ensure that coordination is streamlined, complementary and mutually reinforcing, and to avoid duplication at the delivery level.

Specifically, this note outlines in the attached table the practical interaction of IASC coordination and UNHCR's Refugee Coordination arrangements in contexts:

- (a) Where a Humanitarian Coordinator has been appointed to lead and coordinate humanitarian action and where refugees are present in a separate geographic area from IDPs and other affected populations;
- (b) Where a Humanitarian Coordinator has been appointed to lead and coordinate humanitarian action and where refugees are present in the same geographic area as IDPs and other affected populations.

This note does not cover refugee-only contexts where the affected population is primarily refugees and – for the purposes of preserving asylum space – host communities directly affected by the refugee presence. In such a setting a Humanitarian Coordinator is not appointed and IASC coordination does not apply. As concerns refugees, UNHCR leads the entire cycle of a refugee response, including inter-agency contingency planning, response, resource mobilization and finding durable solutions.

In supporting the IASC approach, as reinforced by the Transformative Agenda, individual agencies are committed, through their engagement in the Humanitarian Country Team and other IASC coordination structures, to contribute to the strategic outputs of coordination including:

- **A shared situational analysis and understanding** (based on common assessment and information-exchange and covering all aspects of the humanitarian situation);
- **A common vision for the humanitarian response** (captured in prioritised strategic objectives within the Strategic Response Plan, that that inform operational planning);
- **Common advocacy messages** (speaking with one voice on common issues, while agencies continue dedicated advocacy on mandate-specific issues); and
 - **System-wide resource mobilization and allocation of pooled funds** in line with common priorities / vision/accountability.



In complex emergencies and disasters where a Humanitarian Coordinator has been appointed, the adjacent **diagram** reflects the commitments of agency engagement in the collaborative IASC Humanitarian Response, while recognising that individual agencies retain independence of action with respect to their agency-specific mandates, including in UNHCR's case, a specific supervisory responsibility in relation to States' compliance with their international obligations toward refugees and stateless persons. Key principles of the IASC include a respect for established mandate responsibilities and equal ownership by all organizations in the IASC.

Mixed Situations - Coordination in Practice

<p><i>Leadership</i></p>	<p>The <i>Humanitarian Coordinator</i>, through leadership of humanitarian coordination in complex emergencies and disasters, facilitates the following collective outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared situational analysis • Common vision and strategic plan for the humanitarian response • Common advocacy messages • System-wide resource mobilization and allocation of pooled funds <p>The <i>UNHCR Representative</i>, leads the provision of international protection, humanitarian assistance and durable solutions for refugees (including in complex emergencies involving refugees) and is responsible and accountable for contributing, as a member of the HCT, to the delivery of the IASC collective outputs listed above. S/He shall also be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing a situational analysis of the refugee situation; • Ensuring a common vision and strategic refugee response plan, coherent with other humanitarian and development strategies and programming; and • Exercising the High Commissioner’s supervisory responsibility and advocating for the protection of, and assistance and solutions for refugees.
<p><i>Strategic planning</i></p>	<p>The <i>Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)</i> is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a common Strategic Response Plan, based on documented needs (i.e. as reflected in a Humanitarian Needs Overview) • Monitoring the implementation of the response and reviewing/adjusting the Strategic Response Plan as required. <p>The <i>UNHCR Representative</i>, as a member of the HCT, participates in and contributes to collective outputs of HCT-coordinated strategic planning and ensures effective leadership and representation of UNHCR-led clusters, as well as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads refugee preparedness and strategic response, together with partners, including with members of the HCT, the Government, and development agencies; • Ensures that the Refugee Response Plan is an integral yet distinct part of the overall Strategic Response Plan. • Coordinates with the Humanitarian Coordinator/HCT on refugee matters, and leads discussion on a standing agenda item in HCT meetings on “Refugee Preparedness and Response” to ensure coherence and mutually reinforcing strategies within the overall humanitarian response.
<p><i>Operational Coordination</i></p>	<p>In contexts where IDPs and other affected populations are geographically separate from refugees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IASC Clusters coordinate the operational response for IDPs and other affected groups, excluding refugees. • UNHCR Sectors coordinate the operational response for refugees. • IASC Clusters and UNHCR sectors share information at the national level. <p>In contexts where IDPs and other affected populations are geographically mixed with refugees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In all circumstances, the <i>inter-cluster coordinator</i> and the <i>UNHCR refugee coordinator</i> share information and ensure mutually reinforcing approaches. • Where IASC Clusters are utilized for geographically mixed contexts, a refugee expert will work within each cluster to ensure that refugee issues are addressed. Regardless of which mechanism (i.e. IASC Clusters or UNHCR Sectors) is utilized, the respective accountabilities of the <i>Humanitarian Coordinator</i> and the <i>UNHCR</i>

Mixed Situations - Coordination in Practice

	<p><i>Representative</i> remain unchanged.</p>
<i>Delivery</i>	<p>In contexts where IDPs and other affected populations are geographically separate from the refugees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IASC Clusters facilitate service delivery for IDPs and other affected groups, excluding refugees. • UNHCR Sectors facilitate service delivery for refugees. <p><u>In geographically mixed contexts:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Either IASC Clusters or UNHCR Sectors will be utilized, based on which best ensures optimal efficiency and effectiveness. The High Commissioner and the Emergency Relief Coordinator will consult and reach mutual agreement on the best option. • An important consideration will be the capacity of IASC Clusters to deliver on specific needs of refugees; and/or the capacity of UNHCR Sectors to deliver on protection and assistance needs of IDPs and affected populations; • In situations where IASC Clusters are utilized to deliver assistance in a geographically mixed context to refugees, UNHCR will ensure its accountability by delivering protection services to refugees through its protection working group, and advocating for the specific needs of refugees through participation and interaction with clusters and their members. In situations where clusters are unable to deliver adequate assistance to refugees, UNHCR will address the unmet needs with dedicated capacity. • In situations where UNHCR Sectors are utilized to deliver assistance to IDPs and other affected groups, the accountability of the Humanitarian Coordinator for these populations is maintained and dedicated capacity will be provided if a sector is unable to provide adequate assistance to these populations.
<i>Resource Mobilisation</i>	<p><i>The Humanitarian Coordinator:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes and leads inclusive resource mobilization efforts for the Strategic Response Plan • Oversees CERF grant applications • Manages in-country humanitarian pooled funds (where these exist) <p><i>The UNHCR Representative:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports, and provides the necessary strategic information for effective system-wide resource mobilization efforts, and for the “Refugee Multi-Sector Response” chapter of the Strategic Response Plan. • For refugee projects supports the Humanitarian Coordinator with CERF and Pooled Fund applications, management and reporting procedures. • Promotes and leads inclusive resource mobilization for all partners involved in the refugee response.
<i>Advocacy</i>	<p><i>The Humanitarian Coordinator:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinates the advocacy efforts of relevant organizations and uses private and/or public advocacy as appropriate with all relevant actors to ensure humanitarian concerns are taken into account. • On behalf of the HCT, provides leadership and/or promotes humanitarian negotiations with relevant parties, including non-state actors, on, in particular, cross-cutting issues of access, gender, protection, human rights, environment. • Supports the advocacy of UNHCR on refugee issues and ensures other humanitarian advocacy initiatives are complementary and supportive.

Mixed Situations - Coordination in Practice

	<p>The <i>UNHCR Representative</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supports the overall advocacy efforts of the Humanitarian Coordinator and HCT and exercises, as necessary, the specific advocacy role as Protection Cluster lead.• Has primary responsibility for advocacy with the host Government and all relevant actors on refugee issues, leads private and/or public advocacy and the development of common messaging on refugee issues.
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