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ASSISTANCE FOR DISPLACED PERSONS:

BACKGROUND NOTES FROM RECENT EXPERIENCE

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October 1988

INTRODUCTION

Displaced persons (DPs) may be generally defined as families or individuals who are forced by war, severe food shortage or catastrophic loss of economic opportunity to migrate from their homes to seek food, shelter, refuge and/or protection in areas outside their normal communities. Persons may be displaced as a result of major civil disturbances, war, drought, famine or severe economic depression, or a combination of these factors.

Depending on how the government wishes to classify the displaced, it may be that persons who belong to one group will claim to be in another to qualify for assistance. If a government or relief agency tries to exclude one group in the presence of others, major administrative -- and possibly political -- problems are likely to occur. Therefore, while it may be useful to differentiate between the populations according to reasons for displacement, in practice, the distinctions are operationally meaningless unless the groups are located in separate geographic regions.

Despite a dearth of written materials and studies about displacement, some key factors are known about the process and need to be understood in order to formulate relief and assistance policies. These include the reasons and "triggers" for displacement, the pattern of movement and the types and patterns of settlement.

PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

In conflict situations, people are displaced both as a direct and an indirect consequence of violence.

Indirect Causes

Despite popular perception of most displacement as an immediate evacuation to escape danger, most people move as an indirect consequence of a conflict rather than because they are personally threatened. Studies have shown that the vast majority of people leave because of a perceived loss of economic opportunity. In other words, displacement is a preventive action rather than a responsive one. In a conflict markets may be disrupted, sources of work or employment may shrink or close, or breadwinners may not have adequate opportunity to obtain the resources required to

survive in a situation in flux. These and many other factors can create a situation wherein the main family breadwinner, younger males, or indeed the entire family must leave in order to survive.

Because this action is a rational decision taken without immediate threat of violence or injury, the persons who move have time to accumulate resources and to make other arrangements to secure their ties to their community. However, the fact that people are moving according to a plan and not as a result of an evacuation does not preclude the possibility that drastic steps may have to be taken. On the economic side, this may mean selling key personal belongings (such as animals, food, and land) and, in extreme situations, making decisions to abandon certain members of the family before the journey in the hope that the group will have a better chance to survive with fewer mouths to feed.

Persons who leave due to loss of economic opportunity are generally willing to travel long distances, since they can take time to prepare for the trip. They often will choose to bypass closer regional population centers and journey directly to larger cities or the economic capital of a country. Because they leave their homelands behind and are prepared to make major changes in their lifestyle and sources of income, they are more predisposed to becoming permanent settlers than other groups among the displaced. Such persons residing in a capital are the most difficult to persuade to return to their homes. Furthermore, the longer the conditions that stimulated their exodus remain unresolved, the less likely they are to ever return to their homes.

Another factor to consider about persons who move because of loss of economic opportunity is that there is a greater likelihood that the family unit arriving at its ultimate destination will be headed by the normal head of the household. It is the breadwinner who must migrate in search of work. Since a long journey to the capital would be difficult and perhaps dangerous for a woman traveling alone with dependent children, it is more likely that these families will be headed by males than displaced persons or families in settlements or concentrations located closer to the zone of conflict. This characteristic has two consequences when planning assistance programs:

- relocation or resettlement will require planning for the movement of larger numbers of people in each family unit; and
- resettlement or relocation must address the problem of job loss or income reduction as well as creation of new employment opportunities.

In other words, since the head of household is likely to have obtained some degree of income, resettlement or relocation will only be attractive and acceptable if alternate sources of income are offered at an amount equal to, or greater than, current employment.

Other indirect causes of displacement include:

1. the departure of family members or friends or significant portions of the community (village, tribe, clan, etc.). When persons leave because of the flight of others, the decision to leave is usually made with less time and preparation; therefore, the distances moved tend to be much shorter. Persons who leave for these reasons usually migrate to nearby towns or relief centers and, at least initially, they may be reluctant to move farther if the departure was made as the result of a collective decision. Families usually travel intact and may carry their grain and a portion of their belongings. As a general rule, they are in much better shape than other groups and are often more easily induced to return to their original community as soon as the risk is perceived to be minimal. Indeed, there is substantial evidence to suggest that persons in this category maintain extensive contact and have regular links to their former communities; even during the height of a conflict, they may make periodic journeys home to tend to local and family matters.
2. persons displaced as a result of a precipitous drop in food supplies. One of the major triggers to displacement is a sudden drop in the availability of food. This could be a result of disruption of food distribution systems, especially transport; military action (such as foraging by combatants); or, most commonly, an increase in the price of staple grains to a level beyond the economic means of low-income families. Unlike famines induced by drought, food prices can be subjected to rapid increases as a result of nearby military actions. The sudden realization that families can no longer afford to purchase basic commodities can result in an immediate displacement of large numbers.

Generally, people who are displaced for these reasons make the choice as individual families, not as a communal group. The immediate response is usually for an entire family to move to a place where they believe that food can be obtained (such as a regional town or relief center); only subsequently would a family decide to send a breadwinner or elements of the family further away in search of food or employment.

In considering this group of displaced persons, it is important to recognize that people fleeing because of a drop in food supplies usually go shorter distances, particularly if they see the shortage as only temporary (one year or less). It is only after a period of time, when the shortage at home remains unresolved, that they may choose to make a second move in order to find alternate employment or more secure sources of food.

Direct Causes

While numerically the number of persons displaced as a direct result of violence is smaller than those indirectly affected, in many ways the former are the most difficult to assist. The trauma of sudden displacement, possible death or injury of family members, or violent acts against

family or friends all combine to create feelings of alienation, distrust and, in some cases, helplessness. These circumstances militate against their acceptance of assistance. Initially, they are less likely to seek help, especially from government sources, until their situation becomes critical. These are the people who are likely to resist registration for fear of identification, and they often avoid programs such as supplementary feeding because identification, registration and regular attendance are required.

Victims of violence generally flee shorter distances than persons who are indirectly affected. If a family is able to escape intact, the head of household may lead the family into hiding; then, when it becomes apparent that return is not possible, he will guide the family on to the nearest relief center or other safe area. If the immediate destination is a relief center, the breadwinner and older males may separate from the rest of the family and return to the area near their home, leaving the women and children behind. In some cases, the men join the combatants, but most usually attempt to stay near their homes, foraging off the land and generally trying to maintain contact with their original community.

It is important to understand these reasons why breadwinners may not be present in a displaced population. Governments often believe that all the men have joined, or are actively supporting, the combatants. Although it is undoubtedly true that some do join one group or another, widespread participation in anti-government operations by persons who have been displaced is sometimes grossly exaggerated and not supported by evidence. For the most part, men of military age will attempt to avoid conscription or other involvement in the conflict. The perception that the men are missing because they join the combatants is one of the principal causes of ambivalence towards DP assistance by governments that tend to view any relief assistance as running a welfare program for the guerrillas' dependents. As numerous military and civilian writers have pointed out, the vast majority of a peasantry affected by conflict is apathetic and apolitical. Until this fact is clearly understood by governments, meaningful programs of assistance cannot be developed.

Because the majority of camp residents are women and children, assistance programs are normally more intensive than similar programs in the larger or more distant cities. A greater range of goods and services must be provided, assistance models must be maternally oriented, food distribution must be more carefully targeted, and immunization programs are of primary importance. As a general rule, relief administrators should expect higher overall morbidity and mortality rates because of the age structure. Community organization, while not entirely impossible, will certainly be more difficult if traditional male leaders are absent.

PATTERNS OF MOVEMENT

For the majority of displaced persons, movements of individual families can best be characterized as sequential or as following a "stepping stone" pattern.

For victims of violence, the first move is usually into the bush. Families may flee into areas near their homes where they can hide in relative safety and where members of the family separated by the violence can regroup. How long they remain in these bush settlements is usually a function of the presence and movement of combatants. If combatants remain in the area, the family will only pause long enough to regroup, acquire some supplies, and then move on. When the combatants withdraw, the family may choose to remain for a period of time to test whether or not they can return home. If it becomes apparent that the family cannot return in safety, they will move to a new area in search of sanctuary.

The next stop is normally a town or a small city. Who controls the town is not usually as important a factor in their choice as the likelihood that food and relief supplies will be available. DPs often feel that towns are less violent than rural areas. They also know that relief systems will operate close to major communications links. Since a government must keep communications open to its administrative centers and ultimately has a greater capacity to feed people, families are more likely to head to the cities controlled by the government than to areas held by insurgents. In other words, no matter what political sympathies held by the people, they instinctively feel that their best chance of survival is in government-held towns.

Whether or not DPs remain in the town of first refuge is a function of two factors:

1. the ability of the community to absorb the migrants and offer them at least minimal jobs and services; and
2. the amount of relief that can be provided by government authorities.

There are no hard and fast rules about what rate or percentage of increase can be sustained by a community before subsequent arrivals must go elsewhere. In El Salvador in 1984, it was observed that DP populations in the smaller towns tended to hover at about 15 percent of the normal population and did not increase above this level until relief supplies were provided by the government. At that point, the population in some towns grew to 50 percent or more of the original population. (At the same time, in the capital and larger cities, the influx of displaced persons swelled those populations from 75 to 125 percent above normal.)

While there are no corresponding studies of displaced African societies, it is clear that if relief assistance is minimal in the towns nearest the conflict, families must move on to larger cities where broader economies promise a higher likelihood of jobs and resources to support them. As populations swell in the regional centers, DPs who arrived earlier may fear that the increase in new arrivals represents a reduction of the support available for their own families. Therefore, as soon as they can acquire the resources, they often decide to move on to larger cities. This process may be carried out in stages, with the breadwinner and older males leaving first; only if time and circumstances permit planning and accumulation of ample resources to make the journey will the

entire family leave together. The sending of breadwinners and males to the cities first is another contributing factor to the high percentage of women and children in the regional centers.

It is clear that, if a government wants to contain DPs outside the capital, it must focus its efforts on the regional centers and camps near the towns of first refuge.

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Because relief programs for displaced persons tend to focus on the areas in which they reside, it is important to understand the characteristics of the settlement types usually encountered. In general, there are three physical settlement patterns: camps, spontaneous settlements, and pockets within existing squatter settlements.

DP Camps

Sometimes referred to as welfare centers, relief camps or distribution centers, DP camps are normally those locations where relief supplies are distributed and which become the focal point for the delivery of emergency services to persons in the first stages of displacement. These camps can vary in size from several dozen families to many thousands. Their growth will ultimately be decided on the basis of the amount of assistance that can be provided to sustain the population, the security of the area, and government policies relating to the size of the camps.

Assistance to DPs in camps generally follows the same lines as assistance in refugee camps. A full range of food, shelter and health programs needs to be provided along with water, sanitation and other site improvements.

Governments often try to contain DPs exclusively in camps. In these cases, caution should be exercised, for such restrictions necessitate an escalation in the levels of service that must be provided. Since DP camps are normally in more remote locations, assistance will probably require substantial transport investment and result in higher per capita costs. The only way to keep costs manageable is to permit DPs to work and participate in the local economy to the greatest extent possible.

Spontaneous DP Settlements

Spontaneous settlements composed entirely of DPs quite often spring up around towns and cities. People with similar ethnic, linguistic or cultural backgrounds to the DPs are often located in smaller towns close to the area of origin; thus, spontaneous settlements may form an extension of an existing community. The primary difference between a new spontaneous settlement and an existing squatter settlement may be in the quality of shelter. Since DPs initially have neither the resources nor the interest in making a permanent investment in shelter, these settlements can become overcrowded slums unless the government and relief agencies act quickly. Once people have settled, it is very difficult to re-plot the site in

order to add basic services and provide sufficient land for reasonable population densities. Thus, once the government recognizes that spontaneous settlement is likely to occur, sites of the government's choice where services can be provided cheaply and equitably should be identified and development plans made so that a settlement can grow along orderly and cost-efficient lines.

In larger cities, where the majority population is culturally or linguistically different from the displaced population, spontaneous settlements may be established near to, but not contiguous with, the urban area. This pattern provides protection from the larger population. Over a period of years, normal growth of the urban area may fill in the territory between the city and the spontaneous settlement; however, the spontaneous settlement is likely to remain a ghetto, culturally distinct from the surrounding population.

Pockets Within Squatter Settlements

If a government demonstrates hostility towards DPs, they are likely to try to integrate into existing squatter settlements, making it more difficult for authorities to locate them. Most squatter settlements are considered illegal by the authorities, but the mere fact that they exist demonstrates that a government is powerless to prevent their development. By grafting onto these settlements, some degree of solidarity can be achieved -- if not overtly, at least subtly. If the government upgrades the facilities in the settlement, DPs benefit along with all the rest of the residents. On the other hand, actions detrimental to the DPs may be perceived as a threat to the non-DP population who, in self-defense, may unite with the DPs against the government actions.

DPs who have integrated into squatter settlements are often the most difficult group to assist. Consequently, they often experience high malnutrition rates, especially children under five years of age. In a 1984 survey of squatter settlements with high proportions of DPs in the capital of El Salvador, surveyors found the gross malnutrition rate as measured by middle-upper-arm circumference (MUAC) to be around 7 percent. However, when DPs were isolated within the same communities, the malnutrition rate for their children proved to be 27 percent.

The lesson is that, in determining overall priorities of assistance, it is important to identify specific population groups so that aid may be properly targeted. It must also be recognized that targeting is extremely difficult, as it is socially and politically disruptive to provide food and other services for the displaced and not for other low-income families residing within the larger community. It can be argued that provision of comprehensive assistance to both populations within the same geographic area would have many positive political benefits for the government. Unfortunately, the resources to sustain such an operation are usually unavailable.

INTERIM ASSISTANCE STRATEGIES

Interim strategies are generally short-term in nature and tend to focus on relief measures. A word to the cautious is in order -- the execution of certain interim strategies may shape or, in the worse case, prevent adoption of more desirable, longer-term solutions.

The provision of minimum amenities in spontaneous or other DP settlements and creation of relief "poles" designed to hold the displaced in a region where they can be served close to their original communities is a common strategy and generally an ideal one. Anything that keeps people close to their homes is likely to encourage their early return. In practice, however, holding may be difficult to accomplish since the centers may be remote and relatively close to conflict. Logistics are often costly and can be complicated by weather and poor transportation systems. Whether holding is successful depends on the DPs' perception of security, their treatment by local authorities, the amount and regularity of relief supplies, and whether suitable employment is available. No matter what the relief system is able to supply, people will naturally seek ways to provide additional income, both to supplement their rations and to acquire capital as insurance against future problems.

As a general rule, it is better to permit development of spontaneous settlements rather than to place people in camps. By permitting spontaneous settlements to spring up adjacent to existing towns, a symbiotic relationship can be fostered that reduces the cost of administration and relief. It is far easier to provide basic services utilizing existing government agencies and equipment than to extend full services and support to people in a totally dependent camp environment.

A simple comparison of the assistance required for settlements versus camps is illustrative. In camps, authorities must provide a full ration (and often supplementary feeding for vulnerable groups); meet all water and sanitation needs; provide shelters, extensive warehousing and administration facilities, as well as power and other amenities. All of these systems must be started from scratch. However, if DPs settle spontaneously and derive a portion of their support from the local community, only supplementary rations may be required; water supplies may become an extension of the municipal system; shelter materials can be supplementary in nature; and other services can be provided from existing facilities.

This is not to say that assistance is not required in spontaneous settlements, but the emphasis shifts from total dependence to supplementation and augmentation. A greater range of options, having long-term benefits for both the DPs and the government, may be available at greatly reduced costs when spontaneous settlements are permitted.

How does spontaneous settlement work in practice? Usually municipal authorities create growth zones on the boundaries of a city. Since few governments have the resources to prepare the sites, only a general development plan is prepared delineating the major streets, establishing firebreaks, locating water yards, and designating land for government and public use. The remainder of the land is open to individual development,

although a government might try to control such development and ensure that people do not take more than their fair share of space. (Some governments have tried to issue occupancy permits, but this approach has generally not worked and has led to corruption, i.e., authorities often sell the permits.)

LONG-TERM ASSISTANCE APPROACHES

Ultimately there are three long-term solutions for DPs: return to their original home or community; resettlement or relocation to a new community; or acceptance and integration into the towns or cities to which they have fled. These options may be compared to the permanent solutions for refugee crises: repatriation, resettlement and local assimilation.

Return

A return to the original community or its vicinity is normally only possible if some degree of stability and peace is achieved. This does not always require a negotiated settlement; there are numerous long-term, low-intensity conflict situations where DPs decide that the circumstances are relatively safe enough for them to return.

There are two factors, other than peace, which determine whether people will be willing to go back:

1. the extent of time between their original move and the point at which it is possible to return in relative safety;
2. the degree to which they have been able to integrate into their new communities and earn a living. If DPs are able to earn more money and attain a higher standard of living in their communities of refuge, they are likely to decide not to return, even if conditions in their original communities are favorable.

Distance may also play a factor, but it is probably not as important as lines of communication to the home community. If information from home is infrequent and official sources are treated with scepticism, assurances that return is possible may be viewed as insufficiently reliable to warrant action.

Resettlement or Relocation to Another Community

Often promoted by government officials, this approach has in practice been one of the least successful of all the various options. Relocation seems to be the option preferred by a government for dealing with DPs while a conflict continues, but few relocation schemes have actually worked.

Successful relocation plans have been carried out for DPs in some countries, and experience deriving from them indicates that certain practices and approaches can be used with a limited degree of success.

However, relocation is always a delicate matter, and the agencies participating must do so with the realization that the issue can be extremely sensitive and very costly.

Relocation must always be voluntary. Any activities that are perceived as forcing people to move against their will can destroy a program before it starts. Even the provision of incentives -- financial or material -- to induce people to move must be handled with caution. If an agency tries to force a move by offering an increased range of goods and services in one area while substantially reducing services where DPs currently live, support for relocation by donors and participating non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as by the DPs themselves, will quickly evaporate.

In short, relocation is far more complicated than it would seem to an inexperienced observer. A full range of services is needed and much preparation is necessary before a relocation plan can be presented to the displaced population. It should be remembered that DPs are already in a state of uncertainty and are trying to establish a new life or acquire the resources needed to enable them to return to their original homes when conditions permit. Introduction of further uncertainty of the magnitude that relocation represents means that they have to make a very profound choice: whether to accept passively or fight to remain where they are. These choices cannot be taken lightly by the displaced, nor lightly urged upon them. In an urban context, where most of the people probably live in spontaneous settlements, relocation means passively surrendering jobs and opportunities only recently acquired for an uncertain future based on only a promise that there will be adequate supplies and sources of income in an unknown location. The uncertainty is often too much to accept.

A key factor in planning a successful relocation program is the provision of jobs. If the relocation site is to be permanent, enterprises that will employ large numbers of people must be identified or established. If the relocation is semi-permanent or temporary, large-scale, long-term, labor-intensive public works programs must be established.

There are several ways that relocation may be carried out. In order of success they are:

1. Individual counselling and relocation. First, the relocation agency identifies target areas, then conducts surveys to determine the types and numbers of jobs available. Once job lists or employment schemes are developed, offices are set up to recruit volunteers to resettle. Caseworkers identify workers according to job requirements and then provide financial assistance to help the entire family relocate to the new area. Assistance may take the form of grants, transportation arrangements and temporary food rations. Once the people are on site, housing or shelter allowances are usually provided. If relocation is to be semi-permanent, land leases may be established; if permanent, land title or long-term leases are required.

Individual relocation requires family counselling and casework. There is no doubt that this requires a high degree of sophistication and a

long lead time; but once the program is in operation, experience has shown that a higher percentage of success can be achieved with this than with any other relocation method. Once the initial relocations are successful, more and more people will apply voluntarily for assistance.

2. Group relocation. In a crisis situation where a massive influx of displaced persons inundates existing communities, public officials often advocate group relocation schemes. The purpose may be to relieve pressures on a urban zone, to move people to environmentally safer areas, or to move people for political or perceived security reasons.

Since DPs are citizens of the country, group relocation programs are difficult to carry out. A government normally does not have a legal or ethical right to order its own citizens to abandon their livelihood and leave a city simply because they are displaced. Thus, group relocations are usually carried out using extra-legal methods and may require force or coercion. A common government argument is that people are residing illegally on land they do not own. Eviction, coupled with an offer of new land at another location, is an oft-used tactic to induce people to move. The approach can be likened to the "carrot and stick"; unfortunately, it is usually the stick that is used more than the carrot.

If a government attempts forced relocation on a mass scale, the results are usually a total failure. As soon as the government eases pressure, the people who were forcibly relocated will turn right around and slip back into the urban area. Even in cases where decent land, jobs and amenities are provided, experience has shown that the vast majority of people quickly return to the communities from which they were evicted. Losses to the government under these circumstances can be substantial, both financially and politically.

This is not to say that large-scale group relocations have not met with some success in certain instances. The key, however, is voluntary movement. One approach, used to relocate squatter settlements in Peru, is illustrative. First, the government developed new sites near light industry and large-scale agricultural enterprises. Once the sites were prepared and ready to accept new settlers, the government identified the communities it wanted to relocate, and organizers were sent into these communities to find volunteers. Community representatives were brought to the sites to see the physical location, ascertain that the promised jobs would be available, and learn the conditions under which land tenure would be provided. No moves were made until approximately 25 percent of the total to be moved had agreed. Each family involved signed a statement that the move was voluntary, and the government in turn signed an agreement stating that the people could return to their original communities at government expense if they were not satisfied within a certain period. When all was ready, the government brought trucks into the community, helped the families gather their belongings, and moved them to the new location.

3. New towns. Another approach, used in El Salvador, was to encourage DPs to move to new integrated communities in zones far from the conflict, providing a full range of economic enterprises for employment, and creating new growth zones in underpopulated areas. The development of new settlements, however, is by far the most complicated method of relocation. Not only must land be acquired, housing erected, water and sanitation facilities installed, and basic enterprises established; the people themselves must be retrained and provided with a complete network of economic and social services for several years after the relocation. Few governments have sufficient resources to sustain this kind of development work over a long period of time. And when they extend services to DPs and neglect the normal urban population, political problems arise very quickly.

All relocations are expensive. The per capita cost depends on the commitment and the range of goods and services made available by (and to) the relocation agency. The most expensive approach is establishment of new integrated settlements. Although it is labor-intensive, the least expensive method is usually identification of a wide range of jobs or job opportunities in other communities, with counselling assistance to find the most suitable and appropriate work for relocatees. If the available jobs are not sufficient, additional opportunities must then be created by the government through public works programs or the establishment of new enterprises.

The cost of relocating families varies considerably depending on the availability of jobs in the relocation zone. If employment opportunities exist, relocation assistance can be minimal. However, if jobs are not available, loans and grants will have to be provided as well as interim subsistence allowances or food until the families reestablish themselves financially.

Summary: Few countries fighting a civil war are in a position to make major investments in relocation programs. Only with massive outside assistance can relocation schemes have any chance of success. If, at any time, relocation is seen as a means of increasing tensions or of harassing or controlling the displaced, donors will conclude that the action is an obstacle to peace and will withdraw support.

Integration into the Community of Refuge

It might be said that it is a wise government that recognizes and accepts that spontaneous settlements are likely to become permanent and begins early to establish these communities on a sound basis. Even after a conflict is resolved, it is likely that large numbers of people will not return to their original homes. Some governments have recognized that they must accept a fait accompli and, instead of treating the displaced as "outsiders", accept them as new settlers, extending services and upgrading the communities as part of normal urban growth.

In many ways integration is the least costly of all the long-term solutions. DPs already have a symbiotic relationship with the larger community, and many already have obtained work and established lives that

contribute to the overall urban community. Once a decision is made to permit a spontaneous settlement to become permanent, a government may simply extend water, roads, sanitation and electricity, and leave the remainder for self-help initiatives. Such an approach requires no special action on the part of the government, and the newcomers are treated on the same basis as other migrants to the urban area.

ASSISTANCE PARAMETERS

The level of intensity required in relief operations for DPs depends upon their living situation. If they settle spontaneously and are able to establish a symbiotic relationship with the surrounding community, aid levels are substantially lower in terms of goods and services. However, if DPs live in restricted areas, camps or remote rural locations, levels of assistance must be much higher.

The key assistance packages that must be contemplated are food, water, shelter, health care and jobs.

Assistance in Spontaneous Settlements

If the displaced are residing in spontaneous settlements contiguous with urban areas, relief programs become supplemental in nature and rely more on indirect, rather than direct, assistance strategies.

1. Food distribution: Food distribution is normally calculated to provide supplemental benefit to the families' diets. Therefore, a partial ration can be distributed at approximately one-month intervals. The distribution itself can be targeted to those communities that present high levels of malnutrition. If DPs live in squatter settlements, targeting might focus on new arrivals rather than on general distribution within the whole community.
2. Water: Water can be supplied through the normal municipal system by extending the system to spontaneous settlement areas and supporting traditional water distribution methods (such as donkey carts), or by drilling additional water wells where the geology is favorable. Any installation for water distribution should conform to the local, long-term water development strategies and should be compatible with the municipal system. The objective is to improve the local government's ability to serve all areas, with a by-product being that of serving the displaced communities.
3. Shelter: In spontaneous settlements, provision of shelter usually requires only minimal intervention by assisting agencies. In large urban areas, settlers are normally able to acquire enough materials to erect a simple structure. They can then maintain and upgrade the shelter as necessary. If conditions are extremely poor and agencies want to assist the process, an ideal intervention is the provision of roof sheeting and timber poles (or similar materials, depending upon the region). The major costs in housing are the roof and roof supports, and doors and windows. Walls can often be made of local

materials such as earth, woven mats, etc. By providing materials such as roof sheeting, agencies contribute something of long-term value that can be easily incorporated into a permanent structure at some future date, either in a spontaneous community or at a relocation site. If DPs return to their original homes, they can either arrange to take the roofing material with them, or can sell it to acquire resources to permit their return.

4. Health care: Health care programs in spontaneous settlements normally focus on immunizations, control of diarrhoeal diseases and nutritional rehabilitation (especially of new arrivals). As a general rule, health care needs will be of a slightly higher order of magnitude than in settlements of economic migrants, particularly if there is a constant influx of new arrivals who have suffered nutritionally due to the circumstances of their displacement. After a period of time with appropriate assistance, however, health authorities generally see an improvement in health levels.

Probably the best reflection of health in spontaneous settlements is nutritional status. It is important to note, however, that nutrition should be monitored by differentiating between those who are new arrivals (90 days or less), persons resident from over 90 days to one year, and those living for over one year in the settlement. If two or more cultural groups are in the same settlement, separate rates should be calculated for each.

5. Productive enterprises (jobs): One of the most important means of assisting DPs in spontaneous settlements is the provision or expansion of economic opportunities. In recent years, a number of countries have experimented with job programs as an indirect means of helping people obtain the resources required to take care of their own needs. Perhaps the best-studied of these is the Jobs and Health Program in El Salvador, carried out under the direction of a joint government/NGO consortium. The program was designed to meet a number of objectives through both direct and indirect approaches.

The direct objectives were:

- a. to employ DPs in order to provide them with cash to meet their own needs; and
- b. to improve the living environment in camps or areas where DPs had concentrated, and in communities heavily impacted by the influx of DPs.

The indirect objectives of the project were:

- a. to reduce the DPs' dependency on food aid.
- b. to improve their health status. This was to be achieved in two ways. First, the projects carried out under the public works program would help improve the living environment in and around

the settlements, thereby reducing health risks. Second, with the cash received from the works program, DPs living in areas not served by health centers would be able to pay for health services at private facilities.

- c. to reduce the adverse impact of large concentrations of DPs on the host community by:
 - permitting the DPs to participate in the local economy by providing them with disposable income; and
 - providing projects to improve the environment, not only for DPs, but also for the whole community. It was thus hoped that resentment of the host community would be lessened.

The maximum number of work days permitted an individual was set by regional authorities; the number varied widely from region to region, with an average of 90 days per worker. The salary paid was one-half the normal minimum daily wage, justified by the fact that DPs also received supplementary food rations.

There is no doubt that the jobs program had a significant impact on the living conditions of individual families who participated and on the general environment of the communities where works programs were carried out. However, analysis of health and nutritional status showed no significant improvement between those who participated in the jobs programs and those who did not. Therefore, the restriction on the maximum number of days one could work was lifted, first to 120 days and then to a full year. An assessment one year later showed a significant increase in both health and nutritional status of the participating families. In one community, malnutrition rates (as evaluated by weight-for-height) dropped from 23 percent to approximately 7 percent in children under five.

A cost-benefit comparison of families participating in the jobs program versus those who received only relief was inconclusive (partly because of the change in the maximum number of days that a person could work). However, evidence indicates that the jobs approach permits significant reductions in the level of direct assistance required. On balance, program costs will be relatively comparable; the overall administration required, however, is far less.

A major consideration in deciding whether a jobs program should be given priority over direct assistance is the female composition of the settlement. When heads-of-household are predominantly women, reliance on jobs programs unfortunately must take a lower priority. In these situations, all but a few of the women have dependent children to care for; thus, it is difficult for them to work. In order to bring the benefits of a program to families headed by women, jobs and income-generating opportunities must be developed specifically for them. The success of any employment program for women will be measured not only in terms of the amount of income provided, but also by whether the

program itself facilitates participation by women who find it difficult to leave their homes.

One innovative approach has recently been explored by Save the Children Federation. Women from the community are taught how to provide in-home day care services in order to release others to work; they are paid initially by the agency and later by the mothers. It is only after day-care provisions have been made that meaningful numbers of mothers will be able to participate.

Some agencies propose schemes where women take work such as sewing, handicrafts, etc., back to their homes. In practice, these have generated little in the way of additional income.

Home gardening is one source of supplemental income for women that has been successful. Small, intensive home or box gardens can be established and maintained by women in or near their homes. A number of NGOs have developed successful techniques for organizing and assisting in the marketing of home-grown vegetables (e.g., Mennonite Central Committee, International Rescue Committee, etc.). Home gardening has the advantage of providing the family with the option of consuming the vegetables and improving their diet, or marketing the surplus and using the proceeds to purchase other necessities. Home gardening projects have proven successful not only in spontaneous settlements but also in camps (if adequate space is allowed for home or off-site gardening).

Assistance in Camps and Resettlement Centers

Assistance to persons in camps and relocation centers (at least during the first several years) must be operated at a high level of intensity. Generally, the following assistance patterns must be observed:

1. Food distribution: Food supplies must be calculated on the basis of providing a full ration to the families. Normally this means providing between 2200 and 2500 calories per person per day, whatever their age. Since it is likely that people will sell a portion of the food received in order to obtain capital for other necessities, distribution intervals no greater than 10 days are normally required.

Food rations must consist of grain, oil and a source of complementary protein. The diet should be varied periodically, and occasional distributions of salt, sugar and condiments should be made.

Extensive logistical support, trucks, warehouses, field depots and, of course, personnel to manage and operate the system are required in order to supply the amount of food needed.

2. Water: Water supplies in camps or new settlements normally require installation of entirely new facilities. This can mean establishment of a water yard served by boreholes or, if the site is near a surface water source, intake and treatment facilities.

Distribution systems must also be provided (e.g., tanks, pipes, elevated towers, pumps, etc.). As a general rule, the establishment of new water systems in camps is three to four times more costly than extending a municipal system using pipes and taps and, over a period of one year, it will cost more than thirty times as much to maintain. If at any point in the distribution program tankers must be used, per capita costs will increase proportionally.

3. Shelter: Shelter costs in camps vary greatly depending on the approach chosen. If camps are tightly restricted, there is a higher obligation on the part of the assisting agency to provide greater inputs. This may be by providing tents (a particularly costly form of assistance) or by purchasing and distributing local materials (a lower investment but still costly).

In resettlement or relocation centers, shelter approaches are similar to those for spontaneous settlements. Assisting agencies might provide materials such as roofing sheets and timber for roof supports, door frames and lintels. In order for persons to invest in their own housing, land tenure must be provided at the resettlement center. At a minimum, this should be a long-term lease -- at best, permanent title to the land.

4. Health care: Health care in DP camps is always problematic, and planners should expect the same types of health problems they would encounter in refugee camps. Because of overcrowding, there is a greater likelihood of communicable disease outbreak than in other types of settlement. It is also likely that sanitation conditions will be rather poor, and water scarce. Therefore, the risk of diarrhoeal or other diseases related to water quality or quantity is particularly high.

In resettlement centers, health conditions can be greatly improved if site planning takes into consideration water and sanitation requirements from the very outset. It is generally agreed that new settlements must be oriented around a sanitation plan; adequate space must be left for individual family latrines and waste disposal or incineration facilities.

Health care focuses on immunization, nutrition maintenance and control of diarrhoeal diseases. Measles immunization is often a high priority, and other coverage should be provided to children according to standard country EPI (expanded program of immunization) guidelines. Disease surveillance should be established early, especially in areas at high risk of epidemic diseases for which rapid, intensive assistance is required (e.g., cholera).

In resettlement centers, many problems will gradually taper off if environmental health and water quantity and quality requirements are met.

5. Productive enterprises: Both DP camps and relocation centers require extensive attention to income-generating activities. In camps, the amount of work that needs to be provided is generally less since the

relief agencies must provide a full range of food, water and shelter to residents. Even so, significant levels of job opportunities are required in order to enable families to acquire income to meet their additional needs.

One approach is land lease for displaced farmers. Since many DPs are originally farmers, the leasing of plots of unused land near the settlements can be a very beneficial activity. Farmers can plant small gardens there to produce food for consumption as well as for marketing. Land can usually be leased from absentee landlords or can be provided gratis by municipalities, regional authorities and/or churches. Once land is acquired, workers are hired to clear it and make necessary improvements such as terracing, preparation or demarcation of plots. Families then draw lots to determine who will work the various areas. Tools, seeds and, if necessary, technical assistance, fertilizers and pesticides can be provided through relief authorities. When the crops are ready, relief agencies can assist in the marketing.

Jobs for women in camps are a particular problem. One approach, used with some success in Bangladesh, was the provision of milk cows to single women with dependent children. This enabled the women to earn income from selling milk (and increased their marriageability). A similar approach might use milk goats, and agencies could provide assistance in pasteurizing and marketing the milk.

Job opportunities in resettlement centers are the most complicated to provide. It is of paramount importance that employment be available; otherwise people will quickly leave the settlements and return to the larger urban areas. Resettlement centers can be viewed as new towns that require all the amenities of an urban environment. That is costly enough under normal conditions; finding adequate jobs in a new community for thousands of workers who are to be relocated is almost impossible. Some economists argue that any settlement of more than several hundred people will develop its own internal employment opportunities and its own economy. While this may be true, the initial investment necessary to create the surplus income to support such an economy is staggering. A resettlement community in Mexico for persons displaced by the earthquake in 1986 required a maintenance subsidy (i.e., funding above and beyond the cost of housing, water, roads, electricity, etc.) of approximately US\$1,000 per person per year. This subsidy was necessary until employment opportunities could be provided at sufficient levels to shift the primary focus of employment to the community from Mexico City, 20 miles away. Even so, studies showed that, despite the heavy subsidies, more than 70 percent of the original settlers left the community and returned to the city. The resettlement center today is occupied by economic migrants to the greater Mexico City metropolitan area. The 30 percent who stayed were almost all shopkeepers and artisans who moved to the settlement during the latter phases of the relocation, i.e., nine months after housing and infrastructure were installed. These were the people who were able to benefit from the creation of shops and small industries in the area after laborers were earning money.

This example highlights two points: first, jobs must be available before people move; and second, stores and commercial services must be planned from the outset of the resettlement efforts.

Why were the costs so high? Because everything had to be subsidized in order to keep people on the site. The move itself depleted many of the families' personal resources. Jobs at the new settlement site paid insufficient wages to survive and also cover the money families had lost in the move. Therefore, the people were faced with two options: returning to Mexico City or petitioning the relief agencies to subsidize their cost of living. Ultimately, subsidies included transportation, electricity, water, food (including hot school meals), transportation to and from Mexico City, health care, and dozens of other items. In short, the government and relief agencies created an intolerable welfare situation that could not be sustained. Anytime the subsidy levels dropped to the point where people had to devote their own meager resources to survival, families packed up and returned to Mexico City.

Relocation must be a carefully-planned venture, and any government or relief agency contemplating a resettlement program must be fully cognizant of both the direct and indirect costs.

COMMON ASSISTANCE ISSUES

Registration

At some point in every assistance program, the question of whether to register DPs (and how to carry it out) will arise. Registration is a legitimate concern, not only of the government but also of other humanitarian agencies. Overall population statistics are one important by-product of registration, and protection and tracing are good reasons for some form to be adopted. However, it is important that the registration system be secure and that it be designed in such a way that it cannot be used to provide any party with information that might be detrimental to the DPs.

Several options exist for registering displaced persons:

1. assigning registration to a neutral international organization such as a UN agency or the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The primary advantage to this approach is that the neutral body is the only one maintaining lists, and central control can be maintained to discourage misuse of registration cards. Statistics may be provided to the government or other entities as necessary for planning purposes.
2. designating a lead agency in each community as the registrar for the settlement. Each agency carries out registration using a standard format developed by all the participating agencies and produces overall information for statistical and planning use. Each organization is responsible for ensuring that errors or duplication are minimized for the communities they serve.

3. using a multi-organization registration system. A system utilizing the services of a number of assisting organizations can be developed and made secure through random numbering. To do this, a standard registration card is issued to each family bearing the logos of the participating relief agencies. Upon receiving a card, the head of the family goes to the registering agency and is issued a number which is recorded for verification purposes only. The card can be presented at any time to any one of the participating agencies to obtain relief supplies or services. The recording organization is responsible for making periodic inspections of different distribution programs to ensure that duplication is minimized.

It should be remembered that DPs will actively seek to avoid any type of registration, including surveys to enumerate the population and other information-gathering activities. They recognize that they are in a precarious legal position and, in short, do not want to be on anyone's list.

Relocation or Resettlement

Sooner or later, almost every government proposes some sort of relocation program despite overwhelming evidence that such programs are rarely successful and require a major commitment of funding. If a government decides to go ahead with relocation, it is important that criteria be set to ensure that all moves are entirely voluntary. If a government is to avoid controversy, the following policies should be established and observed:

1. All relocations must be voluntary.
2. An internationally-recognized NGO should verify that each move is voluntary.
3. No government-sanctioned relocation should be undertaken if the proposed site is in a zone of conflict.
4. If an individual chooses to relocate on his own to a site that is in or near a conflict zone, financial support for the move should be provided by a non-governmental or international agency rather than by the government.
5. No relocation activities should take place until adequate food, water and public health services are ready on site to service the resettled families.
6. Once relocated, a framework for assistance should be immediately available to help people make the transition to their new life.

A special office should be set up to coordinate any type of relocation or resettlement activity. A typical system should be structured to work more or less as follows:

1. The relocation office should inventory job possibilities in different locations.

2. Relocation caseworkers should then establish office hours at a location in or near DP settlements. Notices regarding relocation opportunities and assistance should be posted or announced in camps or in areas with high concentrations of displaced persons.
3. Volunteers responding to the notices should be assigned to a case worker.
4. The case worker should provide counselling to determine where the family wants to go and what assistance would be required.
5. A specific job should be identified for the head of the family and guaranteed before the registration process continues.
6. Once the source of employment is guaranteed, relocation arrangements can be finalized. A NGO should meet with the family, review the arrangements, and certify that the relocation is voluntary.
7. The move commences upon completion of this verification.

The Limits to Relocation Incentives

Governments often try to force people to relocate by exerting various types of pressure -- some subtle, others overt. Widespread debate is currently surfacing about how far governments can go in trying to force compliance with their resettlement objectives. In the worst-case scenario, government troops cordon off a section of a community, round up the people, and physically convey them to the relocation site (often bulldozing or burning their houses to discourage them from returning).

In a less traumatic but still harsh and unacceptable approach, governments have cut off water or food supplies to relief-dependent communities in the hope of forcing the people to move out. Such a move is usually accompanied by an announcement that subsidized food and other relief services will be available at the new site.

In urban areas, governments may take a more subtle approach. As a spontaneous community begins to form, the government simply ignores its existence and neglects to extend municipal services such as water, sanitation and electricity to the new settlement.

That a government has the right to decide on its urban development policies is indisputable. Furthermore, there are often very legitimate reasons for not wanting a community to be established or to grow in a certain area. All governments have the right of eminent domain and the right to use legal methods to plan and guide urban growth. Despite this, the overwhelming evidence shows that virtually all moves to resettle people involuntarily fail. In forced resettlement, the government only alienates the affected population and increases their determination to return to the place from which they were evicted. When families do return, they may take greater precautions to integrate into the host community and find other, more secure sites to settle, making it even more difficult for the government find them and send them back to the relocation site.

"Carrot and stick" approaches may meet with some success but, ultimately, success will be more dependent on income and employment opportunities than on provision of relief supplies. Few governments are adequately prepared, especially financially, to support DPs between the time of the move and the time that they are fully established in new settlements. As soon as the level of service falls, people will begin to abandon the settlement and return to the community from which they were relocated.

Economically, agencies should be cautious with regard to "carrot and stick" approaches. It is expensive enough to supply relief services to DPs in spontaneous settlements; moving DPs to a relocation center escalates the level of support required and thus the costs. Governments that try this approach soon realize that its limits are more financial than logistical. Supporting people with any degree of self-help is much better than creating an artificial relief situation that must be maintained for any length of time.

The least successful approach is that of creating disincentives to spontaneous settlements by neglecting to provide urban services. There will always be entrepreneurs who will find ways of supplying needed services (e.g., donkey cart operators). In the end, the cost to the government will be higher if services are not provided in a logical and planned manner as the communities evolve. It is always more costly to go back and install utilities in dense, unplanned settlements than to lay out a community in a logical manner and encourage growth along rational lines.

The disease factor should also be considered. By refusing to extend water, sanitation and health services into spontaneous settlements, a government increases the likelihood of communicable disease outbreaks. No government can afford to ignore the adage that "disease knows no boundaries". Conditions of overcrowding, poor sanitation and unclean water are the breeding ground of epidemics that may spread to planned areas.

The Role of the Government in Assistance Programs

If most of the displaced people are from an ethnic or cultural group different from that of the population majority, the role of a government in providing relief and assistance becomes a delicate issue. No matter who the DPs are, ultimate responsibility for their welfare and maintenance falls squarely on the shoulders of the government. This does not mean that governments can, or should, be involved directly in all cases of assistance. For example, in a civil war, the government is one party of the conflict, and any assistance to DPs will be viewed within the political context. How and where, then, does a government determine its assistance role?

Several principles should be observed. First, the government must be made to understand clearly that the welfare of DPs will be a key to any peaceful resolution of the conflict. If the displaced are abused, not properly cared for, starved or permitted to languish without adequate supplies, government opposition will be fueled. One only has to look at parallel experience in refugee assistance. Spontaneously-settled refugees

who are working contribute proportionally less money and manpower to insurgent movements than refugees in camps. Therefore, DPs must be taken out of the conflict equation by ensuring the highest level of services and job opportunities possible.

Second, where the majority of displaced are from cultural or ethnic minorities, a government should provide the overall framework for assistance but remain only indirectly involved in actual assistance to the displaced communities. Since a government cannot be neutral in a conflict, it must often remove itself from the provision of assistance and allow international or other neutral organizations to give direct aid. The Secretary of the Ministry of Rehabilitation in Sri Lanka once remarked that the greatest contribution the government made to assisting DPs during their civil war was to stand aside and allow NGOs to work.

This principle, however, is somewhat limited since in reality few NGOs have the capability to sustain major relief operations over wide areas for long periods of time. In other words, some degree of government involvement will always be necessary. Where then, should a government allocate its resources and where should it rely primarily on NGOs?

The answer is usually found in the geography of the situation. The closer the camps or settlements are to the zone of conflict, the more neutral NGOs should be involved; the greater the distance from the zone of conflict, and in spontaneous settlements in urban areas, the greater the involvement of the government can be.

This principle is also compatible with government and NGO capabilities. Generally, governments are poorly-suited to operate in camps while NGOs often specialize in these types of services. On the other hand, government is always structured to provide municipal services. Extension of water, sanitation, etc., is not only easy, it is also more cost-effective since new mechanisms, structures, ministries, etc., do not have to be formed. Thus, governments should plan to build on the inherent strengths of their own mechanisms and those of the NGOs, and avoid creating new institutions.