

## Chapter 9

### Findings and Recommendations

#### Lack of policy coherence

A principal finding of the Joint Evaluation is a lack of coherence in policy and strategy formulation, principally within the political/diplomatic/military domain. Study III has chosen to call it a "policy vacuum". This lack of coherence was the result of numerous and often interacting factors, the principal ones being:

- conflicting interests between members of the Security Council and lack of resolve to overcome these differences, probably stemming from little interest in a small African country of marginal strategic importance to the main powers; and
- a lack of understanding of Rwanda's complex situation and misread signals prior to and immediately after the shooting down of the President's aircraft on 6 April.

Other factors included the "shadow" cast by the US experience in Somalia in October 1993, inadequate strategy formulation and communication within the UN Secretariat and disjointed relationships between the Secretariat and the field level. The 21 April decision to withdraw the bulk of the UNAMIR force and the tardy subsequent efforts to provide reinforcements allowed the genocide to proceed virtually unhindered and forced the withdrawal of almost all humanitarian agencies from the areas controlled by the interim government. Members of the humanitarian relief agencies sought to provide relief assistance and some form of protection in these areas which, as a result of the lack of concerted political and military action, involved considerable personal risks.

The massive refugee movement, particularly that into Goma, was accompanied by very high levels of violence within the camps. Once again there was a lack of coherence and concerted action by members of the Security Council to address the insecurity and, once again, humanitarian agencies had to do their best in a situation that was untenable. In the face of the overwhelming humanitarian needs created by the Goma influx, military contingents were deployed to the area but did not attempt to address the high levels of insecurity that severely hampered the relief efforts for instance, by forcing medical personnel to leave the cholera centres at nightfall and severely delaying the registration process, which could have significantly assisted efforts to improve the inequitable food distribution systems within the camps.

Both inside Rwanda and in the camps of Goma, the humanitarian community was left to steer its own course, attempting to substitute for the lack of political and military action. At times, particularly in relation to the issue of the repatriation of the refugees from Goma, this course was influenced by Western political figures. The attempt to encourage early repatriation was naive given the enormity of the genocide and represented a classic attempt to substitute

humanitarian action for the political action that was required first and foremost. A continued lack of coherence and concerted action in the political/diplomatic domain has produced a situation that, even in 1996, was costing the international community approximately \$1 million a day to sustain Rwandese refugees in neighbouring countries, and contributes to hardening attitudes among the government in Kigali. Despite the massive loss of life and the expenditure of enormous sums of money, 1.8 million Rwandese remain in camps outside their country and many observers expect a resumption of the civil war at some point in the future. A solution remains distant.  
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A key lesson, then, is that humanitarian action cannot serve as a substitute for political, diplomatic and, where necessary, military action. The onus of responsibility must, first and foremost, be upon the political and diplomatic domain to address complex emergencies. This will require the development of more effective mechanisms for formulating policy and a greater commitment from the international community, and particularly members of the Security Council, to the formulation of coherent strategies. In setting such strategies, fuller account must be taken of the humanitarian implications of political and military actions and inaction. The international community must be more prepared to highlight the humanitarian consequences of political, diplomatic and military inaction, both for the affected populations and for the effectiveness of relief activities. This will require development of more effective channels of communication between the humanitarian and political/diplomatic/military domains.

To address these issues, Study III, in conjunction with Studies I, II and IV and the Synthesis Team1, makes the following recommendations:

1. The Security Council should establish a Humanitarian Sub-Committee. Its purpose would be to inform fully the Security Council of developments and concerns regarding the humanitarian dimensions of complex emergencies and to make appropriate recommendations, taking into account both interrelated and distinctive aspects of political, military and humanitarian objectives.
2. A team of senior advisers should be constituted for all complex emergencies, charged with synthesizing crisis information and bringing coherent policy options to the Secretary-General. The purpose of this team would be to ensure that humanitarian, political and peacekeeping concerns are all taken into account in formulating options for the Secretary-General, the Security Council and in the General Assembly; it would not be charged with making operational decisions regarding humanitarian action.

## Donor funding and preparedness measures

Despite the generally impressive achievements of the humanitarian agencies and the massive resources contributed by donor organizations and the general public during 1994, the study found that there was frequently an imbalance in resource provision between preparedness and capacity increasing measures, on the one hand, and response measures in the face of a pressing humanitarian need on the other, particularly where such needs were well covered by the media. There were instances where investments (such as the purchase of additional locomotives and rolling stock for the Tanzanian Railways) would have recouped their cost within weeks as a result of savings. More importantly, there were instances where investments in preparedness that would subsequently have saved many lives, were not made because of an actual or perceived reluctance on the part of donor organizations to fund such measures. This was referred to as the lack of up-front funding within the system; and its effects were pervasive.

A problem identified regarding contingency planning and preparedness measures is the lack of consistent working definitions among agencies and of a shared understanding between agencies and donors as to what constitutes an appropriate level of investment in preparedness. Donor organizations appear to be instinctively over-cautious in funding preparedness measure for events that, though likely, may not actually happen. In contrast, they may spend freely in the face of a self-evident need. The problem, of course, is that by the time a need is self-evident it may well be too late, lives have been lost and higher-cost types of response, notably airlifts, will have to be used. Donor organizations and agencies need to be encouraged to accept that a proportion of preparedness measures will not be utilized, but this need not be reason to regard them as wasted resources.

It is also important that preparedness be broadly conceived, not just regarded in terms of stockpiling at different locations within the region and development of substantial rapidresponse capacity (both of which may well be highly appropriate). Ideally, preparedness should also include the advance placement of key technical and logistics staff and measures such as the preparation of adequate  
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maps and communications equipment, which may play a vital role in the event of a sudden population movement. Donors should be prepared to provide increased up-front funding to agencies for contingency planning and preparedness measures for major complex emergencies and honour

pledges to do so. For activities that draw on funds channelled through the UN, the existing contingency fund overseen by DHA should be expanded and procedures for its utilization streamlined.

3. Donor funding sources and implementing agencies need to be brought together, perhaps through an appropriate forum of the OECD/DAC, to seek a common understanding regarding mutually-acceptable levels of investment in contingency planning and preparedness measures, as well as the accompanying levels of risk.

4. Donors should be more prepared to provide advance funding that would enable implementing agencies freedom to respond effectively to fast-moving events and to make their own decisions in relation to expenditures central to the effectiveness of their operations. The level of the Emergency Response Contingency Funds maintained by the principal agencies and CERF and administered by DHA, should be increased but subject to ex-post scrutiny by the respective governing bodies.

5. Donor organizations and implementing agencies should take greater care to ensure that during periods when resources are comparatively freely available, as was the case for the two months following the Goma influx, that they continue to be used wisely and cost-effectively.

Greater efforts should be made to utilize locally-available goods and services or those available within the region. Similarly, airlift capacity should be used judiciously; and if viable overland routes are available, they should be preferred.

#### Humanitarian early warning and contingency planning

Detailed study of the information flows and decisions leading up to the Goma influx reveal that an integrated mechanism for gathering and analyzing information that could provide advance warning of large population displacements did not exist. The UNREO Information Cell came closest to fulfilling such a role but its objective was to collect and share information for coordination rather than warning purposes. It was heavily dependent upon a) relief agencies or UNAMIR contingents being present in an area and b) on relief agencies providing regular monitoring reports on developments/events in their area. These conditions were not met in much of north-west Rwanda during the critical period of May and June 1994. The need for early warning capacity to be located in the region was strongly supported by the detailed study of the Goma case, which revealed that inter-agency "early warning" meetings covering 10 20 actual and imminent emergencies were simply too distant to be of value operationally. The study also highlighted the need for

information to be circulated as widely as possible among all agencies involved in the response, including NGOs (as it will most likely be NGOs that are first to implement any response actions) and to all agency sub-offices, many of which did not receive the UNREO situation reports (SitReps) sent to headquarters offices.

The study revealed that, especially in the context of fast-moving, complex emergencies, contingency planning can, potentially, play a vital role. Anticipation of a range of scenarios, analysis of factors bearing on the likelihood of each and regular re-consideration of their likelihood may be seen as a critical link between early warning and preparedness planning. An important resource for contingency planners should be information and analysis drawn from an integrated humanitarian early warning capacity. Just as important, the contingency plan must then be updated to reflect relevant changes in the environment, again drawing on the early warning system.

6. Once emergency operations have commenced, an adequately-resourced integrated early warning cell should be established within the DHA field coordination office. All agencies, governmental, UN and NGO, operating in the region should be encouraged to feed reports on developments within their area of operation into the Cell. Where coverage of areas is incomplete, it should have capacity to place field observers/monitors to complement relief agencies or, in  
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those areas where security is very poor, to call upon aerial reconnaissance capacity through standby arrangements with suitable military forces. Contingency plans should be prepared and regularly updated, drawing on the information and analysis provided by the Integrated Early Warning Cell. Reports containing information on key developments in each area and assessments of the likelihood of substantial population displacements should be disseminated

widely to all sub-offices of agencies involved in the response with a proven record of treating sensitive information confidentially. In extremely fluid and tense situations, reporting should be daily.

Coordination: filling the "hollow core"

The overall response involved an unprecedented number of agencies and organizations operating in Rwanda and the four neighbouring countries. At least seven UN agencies and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the IOM, approximately 250 NGOs, at least eight military contingents, the ICRC, IFRC and various National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies were involved in the response in either an implementation or support role. In addition, the system was resourced

by over 20 donor organizations, several of which placed their own teams in the field to undertaken specific activities or assess needs and provide recommendations on funding. With so many agencies and organizations involved in the response, there was a critical need for a strong capacity at the centre to provide leadership and overall coordination.

In regard to refugee operations, UNHCR came close to fulfilling such a role by virtue of its clear mandate, support from host governments (particularly that of Tanzania), highly competent technical coordination personnel, and control over a significant proportion of the funds available for agencies and NGOs in large part due to a bold decision by ECHO to channel all its funds for refugees through UNHCR. However, coordination arrangements in relation to other areas and levels of the system were less satisfactory. The fact that the roles of the SRSG, the UNAMIR Force Commander and the Humanitarian Coordinator /Head of UNREO were limited to operations within Rwanda hampered coordination of policies and operations inside Rwanda with those relating to refugees in neighbouring countries. Within Rwanda UNREO performed several useful functions, though it suffered as a result of its ad hoc status and lack of clarity over its relationship to DHA and UNDP, its relationship with operational UN agencies and the SRSG. In addition, it did not have adequate resources and some of its personnel (many of whom were UNDP and seconded NGO personnel) lacked emergency coordination experience. Consequently, its role was limited, principally to that of information sharing. At the préfecture level within Rwanda, UNREO's field offices provided a useful forum for information sharing among NGOs, but technical coordination was the responsibility of other UN agencies such as UNICEF, WHO and FAO. As a result of their initial concentration on developing the capacity of the new government in Kigali, the provision of technical coordination in the south-west with its 300,000 IDPs was slow.

As well as supervizing UNREO, DHA undertook a wide range of coordinating actions spanning from the initiation and leadership of the UN Advanced Humanitarian Team to coordination of Consolidated Appeals and the chairing of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. Whilst assessment of the effectiveness of such non-operational coordination is difficult, it was clear that DHA was substantially more effective in providing coordination than it had been during the Somalia operations in 1992, when DHA was created. Nevertheless, it was apparent that the Department experienced

substantial institutional and financial obstacles and faces continuing uncertainty over its future.

By virtue of its lack of control over the funding of UN agencies and ambiguity over its representation

in the field, it was unable, despite the best efforts of its personnel, to provide strong leadership

and directive coordination. As a result of all the above difficulties in the area of coordination, and the dominance in resource terms of WFP and UNHCR, Study III concluded that the term "hollow core" was an apt characterization of the humanitarian relief system during the response.

Three options for addressing these problems are formulated below with each option varying in the degree of reform required. Each is recognized to have relative advantages and disadvantages.

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#### 7. Option (i)

Strengthen and extend existing inter-agency coordinating arrangements and mechanisms through:

- a) the use of inter-agency Memoranda of Understanding (such as that between UNHCR and WFP);
- b) strengthening DHA by assuring its funding base and giving it responsibility for providing common services to UN and other agencies (air cell management responsibility, integrated humanitarian early warning system, etc.);
- c) structure UN coordination meetings as inclusive task forces, chaired by DHA, at which representatives of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, major bilateral donors and key NGOs would be routinely invited to participate;
- d) reducing the number of senior officials with coordination and leadership roles and clarifying lines of authority of those with such roles.

#### Option (ii)

Considerably strengthen the central coordinating role of UN/DHA. Under this option, humanitarian

assistance funding for UN agencies and their NGO implementing partners would be channelled through DHA, which would decide on priorities and determine the amount of funds each agency would receive. To perform effectively this expanded role, DHA would need additional expert staff, including those with technical backgrounds, to be posted to the field as well as headquarters.

#### Option (iii)

Consolidate, in a new, expertly-led and -staffed and fully operational mechanism of the United Nations, the emergency response functions of DHA and the principal UN humanitarian

agencies (UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF). This is the option recommended by Study III.

Option (i) would be the least costly and disruptive, but the findings of Study III suggest that these efforts would not be enough to eliminate the confusion and competition and

considerable difficulties faced by DHA and UNREO during the Rwanda emergency. For instance, technical coordination inside the country experiencing the complex emergency as well as for IDPs would continue to be provided by several UN agencies rather than the DHA field coordination office.

Option (ii) would enable DHA to achieve directive coordination of the sort enjoyed by UNHCR in the Ngara operation. This would not require the creation of additional organizations but would strengthen one that is already there. Given DHA's relatively recent establishment, its inadequate resourcing and limited capacity, other UN agencies can be expected to regard this option unfavourably. To achieve this option would require a phased programme of implementation, including early strengthening of DHA's capacity and competence. It would be feasible for additional technical staff to be seconded from other agencies.

Option (iii) is that preferred by the majority of the Study III Team and is therefore the recommended option. Such a radical proposal is not new and over the last two to three years has been proposed by several authoritative observers and departments of key governments.<sup>2</sup> The proposal would ensure coordination by centralizing all policy and operational responsibility in one agency/department. It should be noted that this agency/department need not be created outside the existing UN structure, but could be created within one of the existing bodies, such as DHA. It would considerably rationalize the current system, reduce duplication costs and create a strong body fully capable of providing leadership. Against these positive aspects are the fact that the transition to the new consolidated agency/department would be disruptive and that it might increase rather than reduce the disjuncture between relief and development programme management.

Whichever option is chosen, a plan of action should be formulated, including a full review of staff needs by a special panel of international experts, governments and NGOs. A report containing the reasoning for selecting the option as well as the plan of action should be submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly.  
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Stand-by capacity and the role of military forces in humanitarian operations

Military contingents from OECD countries had a significant involvement in humanitarian operations

inside Rwanda and in eastern Zaire in the provision of relief assistance and by supporting relief agencies. Unfortunately, the study was unable to obtain sufficiently precise and comparable data on costs and performance to allow definitive conclusions about the value and appropriateness of military contingents in humanitarian operations. The Rwanda experience with military contingents does raise questions about their predictability, effectiveness, high cost and ability to participate collaboratively in operations involving several official agencies and numerous NGOs.

In large part, involvement of the military was in response to capacity within the humanitarian system having become overstretched by the time of Goma and UNHCR's novel request for governments to provide self-contained service packages. Not only were military contingents deployed in response to this request but so too were civil defence and rapid response teams. The response by governments did not closely follow the service package concept as envisaged by UNHCR. Several governments provided broadly similar capacities and there were significant coordination problems between the government teams/military contingents and NGOs working in the same sectors. Costly but crucial items such as water tankers and earth-moving equipment did not arrive as quickly as required and as had been hoped by UNHCR. Whilst the experience points to the need to make better arrangements for the maintenance and provision of stand-by capacity (particularly in the case of larger strategic equipment items such as bulldozers and water tankers), it raises important questions about how best to do so.

8. A systematic study should be undertaken of the performance and costs of military contingents in humanitarian relief operations compared with those of official agencies, NGOs and the private sector performing the same functions. The study should assess the most effective and cost-effective ways to maintain stand-by capacity between emergencies. Once this has been identified, the principal UN agencies should develop coordinated stand-by arrangements, a process that should be properly resourced by donor organizations.

9. Until such time as this study is undertaken and policy formulated, and in recognition of the likelihood that some governments may continue to deploy military contingents in support of humanitarian operations, clearer frameworks should be developed for civil-military cooperation in relief operations. This may require joint training courses and exercises for agency and military personnel.

10. To improve the response capacity of NGOs at a national level, donor organizations should

develop schemes enabling their principal national relief NGOs to train and retain competent personnel between periods of deployment.

### Improving NGO performance

NGOs played a vital role in the response, undertaking most of the delivery of assistance to beneficiaries. Whilst many NGOs performed impressively, providing a high quality of care and services, a number performed in an unprofessional and irresponsible manner that resulted not only in duplication and wasted resources but may also have contributed to an unnecessary loss of life. The need for NGOs to improve their performance is now widely recognized.

A set of standards is being developed by several NGO networks intended to supplement the Code of Conduct developed by the ICRC, IFRC and associations of NGOs. Both the Code of Conduct and set of standards (now being developed by Oxfam and other NGOs) should be widely disseminated and promoted among NGOs, official agencies and governments. While voluntary adoption and implementation of the Code of Conduct and standards is clearly preferable to edicts imposed on NGOs from outside, the Rwanda experience indicates that it will not be enough to rely on voluntary adoption alone.  
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11. Some form of regulation or enforcement is needed to ensure improvements in performance by NGOs. Two options are formulated below:

- (i) Self-managed regulation. Under this option, NGO networks could be assisted in acquiring greater capacity to monitor member compliance with the Code and standards.
- (ii) An international accreditation system. Under this option, core criteria for accreditation would be developed jointly by official agencies and NGOs. These criteria would need to be adapted and supplemented for a specific complex emergency. This is the option recommended by Study III.

As stated, the second option is stronger than the first in terms of enforcement, but it raises a number of issues that would have to be resolved, such as the selection of an entity to administer accreditation, funding, reporting relationships, etc. Self-regulation under the first option would be encouraged if donors and donor governments agreed to restrict their funding and tax-free privileges to agencies that have adopted the Code and standards. Similarly, host-country governments could provide registration,

work permits and duty-free importation privileges only to those agencies that have adopted the Code and standards. If implemented, these incentives and disincentives would compensate for the weakness of the first option. Donors and governments must, of course, be prepared to hold NGOs accountable to the Code and standards and employ disincentives in the event of non-compliance. The media have played and should continue to play a positive role by exposing instances of unprofessional and irresponsible conduct by NGOs. However, care is needed to ensure that journalists are well informed of what constitutes good and bad practice in relief management and the specific context in which the NGOs have been operating.

As part of efforts to improve NGO performance, training courses and activities are being expanded and greater efforts made to learn lessons from particular operations. However, given the complexity and often technically-demanding nature of relief operations, the high turnover of staff and the difficulty of utilizing private resources on non-operational or "visible" activities, these efforts need greater encouragement.

12. Donor organizations should give greater support to NGO emergency training and lesson-learning activities.

### Improving accountability

The availability and quality of performance data and reporting by official agencies and NGOs involved in emergency relief operations were highly variable. In some locations, such as in Goma, the situation was more satisfactory but in others, such as within much of Rwanda, availability of data was patchy and frequently not comparable between agencies due to a lack of standardized survey methods and inadequate technical coordination. In such areas the information available did not provide a sufficient basis for assessing impact or performance, or just as important for adjusting programme activities to improve performance. A tendency by some official agencies and NGOs to emphasize or inflate positive accomplishments and play down or ignore problems resulted in distorted reporting. Even basic data on staff, finances and activities were difficult or impossible to obtain from a number of NGOs.

Several options are formulated below to address problems identified above. An additional recommendation is addressed to donor governments and bilateral agencies.

13. Systems for improving accountability need to be strengthened. The following options are proposed for achieving this:

(i) By strengthening the effectiveness of official agency coordination and standards of NGO conduct along the lines recommended above, accountability would be strengthened, especially if implementation of these recommendations includes standards for data collection and reporting.

The current Red Cross/NGO Code of Conduct commits signatories to "hold ourselves respon-

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sible to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources." Full implementation of this commitment would entail establishment of NGO mechanisms for consultation with people affected by humanitarian emergencies.

(ii) Establish a unit in UN/DHA or the body proposed in 7 (iii) that would have no other responsibilities but the following:

\* undertake regular field-level monitoring and evaluation of emergency humanitarian assistance,

and review adequacy of standards followed;

\* serve as ombudsman to which any party can express a concern related to provision of assistance

or security;

\* set up and manage on behalf of the international community a database on emergency humanitarian

assistance operations; and

\* prepare periodic status reports for the public domain.

(iii) Identify a respected, independent organization or network of organizations to act on behalf of beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance to perform the functions described in option (ii) above. This is the option recommended by Study III.

Option (i) would entail least cost and disruption to the humanitarian assistance system, but it would not provide one focal point for a database or for dissemination of information throughout

the system. Option (ii) provides the focal point but as part of a UN unit it could, and probably

would, be viewed as lacking independence. Option (iii) provides both independence and a focal

point but poses issues in terms of selection of the entity, accessibility, and reporting responsibility

(its own accountability). While both options (ii) and (iii) would have cost implications, their contribution to effectiveness and accountability should also be kept in mind. It is essential that

either option be adequately resourced. It should also be noted that option (iii) need not

require  
creation of a new entity, but could well entail selection of an existing institution to assume  
the  
functions outlined above.

The availability and quality of data collected and made available by donor governments  
varied  
considerably. Some donors rarely if ever provided data to the UN/DHA Financial Tracking  
System. Donors have a responsibility to improve accountability both to their taxpayers and to  
the beneficiaries of their assistance and to improve their own performance information and  
reporting  
(including on any humanitarian role played by military contingents). But they also have a  
leadership  
role in promulgating consistent standards, including adequate breakdown of data by activity  
and area. Finally, they have a responsibility to standardize the formats they use for reporting  
requirements of agencies they fund.

14. DHA's Financial Tracking System should be given additional support to enable it to  
increase  
the sophistication and coverage of its database. The reports should be published annually  
and donor organizations not reporting should be listed. The costs of military support to  
humanitarian operations and the basis for their estimation should be listed separately from  
non-military humanitarian contributions.

15. The Development Assistance Committee of OECD should develop, in consultation  
with relief  
agencies, guidelines for adequacy, consistency and standardization of performance data  
and reporting on humanitarian assistance activities.

16. All UN relief agencies and NGOs should ensure that, during relief operations, timely  
epidemiolog-  
ical, nutritional and food security surveys are undertaken and that survey methodologies  
and presentation of results should be standardized to allow comparability between  
agencies.

#### Improving camp security

Physical protection of refugees and displaced persons in camps can be problematic even in  
"normal"  
circumstances. In the Rwanda crisis, this issue quickly became of paramount importance.  
The  
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continued dominance of the former leadership, some of whom were key perpetrators of the  
genocide,  
and the presence of armed elements in refugee camps, particularly those in eastern Zaire,  
inflicted  
more trauma, insecurity and diversion of resources destined for bona fide refugees. In  
addition,  
the insecurity posed a very real threat to relief agency staff and obliged them to restrict their  
relief efforts. As revealed by Study II, the international community's efforts to find a

workable  
means of addressing the security problems were considerably delayed in the case of the  
camps  
in eastern Zaire.

The recommendations developed by Study II and the Synthesis Team in addressing this issue are included here because of their relevance to the effectiveness of relief efforts.

17. In situations where the international community has assumed humanitarian responsibility at refugee and/or IDP camps, take the following actions with respect to camp security measures:

- a. Give UN peace missions authority and the appropriate means to ensure protection, in coordination with host governments or otherwise, of camp populations and staffs of relief organizations.
- b. Work with host governments to take other measures, such as disarming camp residents, separating genuine refugees from those not entitled to refugee status, barring arms trading, preventing military training of residents, expelling hostile leadership from camps, halting the operations of hate media, and splitting up large camps into smaller ones at a greater distance from the border.
- c. Advise official and non-governmental agency staffs on prudent patterns of behaviour that will not invite security problems as well as on how effectively to maintain an open and continuous dialogue with the beneficiary community.

#### Food issues and registration

That widespread starvation did not occur during 1994 reflects in part the satisfactory and often impressive performance of the systems for the supply of food aid. However, the study revealed a number of areas where problems were experienced. Substantial difficulties stemmed from initial reliance on the former leadership in many camps as an expedient mechanism for food distribution. This served to reinforce the power of this group and resulted in rations being manipulated and diverted from refugee consumption. Agencies were soon aware that such "indirect" distribution systems were resulting in high rates of malnutrition among certain groups, particularly the elderly and female-headed households, but had difficulty in introducing more "direct" distribution mechanisms (such as to the cellule or household level) to by-pass the leadership. Factors contributing to the delay included the high levels of insecurity in the camps, their large size particularly in Goma and Ngara and the difficult physical terrain in Goma, which severely hampered better site planning. For similar reasons the process of registration of the refugees was greatly delayed in eastern Zaire and this contributed to the delays in moving to more equitable systems and

also  
of involving a wider group of refugees in planning and implementing camp services. Despite these problems, some organizations were able to move to direct distribution systems considerably earlier than others, suggesting that agency attitudes and practice contributed to the delay.

Other problems experienced concerned the appropriateness of the rations provided and the tendency for agencies to introduce supplementary feeding programmes rather than focus attention and resources on addressing problems encountered in the supply of general ration commodities.

18. Develop and obtain advance agreement from the relevant agencies and, where feasible, governmental authorities, on operational guidelines for food distribution. These guidelines should provide for direct distribution of food at household level if there is a risk of exploitation of the distribution system by camp leadership. The guidelines should also recommend exploring the desirability and feasibility of direct provision of food to women.  
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19. Registration/enumeration specialists should be deployed with UNHCR's Emergency Response Teams to ensure that the registration/enumeration of refugees is undertaken as soon as possible after any influx.

20. Formal Food Aid Needs Assessments involving nutritionists should always be carried out early in an emergency operation to ensure adequate attention is given to issues of ration composition and acceptability to beneficiaries.

21. Before approving the establishment of supplementary feeding programmes (SFPs) in refugee camps, UNHCR, donor organizations and implementing NGOs should consider the potential improvements that could be made to the general ration supply pipeline if SFP resources were deployed instead in support of the general ration supply.

22. The costs of milling cereals supplied by WFP as part of the general ration should be included within the Internal Transport Storage and Handling (ITSH) costs and therefore paid automatically by donor organizations.

#### The role of the media

It was apparent that the media played an important and, at times, influential role within the international humanitarian aid system. The advent of on-the-spot satellite broadcasting and the powerful nature of the images of the influx into Goma contributed to the massive response there, and

may also have contributed to the lack of policy coherence by the media's focus upon the humanitarian story, rather than the more complicated and difficult-to-comprehend story of the genocide and the conflict. The precise ways in which the media may influence a particular humanitarian aid operation could not be studied with any rigour during the evaluation. This requires comprehensive academic analysis, of which there has been none to date.

A rigorous study of media coverage of humanitarian aid operations and the way it influences and is, in turn, influenced by relief agencies should be undertaken. To increase its ability to inform policy, the study should cover more than one relief operation.

#### Mitigating the impact on host communities

While certain groups and enterprises gained from hosting large refugee or displaced populations, others experienced substantial losses. Both gains and losses were distributed unevenly. There were clear environmental and other costs imposed by the large refugee camps on local populations in the neighbouring countries of Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi as well as on local populations surrounding IDP camps. Some of these costs resulted from flawed agency policies. In general the study found that the international community was slow to provide compensation to those groups who were negatively affected and that, as a consequence, the host communities have come increasingly to resent the presence of the refugees and that this in turn limits the options for the wider management of the crisis in the Great Lakes region.

24. Standard operating policies and procedures should be prepared for donor organizations,

UN agencies and NGOs that will help to minimize and mitigate adverse impacts of relief operations (whether refugee or IDP) on surrounding populations and their environment.

25. A quick-disbursing fund should be established (or alternatively allowed to draw from the

existing UNHCR Emergency Response Fund) to provide early compensation to the host communities in the immediate vicinity of refugee/IDP concentrations.

26. Ensure that strategies are pursued that minimize negative impact of refugee/IDP concentrations

on host communities, such as: providing food that requires little or no cooking; providing fuel for cooking; extending camp infrastructure and services (health care, water supply, etc.) to sur-

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rounding local populations; and rehabilitating physical infrastructure (e.g. roads and airstrips)

damaged in meeting relief needs.  
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#### Endnotes

1. The articulation and formulation of these findings and recommendations has benefitted considerably from the work of the Synthesis Team and interactions between that team and Study III. The Synthesis Team's contribution, particularly those of John Eriksson, are gratefully acknowledged.

2. For example: Erskine Childers with Brian Urquhart, "Renewing the United Nations System", Development Dialogue 1994:1, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Uppsala, Sweden; US so-called non-paper "Readying the UN for the 21st Century: Some UN-21 Proposals for Consideration", US State Department 1995.  
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