

4 Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 The team concludes that, overall, UNHCR's programme in Armenia is worthy of support. We welcome its plans for phasing out and handing over its assistance programme to other agencies. UNHCR is providing some high quality legal protection work, and has been successful in persuading other agencies to take account of refugee needs in their programmes. It has also focused attention on building national capacity to ensure that eventually Armenia is able to care for and protect refugees without external assistance.

4.2 As UNHCR down-sizes its operations, the Government of Armenia and the development-oriented UN agencies and NGOs should be aiming for long-term, durable solutions to the plight of refugees. UNHCR and donors should encourage them to do so.

Recommendations for UNHCR

4.3 The team recommends that UNHCR:

- continues and, if possible, accelerates its phase out, eventually reducing its role to one of just protection and advocacy;
- encourages donors to support other agencies to whom it wishes to hand over its programme;
- evaluates the success of its capacity building programme for national NGOs, perhaps with the support of a donor-funded consultant;
- identifies another agency such as UNDP to whom it can hand over responsibility for NGO capacity building within the next two years;
- improves its capacity to ensure, with a limited staff base, that other agencies are providing quality care and protection to refugees;
- improves its internal programme planning and reporting documents, whether by making the most of existing formats, or encouraging UNHCR in Geneva to develop a more useful format for field purposes.

Recommendations for donors

4.4 The team recommends that donors continue to support UNHCR's programme, but that in doing so, they should direct funding to help improve UNHCR's programme planning, monitoring and reporting systems, to help it strengthen its capacity building for NGOs, and to help it focus on its core protection role. Donors should also help UNHCR to hand over assistance work to other agencies by gradually re-directing funding for this to those agencies over the coming two years. This re-direction of funds should be guided by discussions with UNHCR and its partners on what support is needed, and on how to ensure that UNHCR retains a monitoring and coordination role.