Optimizing service to the field

A review of the role of the Desk in UNHCR

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Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit

UNHCR's Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU) is committed to the systematic examination and assessment of UNHCR policies, programmes, projects and practices. EPAU also promotes rigorous research on issues related to the work of UNHCR and encourages an active exchange of ideas and information between humanitarian practitioners, policymakers and the research community. All of these activities are undertaken with the purpose of strengthening UNHCR's operational effectiveness, thereby enhancing the organization's capacity to fulfil its mandate on behalf of refugees and other displaced people. The work of the unit is guided by the principles of transparency, independence, consultation, relevance and integrity.

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Executive summary

Background

The Desk is an operational entity within each UNHCR regional Bureau covering UNHCR's programmes in a specific country, group of countries or cross-border operation. The Desk acts as a liaison between Headquarters and the Field and is involved in most of UNHCR's internal mechanisms and processes. A number of reviews undertaken since the early 1990s have attempted to identify and resolve the challenges for Desk personnel in carrying out the duties and responsibilities of this function, so that the incumbents can be enabled to better serve the Field. This review was conducted in response to a decision from UNHCR's Oversight Committee for two units or functions to address the strategic implications of the role of the Desk. In response, UNHCR Audit Service namely the Office of Internal Oversight Services hereinafter referred to as (OIOS) and UNHCR's Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU) each agreed to produce separate but complementary reviews of the Desk function at UNHCR.

Purpose

The purpose of this review is threefold; first, to re-examine the role of the Desk in the light of current management restructuring and the introduction of new management tools; second, to update and address the earlier lack of action on recommendations of former Desk reviews and third, to facilitate informed management decisions for the response to the UNHCR Audit Service recommendations in May 2005.

Methodology

The findings and recommendations of this review have been drawn from three main sources:

Literature review: The report consolidates and builds on existing knowledge and oversight recommendations from previous Desk Reviews conducted in 1993, 1994 and 1999; two external reviews of the Joint Inspection Unit in 2004; the Mannet Review of UNHCR's Headquarters structure and the OIOS Comparative Review of the Desk Function in 2005.

Benchmarking process: The review analyses and benchmarks parallel ongoing reviews of the role of the Desk in other UN and humanitarian entities (including UNICEF, WFP, OCHA, ICRC and DPKO) by examining their arrangements for decentralization, bilateral cooperation agreements and streamlining and revision of existing procedures.

Reference group workshop: To ensure consultation with key stakeholders in the process and enhance organizational ownership of proposed solutions, EPAU formed a Reference Group comprising participants from all levels of the Bureaux and a

representative from the Field. The Reference Group met and discussed the key issues raised in a two-day workshop in Geneva in February 2005.

Major findings

The key opportunities for improvement of the Desk structure at UNHCR as identified by previous Desk reviews include the need for senior management to:

- Clarify roles and responsibilities of Desks in relation to functional units and the Field;

- Define roles and responsibilities of Desk personnel in UNHCR guidance;

- Simplify procedures and reporting, and delegate authority;

- Strengthen Desk Officer competencies through provision of training;

- Engage in planning and foresight;

- Address non-implementation and resistance to change.

Specific best practices from sister agencies in improving their service to the field were identified by this review and include:

- Ensuring that organizational structure reflects organizational objectives;

- Designing a field-focused information architecture;

- Appointing a change manager to coordinate intiatives;

- Investing in bilateral collaboration agreements;

- Cross-cutting initiatives between geographical areas;

- Using Global Staff Surveys to better address staff concerns;

- Proactive and strategic, continuous learning environment.

Summary of recommendations

The findings presented in this review support that the Desk be placed at the centre of UNHCR operations, thereby ensuring a single, integrated support function serving the Field. This would entail synthesizing the four core functions of the Desk: capacitation, coordination, policy formulation and monitoring and evaluation. For a comprehensive summary of recommendations, please see the relevant chapter.

Introduction

Background

1.   Only with a strategic vision and an operations architecture that truly serves the Field can the fundamental objective of the organization be fulfilled – namely to serve refugees. This review addresses the core operational issue critical to UNHCR's future success; namely, how the structure and roles of the Desk[1] can be enhanced to best serve UNHCR's operations in the Field.

2.   Since 1993, a succession of reviews and studies of the Desk function at UNHCR have resulted in specific recommendations for improving service to the field. These studies have resulted in partially implemented recommendations, with little progress in defining roles and responsibilities, streamlining procedures and establishing accountability structures.

3.   In October 2004, in response to a decision from UNHCR's Oversight Committee[2] for two units or functions to address the strategic implications of the role of the Desk, the Chiefs of UNHCR's Audit Service and the Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU) agreed to each address this challenging implementation issue by conducting separate but complementary reviews of the Desk. Clear terms of reference were drafted by the Audit Service and EPAU to ensure the focus of the Audit and EPAU reviews were different and distinct. To further ensure there would be no duplication in the work conducted, EPAU participated as an observer in two of the meetings organized by the Audit Service as part of the Comparative Desk Review. Periodic briefings with EPAU by the Auditors occurred throughout the process.

Relevant emerging issues

New UNHCR leadership: An opportunity to review HQ-field architecture

4.   The appointment of a new High Commissioner in June 2005 presented a window of opportunity to resolve the duties and responsibilities of the Desk and Field in such a way that respective staff could be enabled to better serve the Field. With the arrival of the new High Commissioner António Guterres, a new Assistant High Commissioner (AHC) for Operations and AHC for Protection, the time is ripe to design a single integrated support entity for the Field, comprising technical assistance and protection support, as well as support in durable solutions. Under the

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[1] The Desk is the operational entity located within the geographical Bureau, which acts as a liaison between Headquarters and the field and is involved in most of UNHCR's internal mechanisms and processes.

[2] The purpose of the Oversight Committee as outlined in the Terms of Reference of November 2004, is to assist the High Commissioner in overseeing the financial and operational management of the agency, to monitor the independence and effectiveness of the internal oversight functions and to ensure that oversight findings and recommendations are adequately addressed. (IOM-FOM 059/2004).

two AHCs for Operations and Protection, this integrated support entity would play a crucial role in bridging the gaps between protection and operations, and Headquarters and the Field.

Appointment of a Special Director for Structural and Management Change to address implementation of change in February 2006

5.   In February 2006, The High Commissioner appointed a full time Special Director for Structural and Management Change. The purpose of the Field Review is to maximize delivery of protection, assistance and solutions for beneficiaries by creating efficiency, ensuring coherence, and identifying innovative arrangements to run Operations and implement programmes. This review-Optimizing Service to the Field and the recommendations and benchmarking contained therein will serve the change process.

The planned introduction and roll-out of MSRP

6.   During 2006, UNHCR will continue its roll-out of new information systems such as Management Renewal Systems Project (MSRP) and Results Based Management (RBM) software with a view of alleviating the current Desk burden. As these initiatives will inevitably refine roles and responsibilities central to the capacitation of the Field, the time to revisit existing operational structures becomes even more compelling.

Emphasis on RBM and accountability: EPAU to address "implementation"

7.   During the 56th Executive Committee in October 2005, the Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU) confirmed to donors its commitment to addressing historically poor implementation of oversight recommendations. This has involved producing reports with utilization focus (i.e., which are more practical and relevant) and with recommendations that are also practical and to the point. Furthermore, EPAU has taken steps to ensure that evaluation recommendations are properly utilized and implemented.

8.   In September 2005, EPAU established a database to monitor the implementation of recommendations contained in evaluation reports. Meanwhile, the UNHCR Audit Service already works with an effective follow-up mechanism for implementation of audit recommendations, with a compliance function under the umbrella of the UNHCR Controller's Office. The Inspection function at UNHCR established a Compliance Officer post in 2006. Complementing the audit at this juncture afforded EPAU the opportunity to feed into and build on final audit recommendations with a "utilization focus."

Purpose of review

9.   This review analyses the extent to which current structures assist the delivery of UNHCR's core protection mandate, and explores ways in which these can be adapted to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the office's programmes within the changing environment in which UNHCR operates.

10.   Drawing heavily on findings from previous Desk reviews, the purpose of this review is to re-examine the role of the Desk in the light of current management restructuring and the introduction of new management tools in order to update and redress the earlier lack of action on recommendations of former Desk reviews. This review aims to identify key functions that are specific to the role of the Desk and recommend how to enable the incumbents of Desk Officer positions to perform these functions and provide value-added to field operations.

11.   By building on the Audit: " *Comparative Review of the Desk function*" of 30 May 2005,[3] this review articulates a future vision for optimizing service to the field, based on a participatory approach and ensures the mandatory compliance with proposed measures for improvement of the Desk function at UNHCR.

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[3] Comparative Review of the Desk Function. OIOS. 2005.

Methodology

12.   This review looks at both present and previous internal reviews as well as initiatives taken or underway by external parties, notably other UN system bodies and other humanitarian organizations. A participatory process i.e. Reference Group discussed best practices within other agencies and built ownership of the recommendations with a view to their implementation.

Timeline of review

The table below shows the timeline of this review process and follow-up.

Step I: Decision of UNHCR Oversight Committee for two functions or units to conduct reviews of the Desk	December 2003
Step II: Commitment from Senior Management at facilitated retreat	November 2004
Step III: Audit Service and EPAU Desk Reviews approved by Senior Management	January 2005
Step IV: EPAU facilitated Reference Group to discuss how the Desk can best serve the Field.	February 2005
Step V: Issuance of Audit Service Comparative Review of the Desk Function	May 2005
Step VI: Issuance of EPAU Optimizing Service to the field-A review of the role of the Desk in UNHCR	June 2006[4]
Step VII: Implementation of UNHCR HQs and field Review by Change Team	December 2006

Step I: Mandated by UNHCR Oversight Committee –December 2003

13.   On 10 December 2003, the UNHCR Oversight Committee responsible for coordinating the work plans for the UNHCR Audit Service (OIOS) and the UNHCR Evaluation and Inspection Units, decided that as the Desk is a multi-faceted complex function, the Desk review should be carried out by a second oversight function in addition to Audit to better examine the strategic implications of the role of the Desk. As a result, EPAU agreed to conduct a review of the Desk to complement that of the Audit Service.   Efforts were made to ensure that the two reviews were well-coordinated. EPAU staff participated in the Audit process and the Audit team made important contributions to the EPAU review.

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[4] Issuance of EPAU report was placed on hold until February 2006, pending appointment of new AHC for Operations, Judy Cheng-Hopkins.

Step II: Senior Management Commitment to address desk structure – November 2004

14.   In November 2004, EPAU organized a two-day teambuilding retreat for Kamel Morjane, the Assistant High Commissioner, and his Operations Team facilitated by a Professor of Management, Dr. Zackrison.   The list of participants to this retreat, henceforth referred to as the Senior Management team, is included in Annex II. The commitments agreed upon by Senior Management team at the close of the retreat are listed below:

> *Agreement 1*:   Establish a structure for on-going environmental analysis and policy planning within DOP.
>
> *Agreement 2:*   Clarify functional roles and responsibilities within DOP, including cascading the role clarification process and list of agreed behaviours "downward" within each Bureau/Function.
>
> *Agreement 3:*   Develop specific operating principles and actions for better time, information and meeting management and see to it that they are enforced throughout DOP.
>
> *Agreement 4*:   Significantly improve accountability at all levels within DOP.
>
> *Agreement 5:*   Work with the Director of DHRM to discuss and resolve a number of human resources-related issues and concerns, including the Performance Appraisal Report (PAR) system, selection of Representatives, etc.
>
> *Agreement 6:*   Take a concrete, proactive stance to the formulation of the overall priorities for the future operations of UNHCR.
>
> *Agreement 7:*   Identify and support specific activities intended to improve co-ordination, co-operation, teamwork and effectiveness within the senior management team and between its individual members, within and between the units/functions represented on the senior management team, e.g., between Desks, between HQ and field operations, and between the support and operations sides of UNHCR.

Step III: UNHCR Audit Service and EPAU desk reviews accepted by Senior Management – January 2005

15.   On 12 January 2005 the Head of EPAU and the Chief of the UNHCR Audit Service met with the AHC and his Operations Team at the Department of Operations meeting to present the methodology of the planned Desk reviews. These initiatives were accepted by the Senior Operations Management Team and the AHC.

Step IV: Facilitated Reference Group discussion - February 2005

16.   A Reference Group comprising participants from all levels of the Bureaux, including a Representative from the Field, was formed to explore the current and

ideal roles of the Desks as a key linking pin between UNHCR-Headquaters and field operations. The complete list of Reference Group participants is included in Annex III.

17. The purpose of the Reference Group was to help participants to jointly elaborate their vision of a Desk that would serve the field optimally and build their commitment towards implementation. To help link the top-down commitment by management with a bottom-up participatory exercise by the Reference Group, the same facilitator for the Senior Management retreat was used to facilitate the discussions of the Reference Group. Hence, the commitments of the Senior Management team formed the "foundation" to build upon during the Reference Group discussions, and the recommendations resulting from the Reference Group discussions formed the foundation for management follow-up.

18. The final recommendations of the Reference Group and vision for the future of the Desk were delivered to the AHC, the Senior Operations Management Team, the Controller and the Chief of the UNHCR Audit Service at the closing session of the Reference Group on 25 February 2005.

Step V: Issuance of Recommendations from Audit Service Comparative review of the role of the Desk (May 2005) and EPAU Review (June 2006)

19. The UNHCR Audit Service and EPAU have produced separate but complementary reports. The EPAU review is intended for use as a resource to the follow-up process for implementing the recommendations of the Audit and the Reference Group. The final phase of the exercise is to monitor and co-ordinate the follow-up of recommendations pending implementation.

Step VI: Implementation of UNHCR HQ and field review-Special Director for Structural and Management Change 2006-2007

20. The Director for Structural and Management Change and his team appointed in February 2006 will facilitate implementation of recommended change initiatives on a rolling basis from autumn 2006 until 2007.

Process and approach

21. This review uses elements of "appreciative inquiry" as a capacity-building process that analyses the values of the organization and the culture in which it is embedded, its relationships and environment, with the aim of building on existing strengths, knowledge and best practice in UNHCR and field-based sister agencies. This is balanced with a practical examination of the historical challenges confronting UNHCR in order to optimize service to the field.

22. The review process was coordinated in parallel with the EPAU benchmarking of best practice system-wide and internally with the existing knowledge of the three oversight units in UNHCR.

Participatory approach

23.   The methodology adopted by this review aimed to encourage wide participation, hence allowing a variety of views and perceptions to be tabled. Furthermore, it ensured a comprehensive look at past recommendations, the experience of the participants and the addressing of new and current challenges in respect of an optimal vision of a performant Desk.

24.   The review builds upon participatory consultations with Desk and Field staff in dialogue with management via a Reference Group formed in 2005. The bottom-up approach was designed to provide legitimacy to the most fundamental operational leadership challenge confronting UNHCR today- namely, optimizing service to the field. The process was designed as a "bottom-up approach" complemented by a participatory exercise with representatives of the field, Programme Assistants, Desk Officers and representatives of servicing departments (February 24 and 25, 2005). By using a participatory process and appreciative inquiry, this review aims to elaborate an innovative approach that will link organizational learning to a change in practice.

Analysis of past reviews

25.   This report consolidates and builds on existing knowledge and oversight recommendations via a literature review of both internal and external studies conducted over the last twelve years. In particular, the report draws upon Desk Reviews of 1993, 1994 and 1999, two external reviews of the Joint Inspection Unit in 2004, the Mannet Review of the UNHCR HQ structure and the UNHCR Audit Service: Comparative Review of the Desk Function in 2005.

- Comparative Review of the Desk Function. 2005.

- UNHCR's Senior Management Structure, Final Report of the Independent Study. MANNET, Geneva. 2005.

- Review of Management and Administration of UNHCR. Joint Inspection Unit, JIU/REP/2004/4. Geneva. 2004.

- Review of the Desk (Structure and Roles) Some Observations in the Context of Restructuring. Inspector General's Office, Geneva. 1999.

- Report of the Working Group on the Role and Responsibilities of the Desk. UNHCR, Geneva. 1994.

- Report of the Working Group on Programme Management and Operational Capacity, Geneva. 1993.

26.   A comparison of the recommendations made by Desk reviews over the years showed that many of them were still valid. It is acknowledged that some of the recommendations could not be implemented either because the recommendations had become out-dated and impractical, or because they were too expensive, deemed to fall outside of UNHCR's mandate, or faced resistance as a result of UNHCR's organizational culture. The accountability and responsibility for implementing recommendations were left unclear, exacerbated by uneven buy-in by staff at all levels.

27.   The July 1993 Working Group on Programme Management and Operational Capacity[5] recommended a strategy to streamline the institutional tension between "Assistance" and "Protection". The 1994 Working Group on the Role of the Desk [6] proposed a new structure for the Desk, delegating more authority to the Field and simplifying and streamlining procedures to give the field more flexibility.

28.   In 1999, a Review of the Desk Function (Structure and Roles) by the Inspector General's Office highlighted that the 72 recommendations of the 1994 report remained unimplemented. Specifically, the division of labour and assignment of tasks had not been tackled, decisions on decentralization of Desks to the regions had not been taken, and Desks and Bureaux had not been structured in order to better carry policy and strategy formulation.

29.   At the request of UNHCR's donors at the Executive Committee in 2004, the Mannet Consulting Company was commissioned to review the UNHCR Headquarters structure. The Mannet review identified concrete ways to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of support and guidance provided by the Desk. External Reviews by the Joint Inspection Unit in 2004 and the Mannet Consulting Group in 2005 illustrated that little or nothing had changed.

30.   The UNHCR Audit Service Comparative Review of the Desk of 2005 outlined many of the same issues raised in previous reviews relating to the roles and structure of the Desk. The recommendations from the OIOS Desk review, which have yet to be implemented by UNHCR, together with issues raised at the Reference Group and other recurrent recommendations from previous reviews, have been integrated into the road map for implementation plan at the end of this report.

Benchmarking and best practice

31.   In order to build on existing knowledge and best practice within the UN system, EPAU explored best practice internal to UNHCR and that of its operational partners, who are also currently exploring ways of improving service to the field. Internal reviews are underway in Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP), International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to gauge whether the operations structure serves the field optimally.

32.   EPAU analyzed and benchmarked the parallel ongoing initiatives in sister agencies, (see matrix in Annex VI) of reviewing the role of the Desk, their arrangements for decentralization, bilateral co-operation agreements and streamlining and revision of existing procedures. The benchmarking exercise further

[5]   Eric Morris (Chairman), Janet Lim and Andrew Mayne (Rapporteurs), Robert Ashe, Amid Awad, Omar Bakhet, Amelia Bonifacio, Joel Boutroue, Ana Maria Canonica, Jean-Marie Fakhouri, John Horekens, Ann Howarth-Wiles, Irene Khan, Kai Neilsen, Guy Ouellet, Christiane Sartre, Claire Schubert, Andrew Sokiri, Anthony Salmon, Yvette Stevens, John Telford, Romani Urasa.

[6]   Amelia Bonifacio (Head of Working Group), Michael Alford, Peter Browne, Katy Cain, Anne Davies, Bemma Donkoh, Alejandro Henning, Frances Kavanagh, Mengesha Kebede, Andrew Mayne, Vedasto J. Mwesiga, Hugh O'Donnell, Martin Pinder.

elaborates on recent interagency structural trends. The findings of this exercise are elaborated from page 13 of this report.[7]

Reference Group

33.   To ensure consultation with key stakeholders in the process and enhance organizational ownership of proposed solutions, EPAU formed a Reference Group in February 2005, comprising participants from all levels of the Bureaux and a representative from the Field. One of the members of the 2005 Reference Group had participated in the 1994 Desk Review process, and thus provided a valuable source of institutional knowledge. The complete terms of reference, chronology for the process, and list of participants in the Reference Group are included in Annexes III, and IV.

34.   The main purposes of the Reference group were to:

- Facilitate dialogue with the auditors on the Reference Group's vision for the Role of the Desk, and provide an opportunity for the UNHCR Audit Service to present the findings of their Desk Review;

- Explore a variety of tools, intended to assist the Desks in their efforts to more effectively and efficiently fulfil their defined roles and responsibilities, i.e. to revise the profile of Desk Officers in relation to their hierarchy and other functional units, redraft job descriptions, develop guidance for Desk Officers, agree on optimal reporting models, adopt cross-cutting initiatives, etc.

- Examine, disseminate and replicate tools, best practices and lessons learned within UNHCR and sister agencies towards optimizing service to the field.

- Develop concrete recommendations to improve the nature and quality of support provided to and by the Desk, as well as co-ordination and communication between HQ and the field operations.

35.   Prior to the Reference Group Workshop, the facilitator for the Reference Group met with each of the Bureaux Directors individually to discuss their commitment to the process. The facilitator also "coached" UNHCR's Senior Management Team between November 2004 and February 2005, reinforcing formal senior management support for the process of the review and commitment to the implementation of recommendations. The commitments made at the end of the Senior Management retreat in November 2004 outlined on page 8 laid the foundation for the Reference Group exercise.

36.   The Reference Group met in February 2005 for a two day workshop, (see Annex V) where they elaborated on the vision of a Desk that would serve the Field optimally and built a commitment towards implementation. Participants shared their own experience, perceptions and expectations and explored the current and

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[7] UNHCR would like to thank its partners, who shared their own successes and challenges in a transparent fashion. In particular, we would like to thank Thomas Eriksson from UNDP, Lisa Doughten, Neeru Singh and Francesco Strippoli from WFP, Catherine Deman and Christoph Luedi from ICRC, Martin Faller of IFRC, Denise Wilman and Judy Hylton of DPKO and Gary Stahl and Jean Quesnel of UNICEF.

ideal roles of the Desks as a key linking pin between UNHCR-HQ and field operations.

37.   The final recommendations of the Reference Group, the vision for the future of the Desk, and the road map for implementation were delivered to the AHC and the Senior Management Team at the end of February 2005. The AHC, the Senior Management Team, the Controller, the Chief of UNHCR's Audit Service and the audit team convened for the final session to discuss the next steps with the Reference Group.

Main findings

Current state of the desk

38.   Initial discussions of the Reference Group involved reflections on the current state of the Desk and its roles and responsibilities. The group described the Desk as a 'microcosm' of HQ, serving as an entry gate to the field. The Desk was further seen as an interface, translating the needs of the field to HQ, and disseminating policies and guidelines.

39.   While Reference Group participants identified capacitation, co-ordination and support of the strategic vision for the organization as the essential functions of the Desk, it was noted that at present, too much time is currently spent by Desk Officers dealing with what was referred to as "clutter". The current role of the Desk was described as analogous to that of a repository for tasks not dealt with by anyone else.

40.   The primary reasons for the current amount of clutter identified by the Reference Group included the paucity of job descriptions and terms of reference, poor, ignored and/or inadequate procedures, inadequate planning and prioritisation, and inadequate or conflicting policies. It was acknowledged that clutter will exist even in the best scenario, due to the inherent positioning of the Desk as the focal point of demands and expectations from HQ, the field, donors, other agencies, etc.

External benchmarking

41.   As part of this review, EPAU contacted a number of operational partner agencies to gauge trends in operational structures towards decentralization, in order to learn from the best practice in the humanitarian field.[8]

World Food Programme (WFP)

42.   WFP has undertaken several decentralization initiatives since 1996 to strengthen its country offices. The purposes of doing so were to improve communications to move away from a culture of control and to improve efficiency. Initially, the process was hampered by the lack of common information systems at HQ and in the Field, which was addressed by the implementation and roll-out of SAP (IBM) integrated software in 2001. Also, the organization had to find the right level of decision-making authority to be delegated to the Regional Bureaux, as well as clearly define the decision chain between HQ and the Field.

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[8] Information presented in this section was drawn from the unpublished findings of an analysis of leading decentralized organizations by Boston Consulting Group as part of an evaluation review conducted for WFP in December 2004.

43.   The WFP Evaluation Report[9] of June 2003 characterized decentralization in WFP as a "management philosophy" to be improved upon, as opposed to an initiative. More recently, the WFP's Operations Review[10] of April 2005 explored whether the Field had sufficient capacity to use its authority effectively within current structures and funding parameters. Decentralization has helped to shift the centre of gravity for the delegation of authority and operational control from HQ to Country Offices. WFP cited its internal challenges as:

- A perceived reduced presence of the operational/field view in HQ decisions;

- A top-down, inefficient information exchange between the field and HQ is not practical for implementation in the field;

- A plethora of new, uncoordinated initiatives and top-down guidance that emanate from various units within HQ. Moreover, increased new responsibilities in the field have not been matched by increased resources;

- Budgetary and programmatic capacitation is optimal; however, roles and responsibilities between the regional offices and country offices remain unclear and technical support needs to be tailored specifically to each office.

44.   WFP will further refine its decentralization processes by:

- Creating a Corporate Governance system to improve communication;

- Appointing a Change Manager to coordinate and integrate initiatives;

- Restructuring the Regional Offices to address Country Office needs;

- Clarifying roles and responsibilities, procedures and guidance for operations and including new job descriptions;

- Streamlining corporate baseline and reporting requirements;

- Introducing a major training initiative for all staff.

The following were identified as the value-added roles of the Desk (Corporate Centre):

- Defines corporate direction;

- Establishes policies and processes for the organization;

- Allocates resources across the enterprise;

- Manages the corporate portfolio: manages partnerships;

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[9] Full Report of the Review of WFP's Decentralization Initiative (May –June 2003) WFP Office of Evaluation. Rome, September 2003.
[10] Report on the Findings of the Operations Review. WFP Operations Review Team, April 2005.

- Enhances business units' performance: stretch targets, challenge, review performance, coach and motivate;

- Leverages the network: facilitate knowledge-sharing/develop shared services;

- Systematically develops leadership talent;

- Acts as a catalyst for change;

- Maintains basic essential corporate functions·

Benefits for the field

- *Efficiency*: faster processes, less time dealing with corporate requests (HQ is less control-oriented);

- *Leverage*: corporate support for business-building initiatives and programmes;

- *Synergy*: better competence.

Benefits for the desk

- *Efficiency*: reduced direct costs, higher portion of value-added time;

- *Impact*: better targeted intervention, more tangible and measurable results;

- *Motivation*: more productive relationship with the Field.

Successes

- Profile of the people in the Desk:

    - High seniority and significant field experience;

    - Ability to drive change programmes;

    - Functional expertise;

    - Credibility with line managers;

    - Multi-functional approach.

- Processes at the Desk should be slimmed down to the basics.

- Human Resources should have an active role in developing leadership across the organisation.

United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF)

45. UNICEF has decentralized its Regional Bureaux to the Field, leaving only regional liaison functions at HQ. This move was accompanied by a decision to transfer to the Field a substantial amount of decision-making authority and accountability linked to planning and implementation of programmes and

administrative issues, thus reducing the direct involvement of HQ units in managing and supporting field operations. As a result, the role of Headquarters became more normative and strategic. The main reasons given for these decisions were the need to be closer to the Field to provide speedier and more relevant response and decision-making capacities, and to improve the quality of programmes and operational support.

46. UNICEF has seven Regional Offices in the Field, and one Office covering EU countries, each of them covering 15 to 35 countries. These Regional Offices are responsible for providing support to Field Offices in technical, programmatic, budgetary, oversight and administrative issues. They are not involved in implementing programmes in the Field. There are also a few remaining Area Offices which are responsible for serving more than one country. They implement programmes in the Field and may also, in some cases, complement the work of Regional Offices by providing technical support and advice to Country Offices in their respective geographical areas. The roles of Country and Sub-Offices working under them have been clearly defined and, as a result of this, the key responsibilities of all of the actors at HQ and in the Field are clear. This is seen as a key to the success of the decentralization exercise. The respective accountabilities are outlined in detail in an Executive Board paper adopted in 1998.

47. Only in rare or very exceptional cases is a staff member sent to the Field to cover a different area from the Office in which he/she is based. If this happens, the staff member is managed by the relevant HQ functional unit and his/her costs are covered from that unit's budget.

48. To ensure effective co-ordination and regular information sharing at the Field level, Regional Management Teams, consisting of the Regional Director and UNICEF Representatives in the region in question, meet regularly. At the HQ the Regional Directors are members of the Global Management Team led by the Executive Director of the Organization.

49. UNICEF has set up a Regional Bureaux structure that effectively manages to support Country Offices and oversee their operations. The roles are divided up as follows:

- Country Offices: operational management

- Regional Bureau: support and oversight of Country Offices

- HQ: global strategic objectives, policy and guidelines

50. UNICEF has a three-year corporate strategic plan which sets the overall direction and broad priorities for the organization (1998-2001, 2002-2005, 2006-2009). To facilitate communication across the organization, UNICEF has successfully created a corporate model:

- Country Management Team (CMT): recommends decisions to "Representatives" who meet about six times a year, includes all senior Country Office staff and a staff representative from the Office;

- Regional Management Team (RMT): recommends regional decisions, makes peer reviews of Country Office programmes, meets about three times a year with all Country Directors and Regional Directors and a staff representative from the region;

- Global Management Team (GMT): sets organizational priorities and policy decisions, meets three times a year, includes all Regional Directors and HQ Divisional Directors as well as the Deputy Executive Directors and Executive Directors;

- HQ (New York) Management Team: coordinates across HQ Divisions.

51. This model helps ensure that Country Offices' needs are captured and addressed by the regional offices and HQ through a structured process. It makes strategic decisions relevant to the Field, receives inputs from the Field for strategy formulation (GMT), promotes best practice sharing, and RMT/GMTs allow for cross-fertilization of ideas across countries and regions.

52. To introduce and ensure the decentralization process in its first few years, the UNICEF Executive Director appointed a Change Management Team which reported directly to her with direct access to key people in the organization (Country Representatives, Regional Directors, Deputy Executive Directors). The change management unit was disbanded after a few years once the reforms had taken hold and the management teams at various levels were seen to be running well.

UN Development Programme (UNDP)

53. Decentralization in UNDP is not a new strategy. In fact it has been an ongoing process since the 1980s and throughout the 1990s where delegation of authority was decentralised to a large extent to its country offices. This decentralisation was focused on enabling UNDP country offices to plan and manage a country programme locally within a defined accountability framework. It covered the entire programme cycle from setting priorities to designing individual projects, as well as the various management processes involved in the programme and project life cycle. Further, some central services, such as the audit function and IT support functions, were regionalised to some extent and there was an effort in decentralising development policy advisory services to sub-regional facilities (SURFs).

54. In the current Multi Year Funding Framework 2004-7 (as per the medium term strategy paper approved by the Executive Board), further regionalisation was introduced as a means to improve efficiency and performance by building regional support facilities, gradually creating a critical mass of advisory, programme and operational capacity closer to country offices to enhance country office capacities. The regional centres are under the oversight of the regional bureaux with matrix management arrangements with central services units (such as the Bureaux responsible for management, development policy, resource mobilisation etc).

55. In 2004, regional centres were established in Bangkok, Bratislava, Colombo and Johannesburg - in the coming biennium similar centres will be established covering other geographical regions. The regional centres bring together policy advisory services within the development practices, regional programme

management functions, and management and operational support services to enhance capacity and performance of country offices. The regional centres are currently staffed with some 50-100 staff members per centre. The consolidation of capacity into regional centres is integral to the wider UN reform agenda, according to which the period 2006-7 should see the alignment of the technical support structures and the coverage of the regional bureaux among the UN agencies. Strengthening UNDP's regional capacity will enable country offices and programme countries to access the capacities of UNDP in a timelier and more efficient fashion and on a demand-driven basis. This regionalization process is ongoing and will further enhance decentralization of functions and services to the regions, such as additional management and oversight functions.

56.   Over the past 15 years, UNDP has decentralized and delegated significant authority for a number of support functions (such as human resources, administration, finance, procurement) from HQ to the Country Offices. In addition, during the last biennium, some transactional services, such as payroll and Human Resources administration, were re-located to global service centres. This approach will continue in 2006-7 when further services will be identified for re-location.

57.   The long-term objective is an organization characterized by a core strategic presence at headquarters with a number of regional centres providing support to country offices; and global shared service centres handling more transactional work. Overall, the goal is a more rationalized division of responsibilities between country offices and regional/corporate levels, focusing country offices on development work and clustering operational support. UNDP intends to keep a strong regional representation at HQ, even if certain functions will continue to be moved to the Field.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

58.   ICRC is an alternative decentralised organisation that manages to be flexible and receptive to requests from the field. Its Corporate Culture is historically bottom - up/consultative and is highly sensitive to signals coming from the field. Autonomy is given to field delegations with financial flexibility within an approved budget (Cadre de Fonctionnement) framework. Besides providing the necessary means to the fields, the Role of HQ is limited to guidance and quality control of field operations, review and approval of field proposals and decisions on non-day-to-day operational matters (e.g. HR/extra-budgetary requests).

59.   Within ICRC the Operations Department (OD) is the principal interface between HQs and field delegations. It is responsible for communication between the two and for orienting and coordinating the Headquarters support to the field.

60.   Delegations are regrouped in ten geographic regions. At the Headquarters, each region is managed by a head of region, assisted by 2 deputies and a Regional Co-ordination Team that consists of representatives of the other departments with specialized knowledge and skills, who are permanently assigned to the team. They have an advisory and quality control role, with no decision- making power. The regions are regrouped in 4 large geographic zones headed by a delegate-general, who is directly supervised by the Director of Operations.

United Nations Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO)

61.   DPKO is partly decentralized in that it has devolved responsibility and authority to the field in terms of personnel and financial authority. The DPKO Office of Mission Support (OMS) is responsible for furnishing strategic, policy and political advice to missions under the overall authority of the USG for DPKO. Day-to-day management is devolved to the field and is overseen by the Office of Operations (OO), in tandem with the Civilian Police Division and the Military Division.

62.   For DPKO, an integrated mission is the central philosophy and the instrument through which the UN manages post-conflict situations requiring a system-wide response, through subsuming actors and approaches within an overall political crisis management framework.[11]   Operational planning for integrated missions must be based on clearly defined strategic policies encompassing only what needs to be integrated.

63.   The integrated mission is characterized, firstly, by a clear purpose for UN engagement and clear chains of accountability to the Representative of the S-G; secondly, by effective internal and external communications, the ability to capacitate the Field with resources (including monitoring capacity), and the authority to adjust operational objectives; and thirdly, by the ability to coordinate and mobilize a UN system response to the integrated planning process.

Implications for UNHCR

64.   Whilst UNHCR can learn important structural and managerial lessons from its partner agencies, it is important to take into account the differing organizational challenges of the agencies considered, as well as their organizational histories and projected movements, when attempting to transfer these best practices into the context of UNHCR.

65.   UNHCR can follow other agencies in adapting its operational and managerial structures to the changing humanitarian and political climate with careful reference to its mandate and organizational goals. The examples and best practices outlined in this report are aimed at providing possible models and inspiration for a strategic plan for change at UNHCR; they are not suggested as solutions to the unique challenges of the organization.

Key opportunities for improvement

66.   An analysis of previous reviews together with discussions with the Reference Group revealed some key opportunities for improvement of the structure and roles of the Desk.

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[11] Eide, Kaspersen, Kent and von Hipple, Report of Integrated Missions: Practical Perspectives and Recommendations. May 2005. p. 3

Roles and responsibilities of Bureaux and support divisions

67.   The need for clear division of labour and roles and responsibilities has been reiterated in Desk reviews of 1994, 1999, and again in 2005 by the Mannet report and the Audit Service report as well as by the Reference Group. The absence of a clear distinction in roles and responsibilities among Bureaux and support divisions has resulted in multiple decision-makers and action-takers at HQ. This often leads to inaction, due to the assumption that someone else is responsible.

68.   The Mannet Consulting review of 2005 revealed that UNHCR procedures were overly cumbersome and time-consuming and characterized by convoluted paths. Furthermore, the multiple layers of checking and control which exist often result in duplication and inefficiency. The need for improved performance management and accountability at UNHCR was also cited by Mannet. The 2005 Audit further elaborated that roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined, if staff is to be held accountable for them.   The Reference Group from 1994 proposed the establishment of means of enforcement of accountability through sanctions and rewards which is yet to be implemented.

Roles and responsibilities of desks

69.   Reviews and discussions of the Reference Group expressed the urgent need for clarification of the control and support roles of the Desk in relation to the authority in the Field. Furthermore, there is a need for a clearer understanding of the role of the Desk in introducing and implementing policy and strategy, including new UNHCR initiatives, e.g. the mainstreaming of age, gender and diversity, security, environment and HIV/AIDS. Such initiatives are placing an unnecessary burden on the Desks, while commitment by management to these issues appears contradictory.

70.   Discussions among the Reference Group reiterated that the Desks are at saturation point and need to focus on specifics, what was referred to as "back to basics" or returning to the core function of the Desk. With the increasing reporting burden on the field, it was agreed that the ethos of the Bureaux should be shielding the field from non-essential issues.   These recommendations had been made in previous reviews of 1994 and 1999 and as well as the latest 2005 Audit Service eport.

71.   The 1994 Reference Group proposed that Desks must act as proactive, results-oriented facilitators, intervening as necessary on matters of support and control, not in details of implementation. Desks should concentrate on management and support and leave control and administration for functional units. Furthermore, Desks must seek to restructure by pooling certain functions in other Bureaux - 'doing more with less'.

72.   The IGO review of 1999 recommended to maintain a Desk structure at HQ within regional Bureau level that acts as focal point for the region and carries out 'core functions', namely:

- Assistance to Directors in the formulation of policies and operational strategies for the region;

- Dissemination of information;

- Coordination, liaison and advocacy.

Decentralization

73.   Since 1994 the Report of the Working Group on the Role and Responsibilities of the Desk and succeeding Desk reviews have argued for empowerment of the Field with minimal Desk involvement. The recommendations of the 1994 Working Group toward this end included redefining the role of the Desk to strengthen its macro-managerial role by transferring more micro-managerial or detail functions to the Field or HQ functional units. In line with decentralization efforts, the Reference Group proposed that training be conducted in the field to raise competency levels in international protection.

74.   The 1999 Review of the Desk also supported decentralization of Desk functions, recommending that authority be delegated to the field in areas of financial management and personnel administration. However, it prescribed a more case-by-case approach, advising that the decision to decentralise Desk functions should be based on whether such a move adds value to operations in the region. The review further recommended conducting evaluations and compile lessons learned of the decentralization of management structure in Europe and Caswaname.

75.   More recent reviews have continued to emphasize the need for field interface and processes to be geared towards field realities, and not to HQ. The Mannet Consulting review addressed the widening gap between HQ and the field, proposing that greater efforts be made by UNHCR towards ensuring that HQ is more oriented towards the field. The review recommended the decentralization of planning and resource allocation decisions, and ensuring that field input into policy-making is sufficiently recognised. These adjustments would help ensure that beneficiary needs are incorporated into programming and improve ownership of new initiatives.

Roles and responsibilities of desk personnel

76.   Past reviews of the Desk have repeatedly revealed the lack of clarity in the definition of the roles and responsibilities of Desk personnel and reporting lines in internal UNHCR guidance. The current job descriptions of Desk personnel and support staff were considered to be too vague to establish clear lines of accountability, and were usually characterized by a mix of managerial responsibilities inappropriately intertwined with support and control functions.

77.   Furthermore, it was noted that job descriptions were not clearly explained in various UNHCR manuals, causing confusion among staff. For example, Chapters 2 and 7 of the UNHCR Manual[12] are not clear on roles and responsibilities of Desk personnel in relation to other functions. In addition, a close examination revealed inconsistencies among iterations of roles and responsibilities within the UNHCR Manual.

78.   Ensuring that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined would help avoid duplication of work and ensure accountability at the organizational level. In

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[12] The UNHCR Manual is an operations manual which governs the organizational relationships within the HQ and between HQ and the Field.

particular, UNHCR would benefit from further clarification of division of roles and responsibilities for the following posts, which are seen to have complementary roles and responsibilities:

- Directors and Heads of Desks;

- Regional Legal Advisers (RLAs) and Heads of Desks;

- Senior Legal Advisers (SLAs) and RLAs;

- Desk Officers and Senior Desk Officers;

- Senior Resource Managers.

Delegation of authority

79.	A series of reviews of UNHCR's organizational structure have identified the potential benefits of increased delegation and assumption of authority in avoiding unnecessary micro-management and control of decision-making. In 2005, Mannet Consulting recommended that Representatives and line managers should receive adequate authority. In particular, it was proposed that:

- The Bureaux and Regional Directors and the field should have line management responsibility and decision-making authority for the management and delivery of operations.

- Staff deployment could be made more efficient by allowing key issues to be left to the managers' discretion.

80.	These recommendations provide opportunities for the improvement of the efficiency of key organizational processes by making them less cumbersome, as well as enhancing accountability at all levels of the organization.

Desk officer competencies

81.	All Desk reviews since 1994 without exception have asserted that formal training for Desk personnel at UNHCR is highly inadequate, compromising the quality of service provided to the Field. In the absence of formal staff development opportunities for Desk personnel, the onus for training provision has often fallen on assistants. In 2005, the Audit of the Desk function found that Programme Assistants often had to provide on-the-job training to new Desk staff (in one case estimated at 20 to 30 per cent of their time) and participants of the Reference Group shared similar experiences. The Audit of the Desk function further noted that Desk Officers lacked sufficient knowledge about their geographical regions, and did not undertake adequate visits to the field locations they serve.

82.	Some opportunities for improving Desk Officer competencies which have been identified by Desk reviews and the Reference group include:

- Re-evaluating the profile and qualifications of Desk Officers, consistent with new demands;

- Gradually implementing structural change and decentralization efforts to ensure that all members of the team have means to carry out agreed tasks;

- Conducting a structured orientation programme for new Desk staff;

- Providing training for Desk personnel in all areas;

- Requiring more travel and missions for Desk staff to familiarise personnel with realities in the geographic area they are covering.

Information and reporting

83.   The installation of LAN/E-mail systems in the mid-90s has resulted in the Desk becoming the gateway for information. At the same time, this development has made Desks increasingly burdened by excessive requests for information and reporting requirements. Reviews from 1994 and 1999 have recommended taking steps towards the simplification and rationalization of procedures and addressing the undisciplined use of this e-mail system. The 1999 report recommended the introduction of a user-friendly information and communication system to provide up-to-date information on operational objectives and latest developments in the field.

84.   The Mannet report examined the current reporting burden at UNHCR, and determined that it is not sustainable. The report proposed that immediate measures be taken to alleviate the current reporting burden, by significantly reducing the number of requests directed to the field from HQ. Considering the volume of information, some system needs to be introduced to enable Desk staff to prioritise requests and work commitments.

85.   Previous Desk reviews have made recommendations for strengthening the control, monitoring and evaluation function of the Desks, in order to ensure that field performance is systematically measured against target performance indicators. The 1999 Desk review recommended that staff assigned to the Desk must have relevant skills in analysing and presenting information for dissemination.   While MSRP and RBM roll-out could eventually reduce the current Desk burden by alleviating manual controls and checks, Desk Officers will have to build their capacity to conduct programme evaluations, as this function is being decentralized at UNHCR.

Planning and foresight

86.   UNHCR is often said to operate in 'fire-fighting' mode, a reactive approach characterized by lack of planning and foresight.

87.   The 2005 Audit of the Desk function observed that actual workflow and procedures differ from what is described in UNHCR guidance (e.g. with respect to tracking of sub-project agreements, monitoring of obligation plans, and receipt and tracking of SPMRs). The review also found Desk structures to be inconsistent with workload indicators, with no clear correlation between operations budgets/expenditure, persons of concern and staffing levels of the Desk.

88.   Staffing for operations was also found to be unnecessarily burdensome and could benefit from more support from DHRM. Factors determining need for change,

selection of structural model and typical staffing structures for each model have not been clearly defined.

89.   The 2005 Audit recommended that Desks and Bureaux be structured in such a way that they can carry out policy and strategy formulation effectively and be given means and flexibility to reallocate resources and structurally adapt to change. Specific opportunities for improved Desk performance in this area as identified by the audit and other views include:

- Investing in preventive action to avoid the need for curative/corrective action;

- Engaging in more foresight, long-term planning and priority setting: e.g. arranging strategic planning workshops at sub-regional/country levels;

- More clearly defining resource allocation processes and all procedures;

- Developing an adequate workforce strategic plan;

- Improving the consistency of policy-making processes and ensuring one source for policy guidance.

Achieving change

90.   Implementing such proposed improvements in policy and practice and incorporating identified best practice into UNHCR programming have proven to be difficult, in part due to the widespread scepticism about change across the organization. New initiatives are often viewed as extra work by the already overburdened Desks and functional units, and are not always justified or coordinated.

91.   It has been acknowledged by the Reference Group that UNHCR has the capacity to implement change and most individuals perceive the need to do so. A number of key elements in achieving successful change include the following:

- Strategic direction and the commitment to follow through from management: building a shared vision for UNHCR operations and communicating it throughout the organization;

- Ensuring ownership of strategy through consultations with all key stakeholders;

- Establishing clear accountability and responsibility for implementation;

- Allocating sufficient staff time and resources to change initiative;

- Improving coordination among initiatives.

Recommendations

Vision for the desk

92.   A common strategy or vision for UNHCR operations should be shared throughout the organization.   In seeking the optimal design for the Desk, it is important to ensure that "form follows function" by communicating an organizational strategy for operations, then developing a Desk structure to follow.

93.   This review, which is based on an examination of existing literature, a benchmarking exercise and the findings of the Reference Group, recommends that the Desk be placed at the centre of UNHCR operations, thereby ensuring a single, integrated support function serving the field. The role of the Desk should be primarily that of capacitation, co-ordination and support of the strategic vision for the organization. The Desk would be the core structure at HQ around which all other functions are organized to support it in its task of enabling the field to deliver international protection and durable solutions to refugees, IDPs and other persons of concern.

94.   The Desk was further envisioned as being the single interlocutor at HQ for the Representative and staff in the field with full authority delegated to the Head of Desk, thereby shifting the current burden from Directors of Bureaux to Heads of Desks. This would flatten the hierarchical structure and facilitate information flow.

95.   The following chart lists functions reflecting the key roles and responsibilities of the Desk which would serve the field optimally, and the means made available to put this into day-to-day practice. The success of this vision is conditional on the strategic operational direction being effectively communicated:

The "Vision" for the ideal structure and roles of the desk

FIELD	**CAPACITATION** Managing the establishment of new field operations with a strategic vision and a desired outcome; Ensuring that on-going field operations are adequately and appropriately resourced; Ensuring that field staff are provided with appropriate support in the form of training, teambuilding, guidance/advice, encouragement, etc. **COORDINATION** Ensuring the effective co-ordination of field-based functions within the area covered by the Desk; Ensuring prompt, appropriate response and follow-up to requests from the field; Serving as the linking pin between the variety of prioritised groups with a perceived "stake" in the nature and effectiveness of field operations, e.g., HQ, donors, host governments, etc. **POLICY FORMULATION** Supporting and, where appropriate, facilitating strategic planning at the field level; Ensuring the field's appropriate involvement in and sense of ownership of policy formulation at all levels; Ensuring effective dissemination of policy and guidance, both vertically and horizontally. **MONITORING AND EVALUATION** Ensuring that policies and procedures are appropriately implemented and followed within the Desk's area of responsibility; Ensuring proper control of established budgets; Performing quality assurance; Ensuring the proper allocation and utilisation of field resources; Providing performance feedback to field Representatives (Desk and Bureau Directors).	**HEADQUARTERS**

Compatibility of the vision with on-going change initiatives

96.   Results Based Management and the Management Renewal Systems Project will significantly affect the ways in which Desk personnel have to manage the various processes involved in performing the above functions.

RBM – Results-based management

97.	Comprehensive planning and sufficient resourcing are central to the capacitation of the Desk function and necessary to optimize service to the field. The Deputy Representative in Sierra Leone profiled his own RBM system as a future model for UNHCR, explaining the role of RBM, planning results against expected results in a clear, consistent and concise fashion and, within a budget, noting that RBM is essentially measuring and monitoring. Thus the value added by RBM is that the data are recorded only once and effort is kept to a minimum.

MSRP - Management Renewal Systems Project

98.	The Reference Group discussed with the MSRP team the following changes that MSRP would bring about to alleviate the current Desk burden:

- Real time system will minimise the current Desk burden

    - HQ and field locations see the same information at the same time. Reports will be consolidated and contain information regarding details of all field transactions.

- Ease of procurement

    - Requisitions will be placed directly by the field with HQ/SMS. As a real-time Asset Track system will exist in the system, this will ease inventory bureaucracy.

- Facilitate budgeting & finance

    - Budget submissions will be entered directly into the system, thereby eliminating current reporting requirements (situation reports and notional vouchers). Additionally, reporting should be eased by sub-agreement monitoring, audit and closing functionality.

- HQ payables will bypass the Desk

    - Since vouchers approved in the field can be routed direct to Treasury to make payment through any UNHCR bank, Desk and Finance will no longer be involved. Capacity will exist to track in-kind donations, thereby allowing expenditures to be charged automatically and directly against a contribution.

Good practice recommendations from sister agencies

99.	The following recommendations for optimizing service to the Field were informed by good practices collected from sister agencies through the external benchmarking exercise.

Form must follow function: intra-agency and inter-agency

100.	The future operations/Desk structure should be determined by the strategic vision for UNHCR operations, its objectives, and the activities necessary to achieve the agency and UN system objectives, which should then determine the optimal structure. As the strategies are different in each geographical region, it is foreseeable

that structures will vary across regions and country operations. Moreover, as the UN trend is towards synchronization between UN agencies, integrated planning of missions and interagency collaboration must be incorporated into the vision for the future Desk structure.

101. Stock must be taken of the operational environment in the field, the new interagency responsibilities generated by donor approaches at country level, and new responsibilities of UN reform such as coalition and sector approaches. Moreover, the tendency of various sister UN agencies and bilateral partners not to be transparent with their own agency strategies hinders overall coordination. More individual agency transparency is central to overall interagency coordination.

Information architecture should reflect the way the field work i.e. be field focused and bottom-up

102. Effective communication requires that information and guidance should flow horizontally and vertically as opposed to hierarchically and ideally be balanced with management accountability. Excessive top-down communication has been successfully addressed by UNICEF, and ICRC has put in place bottom-up management structures to allow the field to be the driving force in setting the operational agenda. WFP is considering further refining its structure to adopt the same three-level structure, comprising a country-level management team, a regional management team and a corporate management team which meet three times annually on matters related to policy, strategy and operations. Horizontal management structures and decentralized decision making ultimately empower the field and encourage teamwork. User-friendly knowledge management systems which provide information to staff about how to do their jobs better are among the solutions that optimize service. Such systems are heavily reliant on internet connectivity.

Change managers to coordinate and integrate initiatives

103. Change managers have worked successfully in UNICEF, ICRC and WFP to mainstream new initiatives and recalibrate priorities such as age and gender mainstreaming and HIV/AIDS initiatives.

Bilateral collaboration agreements

104. The emergence of bilateral partnerships across the system is noteworthy. Continued interaction with UN and sister agencies and the development of proactive partnerships such as the bilateral collaboration agreements between DPKO/UNHCR and WFP/ICRC combine the relative strengths of respective agencies.

105. The bilateral WFP/ICRC collaboration to optimize service by deepening co-operation between the two organizations was obtained by way of an MOU, outlining the following modus operandi of collaboration:

- Regular meetings to discuss opportunities for further collaboration;

- Exchange of technical contact points;

- Staff exchange initiative;

- Contacts between WFP field offices and delegations of the International Federation;

- Support for activities which build national capacity and enable that capacity to play a full part in this co-operation, including through the possible development of a WFP field-level agreement specific for national societies.

106.   Moreover, DPKO operations work bilaterally. There are already several African and European forces working either with UN authorization but not under UN authority (Kosovo, Afghanistan, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire) and DPKO works with those organizations to either increase the command/control and/or operational abilities of Administrative Units, and with EU, to ensure that inter-operability is enhanced, and there are joint crisis procedures in development.

Cross-cutting initiatives between geographical regions

107.   ICRC has systematically introduced cross-cutting initiatives and knowledge-sharing practices between geographic Desks and regions. UNICEF, WFP and UNHCR take ad hoc cross-cutting initiatives but not systematically. Intra-agency learning across geographical Bureaux should be facilitated wherever possible.

The global staff survey – a practical tool to improve management addressing staff concerns

108.   UNICEF in 1997, UNDP in mid-1999 and WFP in 2004 launched annual staff surveys at the country and unit-by-unit level. This involved a number of questionnaires on various aspects of their work as evaluated by all the staff. This ranges from management in a specific office to management at HQ. Using these surveys, they have been able to rigorously track the progress they have made in improving management of the office and also to identify existing problems. Managers across the organizations are asked to hold staff meetings to discuss the survey results and to follow up on areas where the office/unit data show room for improvement. The survey also generates constructive discussions among the staff on various problem areas in the work unit or at HQ level. Managers are encouraged to develop an action plan for each year to reflect the outcome of these discussions. They then use this to identify management problems and to try to address them. The survey is only one management tool to catalyze a change in the culture and further empower staff.

Responding to change – the quest to improve productivity and quality and engage in continuous learning

109. Efforts towards optimizing service should recognize that the evolving humanitarian challenges present a constant "change environment" in terms of changing circumstances and ideologies. Attempts to build a "real culture of planning" and become more proactive and strategic in their operations are ongoing in DPKO, UNICEF, ICRC and WFP. Private sector benchmarking has established that the most important trait of successful businesses is a proactive positive relationship

to change and a continuous dynamic process of strategy making. The most effective organizations have recognized that mistakes will always be made and a collective process of learning from them is crucial, as only then can strategic choices be made from a position of strength. Charles Darwin said "It is not the strongest species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the ones most responsive to change."

Summary of recommendations

110. Many of the recommendations made by this review correspond to recommendations made in previous documents such as the 2004 Joint Inspection Unit Review of Management and Administration in UNHCR and the 2005 Comparative Review of the Desk. When that is the case, cross-references have been provided.

"Back To Basics"- Define Core Functions

- Clarify the core functions of the Desk, define complementary roles and responsibilities within Bureaux, and further empower the Field.

Develop a strategic field focused vision and communicate it throughout the Organization (Action HC & SMC) [JIU Recommendation No. 5]

- A more proactive role with regard to strategy and planning of operations is needed, and effective communication to the staff of that vision;

- A future strategy must include more transparency, coherent planning and communication of that vision from Senior Management; this change is critical in order to catalyse attitude changes in staff so that they can envision their future roles;

- Ownership/willingness to change is central;

- Roles and responsibilities of the Desk will depend on the comprehension *by all staff members of HQ* of the vision for the future;

- Concrete strategies should be identified that can be applied within UNHCR to improve the ability of the Desks to fulfil their defined roles and responsibilities.

Review current UNHCR architecture and structure pertaining to decentralization and develop a model for the Desk (Action: SMC)

- Discuss the pros and cons of further decentralization, (the consequences of decentralization vis-à-vis resources, structures, policy etc.);

- Consider adopting a less hierarchical and more horizontal structure, e.g. that of the Asia and Europe Bureaux, to be used across all Bureaux;

- Develop a model for Desks during an emergency (in emergencies, it was agreed that responsibility should stay with the Desk);

- Develop a model for Desks in protracted situations, with special procedures outlined;

- Discuss proposed structural changes with EXCOM and donors.

Develop and apply a clear distribution of functions and clear lines of authority by defining Roles and Responsibilities of Desk personnel (Action: SMC/ODMS) [JIU Recommendation No.2] [Audit Service Recommendation No.1]

- The Desk should be made the single interlocutor at HQ and for the Representative and staff in the field;

- Clarify roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis Desk, support functions and Bureaux;

- Clarify roles and responsibilities of the Desk personnel and reporting lines in internal UNHCR guidance

- Review terms of reference for Desk personnel, making the Head of Desk the senior responsible officer with full authority as a counterpart to the Representative in the field. Delegating full authority to the Head of Desk will shift the current burden from Directors of Bureaux to Heads of Desks, flatten the hierarchical structure facilitating information flow;

- Heads of Desk and Directors should coordinate regional strategy and manage Bureau-wide initiatives as well as inter-Bureau activities such as resource distribution and coordination and in conjunction with UNHCR global strategy;

- Heads of Desk should be subject to rigorous selection based on leadership, communication and management skills, hold a comparable grade to a Representative, and meet Representatives twice per year;

- Revise the relations between support units at UNHCR (e.g. Budget, DOS, DHRM, Finance etc.);

- Clarify responsibilities in the areas of procurement and donor relations.

Streamline and simplify processes, develop a system of Accountability and Workload/Benchmarks Indicators (Action: SMC/ODMS) [Audit Service Recommendation No 2 & No 6]

- Establish clear objectives and indicators to measure performance;

- Perform detailed surveys and analysis;

- Systematically monitor performance.

Provide training in all Functions (Action: SDS) [Audit Service Recommendation No 3]

- Provide access to more training and capacity-building opportunities in every aspect of the Desk function i.e. Protection, Programme, Budget, Finance, Procurement and Human Resources Management.

Streamline Reporting as per the recommendations of the 2005 HQ working group on reporting (Action: PECOS, DHRM & EPAU)

- Provide staff training on effective report writing;

- Review standard reports to determine their added value, and either streamline or abolish if not needed;

- Review the calendar for reporting; switch to biannual budget cycle;

- Create a link between standard reports and COPs, standard and indicators, etc.;

- Reference Group Vision should move toward a web-based real-time system;

- Create a Reports Officer position in the Bureaux with the responsibility to coordinate reporting initiatives.

Revise and simplify procedures, i.e. resource allocation and implement the findings of the 2005 Working Group on Resource Allocation (Action: SMC/ODMS, PECOS.)

- Reduce steps and simplify procedures; timely issuing of LOIs – which currently take longer with MSRP- should be addressed; provide clear guidance on the resource allocation process; consider reverting to a structure with a unit with responsibility for resource allocation as similar to the former Programme Coordination and Budget Section (PCBS);

- Examine online access to project expenditure for donors.

Develop results-based management approach and ensure consistency with MSRP (Action: ODMS) [JIU Recommendation No 4]

- Desk functions should be refocused on core responsibilities, aligning plans and budget to objectives as the principal paradigm;

- Review TOR of resource allocation operation review board;

- MSRP must co-ordinate pre-roll out of RBM.

Prioritize monitoring and evaluation (Action: SMC)   [JIU Recommendation 4]   [Audit Service Recommendation No 5 & No 6]

- Monitoring and evaluation function should report to the High Commissioner;

- Undertake monitoring of MSRP system implementation;

- Ensure follow-up on recommendations made in previous reports;

- Disseminate reporting models and best practice on information management;

- Develop guidance to facilitate the smooth running of MSRP.

Promulgate knowledge and information management tools, i.e. the BAP Matrix Operation (Action: SDS/BAP)

- Develop a knowledge management system;

- Standard operation management tools must be developed for the Bureaux (some Bureaux have started developing their own, i.e. BAP).

Revise procedures & update guidance (Action ODMS)   [Audit Service Recommendation No 7]

Road map for implementation

111.   The road map for implementation was elaborated in discussion with the Senior Managers and is reinforced by the OIOS audit recommendations. Moving from vision to implementation requires committed leadership from the top of the organization, in addition to that of the dedicated implementation teams. The efforts of the implementers need to be recognized. The underlying message of the exercise is that more UNHCR staff should be involved in the ongoing process of evaluating and giving added value to what they do, as well as moving forward toward clarifying the vision of UNHCR and its staff, always with the goal of optimizing service to the Field in the future.

112. "Changes in the organizational design, improvements in the processes, and greater strategic focus will not work unless they are accompanied and reinforced by changes in UNHCR's organizational culture and the mindsets of staff". This was highlighted by two recent reports, the Organizational *Culture Report 2005* (B. Wigley) and the *Mannet 2005 UNHCR HQ Review Process*, mandated by the Executive Committee. Confronting the UNHCR culture is central to a future operations implementation strategy.

113. MSRP and an integrated Results-Based Management (RBM) implementation, currently being developed and rolled out, will inevitably result in a change in roles and responsibilities for Desk personnel. Ensuring the compatibility of a Desk structure with on-going change initiatives is "central to optimizing service to the field."

Hierarchy of processes

**Develop
field strategy
and direction**
SMC Retreat- July 17
Communication of
Strategy & Direction
organization wide

Review Bureaux/Desk Architecture
Appoint working Group
Determine the optimal range, type,
location and level of management and
technical support to the field offices. Align
field office needs with resources and capacities
available. Ensuring full vertical and horizontal
communication structures

Develop a framework for authority
Communicate new authority framework throughout UNHCR

Define Roles and Responsibilities
Reconsider relevance of functions in consultation with MSRP and RBM
(OIOS rec 1); Clarify legal Advisor reporting lines (OIOS rec 1); Establish
Benchmarks for Desks (OIOS rec 2); Review job descriptions (OIOS rec 1)
Review job descriptions (OIOS rec No 1)

Streamline Processes
Develop a system of accountability/benchmarks for workloads
Prioritize initiatives (OIOS rec 4); Develop guidelines and ways to filter information (OIOS rec 4)
Streamline reporting: Reduce reporting; Merge specialists and general reports for
integrated presentation of operations (OIOS rec 4); Customize reports for offices/countries (OIOS rec 4);
Simplify resource allocation procedures

Clarify the role of the Desk in relation to other functions - procurement, HR and donor relations
Revise planning programming and monitoring processes (OIOS rec 5)
Allow for more focus on strategy, analysis and evaluation/control (OIOS rec 5)
Training in all functions: Organize specific training for all personnel (OIOS Rec No 3)

Roll out RBM ensuring compatibility with MSRP
Design software; Develop RBM model; Test model; Deploy Pilots; Refine software based on pilots; Roll-out RBM world-
wide; Amend procedures (OIOS rec 5); Simplify and Delegate further; Adapt to the Desks needs and processes (OIOS
rec 5)

Priorities Monitoring and Evaluation
Monitor Performance (OIOS rec 6);   Develop SMART performance indicators (OIOS rec 6)

Revise procedures and update guidance
Update Chapter 2 of the UNHCR Manual (OIOS rec 7)

Annexes

Annex I   References

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Annex II   Operations retreat, November 2004

Participants, referred to as "Senior Management Team"

1.	Kamel Morjane	Assistant High Commissioner (AHC)
2.	Arafat Jamal	Assistant to AHC
3.	Jean-Marie Fakhouri	Director Sudan and Chad (absent)
4.	Erika Feller	Director, Department of International Protection (DIP)
5.	Raymond Hall	Director, Europe Bureau
6.	Marjon Kamara	Director Division of Operational Support (DOS)
7.	David Lambo	Director, Africa Bureau
8.	Hope Hanlan	Director, Americas Bureau (RBAC)
9.	Janet Lim	Director, Asia and Pacific Bureau (RBAP)
10.	Ekber Menemencioglu	Director, CASWANAME Bureau
11.	Anton Verwey	Head, Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU)
12.	Richard E. Zakrison	Facilitator, Effectiveness Consultants

Annex III   Reference Group meeting 24-25 February 2005

CASWANAME
Emmanuel Gignac, Senior Desk Officer, Iraq Support Unit
Esin Gullu, Senior Resource Manager, Desk IV, Afghanistan Unit/ACSU
Claire Mc Naughton, Programme Assistant, Desk 1, Central Asia, Iran, Pakistan
Frank Remus, Senior Desk Officer, Desk I, Central Asia

EUROPE
Elisabeth Pelster, Desk Officer

AFRICA
Solange Senaize,   Senior Desk Officer, Central Africa and Great Lakes
Girmai Wondimu, Senior Liaison Officer/Desk Officer, East and Horn of Africa
    Liaison Unit
Andrew Mayne, Deputy Representative, Sierra Leone
Juliana Donkor, Programme Assistant, RDCWA HQ, Liaison Unit

AMERICAS
Petrus Wijninga, Senior Desk Officer Desk 2, RBAC

ASIA
Marc Rapoport, Desk Officer, Desk 1, RBAP

SUDAN DESK
Chansa Kapaya, Senior Desk Officer, Sudan Desk
Naomi Kawahara, Desk Officer, Chad (Darfur) Desk

DOS
Pablo Mateu, Chief, Reintegration and Local Settlement Section (RLSS)

DFSM
Suzanne Murray-Jones, Information Resource Assistant, ODMS

ESS
Nan Buzard, Senior Policy Officer, Policy Development Training Section

EPAU
Caroline Hunt-Matthes, Senior Evaluation Officer
Elena Shishkova, Assistant Evaluation Officer

MSRP
K. Hov, MSRP Field Roll Out Coordinator
T. Kratovil, MSRP Senior Change Management Officer

DHRM
Steffan Hviid, First Officer, Post Classification Unit

Resource Persons:Anita Hirsch and Eleanor Burns UNHCR Audit Service, (Office of Internal Oversight Services); Jill Mackechnie, External Affairs Officer Secretariat; James Grace, DOS, RBM; Anton Verwey, Head of EPAU Andrew Mayne (Deputy Representative Sierra Leone)

Annex IV   Terms of reference for the Reference Group

Purpose

To serve as a source of data relevant to the current and optimal role of the Desk with a view to maximize service to the field.

Product

- Recommend specific measures aimed at improving the role of the Desk ie what it should do, who does it and how it should be done;

- Recommend a definition of the role of a Desk Officer including job description & skill requirements;

(Submission of Recommendation to Bureaux Directors in facilitated seminar)

Resources

- OIOS' observations of "The comparative review of the Desk at UNHCR;

- Profiles of Best Practice internally and externally;

- The Desk reviews of 1994 and 1999;

- Results of HQ Review Process

- Participants own field experiences

Composition

The Reference Group comprises approximately 25 nominees with significant experience in Desk and field operations. Selection of Reference Group Members was endorsed by the Bureaux. It was ensured that at least one member from each Bureau coming from the field.

The Group met for a two- day workshop on 24 and 25 February 2005 at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Geneva. EPAU covered the costs.

February 26 (half day) Meeting with Directors and Heads of Desk to discuss recommendations.

Annex V   Workshop on the Role of the Desk: 24 and 25 February 2005

Facilitator: Zack Zackreson

Overall Workshop Goals

1. To use the following sources of input as a foundation for exploring the current and ideal roles of the Desk as a key linking pin between UNHCR HQ and field operations:
   a. Participants own experience and perceptions
   b. Examples from other relevant agencies and organizations
   c. Internal reviews of current operational practices
2. To explore a variety of tools intended to assist the Desk in their efforts to more effectively and efficiently fulfill their defined roles and responsibilities, i.e. revise profile of Desk Officers redraft job descriptions, develop guidance for Desk Officers, agree on optimal reporting models, Adopt cross cutting initiatives.
3. To develop concrete recommendations for improving:
   a. The future role of the Desk
   b. The nature and quality of support provided to and by the Desk in order to optimize service to field operations
   c. Coordination and communication between HQ and the field operations

A   Introduction and Overview

1.   Goals:
a.   Provide participants with an overview of workshop intentions
b.   Lay the foundation for a climate of open discussion and participation.
c.

Thursday 24 February

09.00   Welcome and introductions
                      Present:
09.10   The broad goals and objectives for the workshop
09.15   The Change Formula as a roadmap to the flow of the workshop
09.30   Exercise – Participant expectations
                      Have participants individually note their expectations for this
                      workshop
                      Facilitate a sharing of participant expectations

B.   Focus on the Current State of the Desk

1.   Goal: Explore:
   a.   The formal definition of the role and responsibilities of the Desk
   b.   Perceptions related to how well the Desk is fulfilling its role and
             responsibilities today
2.   Methods:

10.30   a. Present and, if necessary, discuss:

- the formal description of the role of the Desk
- the interpretation/meaning of the phrase "support the field"

10.40 Exercise – Participant perceptions of the current state:
- Form participants into 2 groups
- Assignment:
  - ➢ Record areas in which the Desk is currently doing a good job of fulfilling its defined role and responsibilities.
  - ➢ Record areas in which the Desk is currently doing a less than adequate job of fulfilling its defined role and responsibilities.
- Facilitate the posting of colored paper on the space provided on the walls.
- Facilitate a discussion of exercise results

11.30 b. Other Perceptions:
- Summarize findings from the 1994 and 1999 reviews
- Present OIOS findings
- Facilitate and open discussion of the above

14.00 Facilitate a discussion of:
- The impact of current performance on the ability of field operations to function effectively.
- The degree to which participants are satisfied with the current performance of the Desk related to the defined role and responsibilities.

C. *Focus on the Future*

1. Goal: Formulate a common picture of:

a. The "ideal" role and responsibilities for the Desk
b. Optimal performance by the Desk in the fulfillment of the ideal role and responsibilities
2. Methods:

14.30 Exercise – Participants' perception of the "ideal" Desk performance.
- Form two groups
- Assignment: How would "ideal" Desk performance "look", i.e. what would be happening in order to ensure:
  - ➢ A high quality of support provided to and by the Desk in order to optimize service to field operations
  - ➢ Highly effective coordination and communication between HQ and the field operations
  - ➢ A high degree of satisfaction with the Desks' ability to fulfill its defined role and responsibilities.
15.00 Facilitate a sharing and discussion of results.

D. *Selecting Targets for Action*

1. Goal: To present participants with criteria for prioritizing and selecting targets for their recommendations.

2.   Methods:
15.45   Present brief lecture on weighting and selection of forces to be focused on.
16.00   Exercise: - Identifying targets for action (1600)
- Form into two groups
- Assignment: Identify the five most significant restraining forces related to the achievement of the ideal state for the Desks.
16.30   Facilitate a share and discussion of the restraining forces identified by participants.

E.   Strategies for Improving the Performance of the Desk

1.   Goals:
   a.   To surface and explore participant recommendations for minimizing restraining forces.
   b.   To identify concrete strategies that can be applied within UNHCR to improve the ability of the Desks to fulfill their defined role and responsibilities.
2.   Methods:
17.00   Learning from the Experience of Others
- Facilitate a discussion focused the concept of Best Practice, including the value of extracting "Best Practice" recommendations from internal and external experience.
- Present and discuss a variety of alternative approaches selected from the list below:
Reporting tools (including discussion time)

Friday 25 February

08.30-10.00   **Emerging Issues for the Desk**
            Results Based Management (RBM)-Andrew Mayne
            MSRP-Ketil Hov/T. Kratovil
10.00   **Best Practice**
   ➢   BAP matrix information management tool - Marc Rapaport
   ➢   Reporting Tools- Jill Mackechnie, Secretariat
   ➢   DPKO- Reference guide
   ➢   ICRC –Refined Job descriptions (see examples)
   ➢   WFP –Undergoing strengthening of the Bureaux at HQ
11.00   **Exercise – Recommendations for Action**
- Form two groups
- Assignment: Formulate specific recommendations for what can/should be done to reduce forces currently restraining the ability/capacity of Desks to perform at the above defined ideal level.
14.00   Facilitate a presentations and discussion of participant recommendations.

F.   Where to from here?

1.   Goals:
   a.   To summarize recommendations and conclusions from this workshop

   b. To formulate recommendations for:
- how the results of this workshop should be applied/disseminated
- next steps

2. Methods:

15.15 Facilitate a Summarization of Workshop Conclusions and Recommendations
   a. Facilitate a discussion of participants' perceptions of:
- how the results of this workshop should be applied/disseminated
- next steps

G. Closure

H. Ensuring compatibility with on-going change initiatives

   1. Goal: to alert participants to the need for integrating their recommendations with other on-going organization-wide change efforts.
   2. Methods:
    a. Facilitate a discussion focused on ensuring that efforts to improve the performance of the Desk are fully compatible with and supportive of the above described organization-wide change initiatives.

Annex VI   Benchmarking of partner agencies

	UNICEF (NY)	WFP (ROME)	UNDP (NY)	DPKO (NY)	ICRC (GENEVA)
State of decentralization/ regionalization **Mid-2005**	Decentralized field structure in place since 1990. Evaluation process is constant	Decentralization process started in 1996. Decentralization is an ongoing process and part of the management philosophy of WFP	Decentralization is underway. Strong regional representation will be kept at HQ even if certain functions continue to be moved to the Field.	Not decentralized, based in NY	Alternative decentralized structure Decentralization is an ongoing process and part of the management philosophy of ICRC
Numbers of Regional Bureaux	All 8 Regional Offices are decentralized to the Field with geographic Desk functions at HQ	6 Regional Bureaux in the Field with liaison functions at HQ, Rome; one staff per bureau Regional Bureaux (16 core staff)	All 5 Regional Bureaux based at HQ in New York, USA serving 134 country offices	3 Regional Bureaux based at HQ in New York	4 Regional Bureaux 74 Delegations Missions worldwide
Location of Regional Bureaux In 2005	**South Asia** (Kathmandu) **Asia & Pacific** (Bangkok) **E. and S. Africa** (Nairobi) **W & Central Africa** (Abidjan) **Americas & Caribbean** (Panama City) **Middle East & N. Africa** (Amman) **Europe, CIS and**	**Asia & Pacific** (Bangkok-serving 12 Countries Offices C.O's) **E. Africa** (Kampala serving 12 CO's **S. Africa** (Jo burg serving 8 CO's) **W. Africa** (Dakar serving 18 CO's) **Middle East and Eastern Europe** (Cairo serving 20 CO's) **Americas and Caribbean**	Africa Asia &Pacific CIS and Europe Arab States Latin America and Caribbean	**Asia & Middle East** **Asia:** UNMISET (East Timor), UNMOGIP (India-Pakistan) Middle East: UNDOF (Golan Heights) UNIFIL (Lebanon) UNTSO (Middle East) Europe & Latin America UNFICYP	Africa Asia &Pacific Europe and Americas Middle East and North Africa

	Baltic States (Geneva) Procurement warehouse – Copenhagen Research – Florence	(Panama City –serving 11CO's)		(Cyprus) UNOMIG (Georgia) UNMIK (Kosovo) Europe & Latin America **Americas:** MINUSTAH (Haiti)	
	Regional Directors • Leadership & Representation Strategic Planning Country Programme Support End '90s more decision-making authority transferred to Field. Result: ROs now responsible not only for technical advice & support but also for budgetary, programmatic and oversight issues in the respective regions.	RB role: provide support in programming, finance & human resources management to Country Offices, implement regional emergency operations, and WFP advocacy at a regional level. 2005 Review: a) Each Bureau is different in terms of size and focus b) There is ambiguity in the description of roles and responsibilities of the RB/Country Office and Headquarters c) WFP Country Directors have tremendous delegated authority in comparison with many of their other UN counterparts. There is need to build Country Office capacities in order for them to be able to perform better.	Decentralization ongoing with Regional Representation at HQ. IT services, HR & admin, procurement audit and advisory services related to policy and programme implementation decentralized in 2004	UNMIS (Sudan) ONUB (Burundi) UNOCI (Côte d'Ivoire) UNMIL (Liberia) MONUC (Dem. Rep. of the Congo) UNMEE (Ethiopia and Eritrea) UNAMSIL (Sierra Leone) MINURSO (Western Sahara)	

Driving forces behind decentralization/ regionalization	Be closer to Field for quicker & more relevant decision-making. Reduce HQ costs	Be closer to the beneficiary and respond quicker to crisis. Increase programme quality	To optimize services to Field offices.	Not applicable	- Clearly defined role of HQ HRM - Rotation Policy - Planning for results Technical support
Core principles in the process	Clarity in structures, roles and responsibilities is the key. Staff member is only exceptionally sent to the Field to cover a different region from the office where he/she is based.	Start the process with 'easy' regions to gain experience (two pilot-based RBs established in 1998, other RBs relocated from Rome in 2001). In 2005 decentralization is a management philosophy.	To create an organization characterized by core strategic presence at HQ with Regional centers supporting CO's and global shared service handling transactional work.	Philosophy of Integrated Missions	An alternative decentralized structure with strong central co-ordination function. It has optimized service to the field by continuous change.
Management structures established for regional staff	Regional staff managed by the Director of the RO in the Field. HQ functional units not involved in managing regional staff (but informal contacts take place all the time between HQ units and regional staff).	Regional staff managed by the Director of the RB in the Field. Regional Liaison Officers at HQ also report to the Bureau Directors in the Field.	Bureaux and functional units jointly responsible for managing regional staff.		
Cross-cutting collaboration across Bureaux	Ad hoc	Ad hoc to be institutionalized	Ad hoc	Ad hoc	Institutionalized
Desk Officers	No Desk in HQ Liaison Officers in NY	No Desks in HQ. Liaison Officers in Rome are	To be cleared	Political Affairs Officers. Roles & responsibilities	Desk Officers. Roles &

Roles		overburdened – under review in 2005.		clearly defined in May 2004 – Reference Guide for Desk Officers.	responsibilities clearly defined in by very specific job descriptions in 2005 which define relationship to all functions.
RBM	RBM terminology commenced in 2000; "Management by objectives" at the country programme level since mid-'80s	RBM unit set up in 2000. Currently, fully operational.	UNDP piloted RBM in 1999 and reported using the framework to the Executive Board in 2000. An overview four years of RBM in UNDP report is pending in 2005.	DPKO results- based budgeting linking planning to outputs with focal point approach should be fully rolled out by end 2005/early 2006.	Lotus notes software linked to People soft software
Bi-lateral collaboration	MOU with WFP.	Bilateral collaboration between UNAIDS full sponsor and UNICF and UNHCR OCHA WFP and ICRC. See below **		DPKO Reference guide for Desk Officers	Defined roles and responsibilities. New job descriptions. Cross-cutting collaboration across Bureaux & between agencies.
Knowledge Management	The Programme Knowledge Network was introduced in 1997. Later broadened out into the Intranet with a range of subject-specific sites, available and used by most.	New Knowledge Management Tool recommended Corporate Governance. Intranet "Pass it on initiative" implemented and refined in 2006.	7 major knowledge networks plus dedicated staff to champion and support usage at HQ and in CO's	KM underway Best Practice Unit at DPKO collates BP	Several initiatives –developed in parallel. Integration into one modular KM tool is underway

	UNICEF	WFP	UNDP	DPKO	ICRC
Reporting Tools Initiatives to reduce reporting	Thematic reporting has increased based on corporate priorities; all donors receive same report. UNDGO format not successful. Real time web-based website for donors under construction, password protected. Narrative and financial reports to several key donors electronically.	Current reporting burden unsustainable especially for small country offices. Programme Quality Assurance Team currently assessing how to reduce by 2006. No plans for web- based reporting for donors.			Thematic reporting "Extranet" Web based real-time reporting for some donors for appeals audit reports and updates in the field midterm and annual Efforts underway to Reduce reporting: Good Humanitarian Donor ship initiative
Planning Cycle	5-year planning cycle with all partners. biannual budgeting cycle	Biannual budgeting planning cycle	Biannual budgeting planning cycle	Biannual budgeting planning cycle	Annual budgeting planning cycle
Global Staff Survey	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

Annex VII   Abbreviations

AHC	Assistant High Commissioner
AU	Administrative Unit
BAP	Bureaux for Asia and Pacific
CASWANAME	Bureau for Central Asia, South West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East
CD	Country Director
RD	Regional Director
ED	Executive Director
DHRM	Division of Human Resources Management
DOP	Department of Operations
DOS	Division of Operational Support
DPKO	Department of Peace Keeping Operations, United Nations
DRM	Division for Resources Management
EPAU	Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit
HR	Human Resources
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IGO	Inspector General's Office (UNHCR)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LOI	Letter of Instruction
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSRP	Management Systems Renewal Project
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
ODMS	Organizational Development and Management Section
OMS	Office of Mission Support
OO	Office of Operations
PCBS	Programme Coordination and Budget Section
RBM	Results-based management
RLA	Regional Legal Advice
SAMM	Staff Administration and Management Manual
SAP (IBM)	Systems Analysis and Programming .(International Business Machines)
SDS	Staff Development Section
SLA	Senior Legal Adviser
SMC	Senior Management Committee
SMS	Supply Management Service
SPMR	Sub-Project Monitoring Report
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme