



***Consolidated Appeals for Humanitarian Assistance in the Great Lakes Region and
South Eastern Europe***

United Nations – VOICE Round Table

November 27, 2001

Brussels

- 1) Programme. 2
- 2) Welcoming words by Ms. & Ms. M. MOULIN-ACEVEDO (UN), K. SCHICK (VOICE) 2
- 3) Opening remarks by Mr. Ruud LUBBERS (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) 2
- 4) Introduction by Dr. H. J. PREUSS (Director Programme and Projects, Deutsche Welthungerhilfe / German Agro Action) on behalf of VOICE. 2
- 5) Discussion. 3

1) Programme

15:00 - 15:15 *Opening remarks by Mr. Ruud LUBBERS (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)*

15:15 - 15:30 *Introduction by Dr. Hans Joachim PREUSS (Director Programme and Projects, German Agro Action) on behalf of VOICE*

15:30 - 16:00 *Discussion*

16:00 - 16:15 *Coffee break*

16:15 - 17:15 *Regional Issues - with the participation of UN Humanitarian Coordinators from the Great Lakes Region, South Eastern Europe and NGO representatives - Discussion*

2) Welcoming words by Ms. & Ms. M. MOULIN-ACEVEDO (UN), K. SCHICK (VOICE)

3) Opening remarks by Mr. Ruud LUBBERS (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)

Mr. R. LUBBERS emphasized the complementarities of the NGOs and the UN agencies. He expressed his pleasure to attend what he called a "meeting between friends", representing a family with specific countries and interest.

4) Introduction by Dr. H. J. PREUSS (Director Programme and Projects, **Deutsche Welthungerhilfe / German Agro Action**) on behalf of VOICE

Mr. PREUSS divided his presentation in two parts.

A/ The first part dealt with the comparative advantage and the complementarities of the UN agencies and the NGOs.

a. The NGOs are working in close contracts with the population. They get the first hand information after a crisis, which is crucial for designing a specific aid. They are prior in crises, have an important role and get rapid info.

During military conflicts, the NGOs are following the principles of the Red Cross and Crescent, i.e. the impartiality of the NGOs regardless of ethnical, religious, ..., origins

The NGOs have long-term commitments, beyond the emergencies. They are supporting and implementing beyond the relief scope and emergency, in order to link relief, rehabilitation and development.

NGOs can also conduct operations at low cost level.

b. First, the UN agencies have a coordinator role. They are not in competition – whereas NGOs can be, for funds for example. The UN agencies are part of a common structure, there is more integrity.

Secondly, they have a voice vis-à-vis national and international public actors, they have access to officials and to confidential information. UN agencies provide access to management, information and diffusion.

Both parties have therefore different strengths and weaknesses.

B/ The second part addressed the issue of the needs of the vulnerable at the end of conflicts.

Generally is the aid provided to the vulnerable at a time when they have already suffered the burden of war. More emphasis should consequently be put on prevention and on the importance of LRRD. There should be additional poverty-oriented policies – and the public organizations should be aware of that.

In conclusion, Mr. PREUSS accentuated the necessity of a reflection on how to link relief, rehabilitation and development. LRRD can be promoted through UN agencies, especially if the European Commission and the other donors realize there is a growing gap between relief and development. NGOs should partnership with UN to tackle these issues.

5) Discussion

Ms. F. CHAPMAN (IRC), put a question to Mr. R. LUBBERS about the UN's reactions to the "forgotten crises"

when nowadays all attentions are focused on Afghanistan. Mr. R. LUBBERS gave three rules:

- advocacy state focus, when countries take the responsibility for the people who have to flee
- protection and assistance by the UN agencies themselves
- durable solutions. Assisting, preparing and empowering people.

He said that keeping people alive was an enormous challenge, as well as backing them up towards democracy.

There is a need of solutions and protection.

The donors are the ones making the choices whether to allocate their funding to this or this region. **They** should not divert all their dowries to Afghanistan. The UN and the NGOs have to struggle together to make this clear.

A question from Mr. J. CHAPMAN-BARRON (*Care International*) focused on the partnership problem the NGOS met with the UNHCR in Pakistan – where the NGOs wanted to work as partners but were put under unacceptable conditions by UNHCR. Mr. J. CHAPMAN-BARRON wanted to get explanations about the “externally displaced people” term.

Mr. R. LUBBERS responded that the term actually meant “refugees”. It use had to be understood in the Pakistan context, as Pakistan felt overborne by the number of Afghan refugees and was against their coming to Pakistan and closed the borders. Refugees still came but were then called “EDPs”. He added that the idea was one of temporarily protection, new structures are nit built and the UNHCR would have encouraged people back in Afghanistan as soon as possible as long as the conditions inside were acceptable.

Mr. L. HEYMANS (*Ministry of Cooperation, Belgium*) asked a question as a donor about the relationships between the Un agencies and the NGOs. He said that Belgium is allocating funds to the UN but realizes that all concrete projects are implemented by the NGOs. He was therefore hesitant to use the UN as intermediaries when the money could be directly distributed to the NGOs. Mr. R. LUBBERS uttered the internal UN rule towards the NGOs, i.e. as long as an NGO is involved in the field, they let it do the job whereas the UN keep a coordinator role. For this reason does a part of the UN budget go to the NGOs. Moreover does the UNHCR register and monitor the people. The UNHCR bears a governmental role, with an infrastructure ok knowledge, advocacy, presence, availability to refugees and so on. That structure is needed.

A question on the coordination issue was raised by Ms. K. SCHICK (*VOICE*) regarding the ways of improving this coordination and the means to do so. Mr. R. LUBBERS said this effort was in continual process. The existing structures (PARINAC) we have to improve it continually. Moreover, the instruments and conditions for this coordination are different following the scale and experience of the NGO. Lessons have already been learnt, and should be constantly being improved from each situation’s experience as long as a basis of mutual trust exists.