



UNHCR/WFP

# Joint Assessment Mission Report

Assistance to the Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal  
(09-20 June 2008)



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### Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMDA	Association of Medical Doctors of Asia
APF	Armed Police Force
ASSH	Assistant Sub-Sector Head
BHA	Bhutanese Health Association
BRAVVE	Bhutanese Refugees Aiding Victims of Violence
BRCP	Bhutanese Refugee Children Programme
BRWF	Bhutanese Refugee Women Forum
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDO	Chief District Officer
CFUG	Community Forest Users' Group
CHW	Community Health Workers
CMC	Camp Management Committee
CMO	Camp Management Officer
CQS	Central Quality Surveillance
CWT	Community Watch Team
DPHO	District Public Health Officer
ECHO	European Commission Office for Humanitarian Assistance
ECW	Enhanced Commitment to Women
EDP	Extended Delivery Point
FBM	Food Basket Monitoring
FDP	Final Delivery Point
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoN	Government of Nepal
HIS	Health Information System
HIV	Human Immune Deficiency Virus
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IP	Implementing Partner
JAM	Joint Assessment Mission
JVT	Joint Verification Team
LDC	Less Developed Country
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MCH	Mother and Child Health
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NBA	Nepal Bar Association
NFI	Non-Food Item
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NRCS	Nepal Red Cross Society
NUCRA	National Unit for the Coordination of Refugee Affairs
ODOC	Other Direct Operational Costs
OPD	Out-Patient Department
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
PGP	Pot-Gardening Programme
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
RCU	Refugee Coordination Unit
RGoB	Royal Government of Bhutan
SADG	Social Awareness Development Group
SFP	Supplementary Feeding Programme
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SSH	Sub-Sector Head
TB	Tuberculosis
TOT	Training of Trainers
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSECOORD	Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator
VT	Vocational Training
WatSan	Water and Sanitation
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WSB	Wheat Soya Blend (fortified)
YFC	Youth Friendly Centre

## Executive Summary

Nepal is one of the world's poorest nations with a Gross Domestic Product per capita of \$1,420. Poverty and food insecurity remain widespread in rural areas; and have been exacerbated by conflict and natural disasters (drought, flooding) in recent years. In addition to these difficulties, more than 100,000 refugees fled from Bhutan to Nepal in the early 1990s.

Despite the internal political conflict the government has maintained its commitment to grant asylum to the Bhutanese refugees. Since 1992, UNHCR and WFP along with their implementing partners have worked with the Government of Nepal to provide assistance to the refugees living in seven camps in eastern Nepal.

To assess the situation in the camps and the assistance provided to the refugees Joint Assessment Missions (JAMs) are conducted periodically by UNHCR and WFP with assistance from the Government of Nepal, the Implementing partners and NGOs, and donor representatives who participate as observers. In Nepal the most recent JAMs have been conducted in 2001, 2004, and 2006.

The 2008 Joint Assessment Mission was held from 9 through 20 June. Representatives from UNHCR and WFP and two donor representatives (ECHO, and the US Embassy) based in Kathmandu accompanied their colleagues based in Damak in the far eastern areas of the Terai in Nepal for three days of field visits in the camps. The Mission participants were divided into three teams, each with specific areas of focus. The findings and recommendations of each team were consolidated and presented to the entire mission members and the implementing partners in Damak. They were then revised and presented to the Country Directors of UNHCR and WFP in Kathmandu and then the Government of Nepal.

The most significant change since the last Joint Assessment Mission is the possibility of resettlement. Although UNHCR has pursued all three durable solutions, repatriation has never been agreed to in the talks between Bhutan and Nepal. Local settlement has never been possible in Nepal, and only at the end of 2007 was resettlement offered as a durable solution with a core group of resettlement countries agreeing to accept up to 70,000 of the refugees over the next five years.

Resettlement will affect all of the refugee assistance programmes. Food rations will have to be reduced to reflect the decrease in population due to resettlement. Trained and experienced refugee staff, particularly in the health and education programmes, will have to be replaced; this will require ongoing training, and may lead to increasing the number of local Nepali staff and services.

The following JAM Mission report presents a summary of the findings. A summary of the main recommendations follows the findings and is presented in table form for easy reference to the text.

## Acknowledgements

The Joint Assessment Team Leader would like to thank the Government of Nepal for facilitating the Mission and providing an opportunity to review the findings with them both at the field level and in Kathmandu. Appreciation should also be given to UNHCR and WFP staff, both in Kathmandu and Damak for their cooperation and assistance. Staff from both agencies prepared a very comprehensive information package that contained most of the key documents used as reference in the Mission Report. They participated in the field visits and provided valuable input to the Mission Report. WFP staff assisted the Team Leader in preparing the final draft of the Mission Report. Finally the Joint Assessment Mission would like to thank the refugees; without their input the Mission Report would have had no meaning, and would not have been possible.

## The JAM Report

### Background and Context

Nepal, a landlocked country situated between India and China with a population of 24.6 million people is one of the poorest and least developed countries (LDC) in the world with a gross domestic product of US \$1,420 (PPP) per capita. According to UNDP's Human Development Index, Nepal ranks 136<sup>th</sup> out of 177 countries and 156<sup>th</sup> in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP.) 40 percent of the population is living on less than US \$1 per day.<sup>1</sup> The country is prone to natural disasters (droughts, floods, landslides, and earthquakes) and has suffered from an internal political conflict which began in the mid-1990s and lasted more than a decade, costing the lives of some 13,000 people. Negotiations between the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) and the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN-Maoists) started in April 2006 and by November a ceasefire agreement was reached.

Asylum seekers from Bhutan started arriving in Nepal in the early 1990s following enforcement of a series of restrictive immigration and citizenship laws in the second half of the 1980s. Those who arrived before June 1993 were accepted *prima facie* as refugees. At the request of the Government of Nepal (GoN), UNHCR and WFP began providing humanitarian assistance to the refugees in 1992.

Seven camps were established to accommodate the refugees, provide security and facilitate delivery of humanitarian assistance. The camps are located in Jhapa and Morang districts in the far eastern corner of Nepal. Although agriculturally fertile, the two districts have a combined population of 1.6 million people, including migrant workers from the impoverished hill and mountain regions of Nepal. Thus, the presence of the refugees only adds to pressure on the land.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has overall responsibility for the refugee programme in Nepal. The Ministry established a National Unit for the Coordination of Refugee Affairs (NUCRA,) responsible for implementing the government's refugee policy. A Refugee Coordination Unit (RCU) was established under the authority of the Chief District Officer (CDO) of Jhapa. Camp supervisors and assistants have been recruited as part of the Refugee Coordination Unit (RCU) and are posted in each camp. The RCU, in coordination with UNHCR, is responsible for:

- camp administration;
- camp security and law and order;
- recruitment and administration of camp supervisors and police;
- registration and screening of new arrivals in conjunction with UNHCR;
- the movement of refugees; and
- coordinating the work of UN and NGO partners.

UNHCR and the Government of Nepal conducted a census of the refugee population in May 2007. According to this, there are currently 107,923 refugees living in seven camps (See Annex 5.) According to the census data base, identity cards have been issued to all refugees over age 16, except in Golhap and Khudunabari camps, where distribution of the cards has yet to be completed.

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<sup>1</sup> Human Development Report, 2005 UNDP  
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Location		Camp Population (March 2008)	Feeding Population (March 2008)	SFP Population (March 2008)
1.	Beldangi I	18,689	18,725	363
2.	Beldangi II	22,671	22,601	337
3.	Beldangi-II Ext	11,645	11,521	184
4.	Goldhap	9,708	9,520	188
5.	Khudunabari	13,259	13,050	198
6.	Sanischare	21,395	21,390	322
7.	Timai	10,439	10,408	196
Total:		107,923 <sup>2</sup>	107,215	1,788

The international community continues to seek durable solutions--repatriation, reintegration and resettlement--for the refugees from Bhutan. Negotiations on possible return of the refugees have been held since 1993 between the Governments of Nepal and Bhutan with no significant progress for the voluntary repatriation of the refugees from Bhutan. Although, the Government of Nepal (GoN) continues its policy to accommodate Bhutanese refugees, it has no policy for local integration, the second durable solution. Resettlement, the third option for durable solutions, was only approved by the Government of Nepal (GoN) and Core Group countries in late 2007. Since then more than 39,000 refugees have expressed interest in third country resettlement. The possibility of resettlement is the most significant development since the last Joint Assessment Mission, and is at this time the major concern of the refugees.

### Methodology

The 2008 Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) was conducted in June 2008. Prior to the start of the mission, UNHCR and WFP staff compiled the main key documents, putting them into a comprehensive information package, to be distributed to all mission participants. This collection of documents proved a valuable resource and reference throughout the mission.

The Team Leader (a WFP consultant) arrived in Nepal on Sunday 8 June. The field work started the following day when the UNHCR and WFP staff from Kathmandu and two donor representatives (from ECHO and the US Embassy) flew to Damak and joined field-based colleagues. Mission members also met with the Implementing Partners (IPs) at the UNHCR Damak office prior to heading to the camps.

UNHCR and WFP staff were divided into three teams, while the two donor representatives serving as observers were given the liberty to move between the teams. Each team was given specific areas of focus (see Mission Programme), which are outlined below:

Team	Area of Focus
A	Camp Operations (Coordination and Management)
	Logistics/Warehouse Management
	Food/Non-Food Items (NFI) Supply and Distribution, Rations Cards
	Post Distribution/Food Basket Monitoring
	Partnerships and Coordination
	Contingency Planning
	Security

<sup>2</sup> This total figure includes 117 individuals who are recorded as being out of the camp. They are still included in the census.

B	Health/Health Centre Management
	Food Security/Food Basket Composition
	Nutrition/Supplementary/Therapeutic Feeding
C	Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)
	Home Gardening
	Local Community Relations
	Community Services/Self Reliance Opportunities
	Durable Solutions/Resettlement/Repatriation
	Gender and Protection Concerns
Education/Vocational Training	

All seven camps were visited by at least one of the three teams, but no team visited all seven camps. A set of questions was prepared by UNHCR and WFP to serve as a guideline for the three teams (See Annex 4.) The three teams gathered information specific to their particular areas of focus through interviews, focus group discussions, and meetings with various stakeholders.

Field visits were conducted for three days, from June 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>. On Friday the three teams met separately to consolidate their findings and draft recommendations. The three teams then came together in a meeting with the main Implementing Partners (AMDA, CARITAS, LWF), in which each group presented its findings and recommendations and asked partners for feedback. These findings and recommendations form the basis of this Mission Report.

The major findings and recommendations were presented to the UNHCR and WFP Country Directors along with an outline of the report on Monday 16 June. Additional briefings were held with the Government of Nepal<sup>3</sup> on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June. The two Country Directors, the Team Leader and UNHCR and WFP staff Mission members briefed representatives from the key ministries on the key findings.

### Durable Solutions: Resettlement

The Governments of Nepal and Bhutan have held 15 rounds of ministerial talks since 1993. Bilateral talks stalled in 2003 and repatriation has still never been considered a viable option for the refugees in Nepal.

At the same time, local integration is not an option. Nepal is not a signatory to either the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol. Refugees are considered foreigners with no political rights and are not allowed to engage in economic activities or own any kind of property. This policy of non-integration minimizes self-reliance opportunities for the refugees and officially forbids local employment outside the camp.

At this point, resettlement remains the only durable solution available to the Bhutanese refugees. This only became an option in late 2007. The initial Core Group of resettlement countries (United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Norway, Denmark and Sweden) have offered resettlement opportunities to 70,000 refugees over the next 5 years. (Note: Malaysia recently resettled one refugee, while France has accepted three.)

UNHCR reports that some 37,900 refugees have expressed an interest in resettlement and 17,000 have submitted applications. The International

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Foreign Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Rameshwor Khanal, Action Secretary, Ministry of Finance; the Home Affairs representative was unable to attend.

Organisation for Migration (IOM) has set up processing and transit facilities in Damak and Kathmandu and, in cooperation with UNHCR, is conducting mass information campaigns (through meetings, posters, leaflets, and radio announcements) to explain the resettlement procedures and opportunities. Working closely with UNHCR, Nepalese authorities and the resettlement countries, IOM is processing refugees and transferring them to Kathmandu for onward travel to third countries. At the time of the Mission, 1,150 refugees had left Nepal.

Although there are some anti-resettlement groups in the camps and there have been incidents of violence and intimidation against refugees and IOM, resettlement is the main preoccupation of the refugees at the moment. Although the mission was warned that discussions on resettlement may be sensitive, refugees freely raised the matter, asked questions and requested more information on the resettlement procedures (e.g. in relation to polygamy, intermarriage, etc.) and the conditions they will find in the countries of resettlement.

Resettlement is *the major change* identified by the Joint Assessment Mission. All programmes and camp activities will be affected by resettlement and will have to be adjusted as the camp population decreases. Trained refugee staff in the health, construction/development and education sectors will have to be replaced. Camp populations will be reduced, providing opportunities to re-design the layout of the camps to provide more room for the remaining refugees, including space for fire breaks and home gardens. Food rations will have to be adjusted to reflect the departure of refugees. In the long run, UNHCR and WFP along with the GoN and the implementing partners will have to consider camp consolidation and therefore streamlining of services. In addition, contingency plans will have to be developed and revised as the refugee population changes.

## Security

The Government of Nepal is responsible for the overall security and protection of refugees and humanitarian workers. Monthly security meetings are held between the Jhapa Chief District Officer, UNHCR and WFP to discuss security issues. Community Watch Teams (CWT) have been established in the camps as part of the Camp Management Committees (CMC). UNHCR supports them with equipment and training for internal security within the camps. These refugee committees are included in discussions on any security incidents which occur both in and outside the camps.

This year, LWF provided training in reconciliation and Peace Management Committees were formed in all the camps. These consist of representatives from both the refugees and the surrounding host communities and help resolve problems between the two communities. They work closely with the RCU and the Armed Police Force (APF) on security matters between refugees and the local communities.

The APF was re-introduced in the camps in October 2007 and 25 armed police were assigned to each camp. This coincided with the start of third country resettlement and was perceived by some of the refugees opposed to resettlement as an infringement of their rights. In general, the APF's presence has been seen as a positive development in improving security in and around the camps. The APF also provide assistance to IOM for buses transferring refugees to and from the camps for resettlement interviews.

UNHCR, WFP and IOM staff follow UN security protocols and both agency sub-offices and vehicles are Minimum Operating Security Standard (MOSS) compliant. Both Morang and Jhapa districts, where the UN sub-offices and the camps are located,



remain under UNDSS's Security Phase III. Travel advisories are issued on a day to day basis; only essential travel is allowed which forbids movement to the camps after dark and occasionally limits access to certain camps due to security concerns.

## Protection

General protection of the refugees and Sexual- and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) cases continue to be monitored in the camps. UNHCR is the lead agency for refugee protection and has field assistants for each of the seven camps, as well as two international Protection Officers covering all the camps. Staff members of UNHCR, WFP, and the implementing partners have all signed a Code of Conduct after receiving SGBV awareness and sensitization training. UNHCR sponsors an ongoing SGBV awareness campaign for refugees to reduce the number of incidents and encourage reporting. UNHCR has made arrangements with lawyers from the Nepal Bar Association (NBA) in Jhapa to provide legal counsel and representation to SGBV victims in all refugee camps.

UNHCR provides separate training to the APF on the rights of refugees, general protection, SGBV, etc. This should be continued and scheduled to ensure that new APF personnel or those rotated between camps participate in the training.

The APF have the authority to arrest refugees (or local residents) but must subsequently turn them over to the civil police for investigation. Although this system seems to be working, APF informed the Mission that there is some confusion between the two police units. The RCU, with support from UNHCR, will need to review the matter and clarify procedures for the two police units.

Although there have been a few isolated incidents between refugees and the APF, protection was not a major concern at the time of writing. The Government of Nepal and UNHCR will have to continue to monitor the APF and ensure that any reported incidents are investigated and that the perpetrator, if found guilty, is transferred from the refugee camps to court for legal action.

## Beneficiaries

Ethnic Nepalese started migrating to Bhutan in the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>4</sup>. Known as the 'Lhotshampas', these Nepali speakers began to face discrimination and cultural exclusion in the 1970s. They started to leave Bhutan in 1990 following the enforcement of restrictive citizenship laws. As noted above, those refugees from Bhutan who entered Nepal before 1993 were given refugee status.

One of the main recommendations of the 2006 JAM report was for the GoN and UNHCR to undertake a census. The census, conducted in order to obtain updated information on the number and demographic characteristics of the refugee population, was completed in May 2007. A database was also shared between the GoN and UNHCR. Through this process, the Government recognized and accepted 1,200 unregistered children.

The updated population data was shared with WFP and new ration cards were issued at the end of last year. In line with WFP's Enhanced Commitment to Women (ECW), the WFP ration cards included the name(s) of female heads/recipients of family food entitlements. This initiative was designed to strengthen the role of women in the control of family food rations.

Following the census, in December 2007 UNHCR began to issue identification cards to all refugees over 16 years old. The process is ongoing: UNHCR needs to complete

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<sup>4</sup> Summarized from UNHCR Health & Nutrition Annual Report, 04 May 2006.  
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the issuing of IDs in the remaining two camps. The cards will be used for personal security and can play a key role in monitoring food distribution and interviews for resettlement.

## Host Communities

The refugee camps have existed in their present locations for nearly 17 years. In general, there are minimal problems between the refugees and host community. Although tension over resources was reported in one camp, Sanischare, where a refugee was killed last year, generally refugees and locals operate in frequent contact with another without significant difficulty.

The presence of the refugees has had a significant impact on the environment and use of natural resources surrounding the camps. Firewood has been a particularly sensitive issue between locals and refugees. UNHCR has made efforts to provide sufficient fuel to the refugees in the form of compressed coal dust briquettes and fuel efficient stoves.

Both UNHCR and WFP through their implementing partners have supported community development activities in the host communities. These include construction or repair of infrastructure (schools, libraries, installing tube wells, repairing access roads, construction of police posts...etc.); training of public health staff (lab assistants, midwives, community health workers); conducting of awareness campaigns (HIV/AIDS awareness, SGBV,) and vocational training programmes; and the building of local community leaders' capacity.

The vocational training (VT) programme in particular is designed to have 50% of the students come from the host communities and to have the remaining half come from the refugee camps. All of the students are school drop-outs. UNHCR provides financial support to CARITAS for its Damak and Birtamod VT classes, while LWF and BRWF run their own short VT activities in all camps. After touring the two vocational training centers (Damak and Birtamod) and meeting some of the centers' students, the Mission recommended that the VT programme be continued and, if possible, expanded to include more students from both communities.

The mission also recommended that UNHCR and WFP continue their programmes with the host community. With resettlement on the rise, it may be necessary to increase use of local facilities. This may require additional training of local teachers and medical staff, repair of local buildings, and the purchase of supplies and equipment to meet the needs of both the refugee and local populations.

## Health

### Public Health

The 2006 WFP/UNHCR Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) indicated that the overall health and nutritional situation in the camps exceeded the national standards of Nepal.<sup>5</sup> AMDA reported acute malnutrition in children under 5 to be 2.5%.<sup>6</sup>

The 2008 JAM Mission confirmed the findings of the previous mission and observed

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<sup>5</sup> WFP/UNHCR Joint Assessment Mission, 2006

<sup>6</sup> AMDA Briefing Document included in the 2008 JAM Information Package  
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that the health care service continued to meet or exceed international standards for refugee camps. However, some of the health buildings need repair (e.g. leaky roofs). In addition, refugees have complained about the lack of ambulances for referral to the local hospitals. The Health Information System (HIS) is now in place but some of the reporting by Community Health Workers (CHW) and their overall supervision will need to be improved.

Resettlement will have a significant impact on the health services in the camp. With the departure of experienced health workers (some with more than a decade experience in the health centers,) there will be a need to expand training to replace departing staff. The JAM Mission felt that UNHCR and IOM should meet with AMDA to identify key refugee medical staff and work out a procedure to maintain a critical mass of health workers. The possibility of asking newly trained staff to remain in the camps for at least one year was raised as an option.

### HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS awareness programmes are conducted in both the local communities and the refugee camps. UNHCR, WFP and their partners support these awareness campaigns. WFP has recruited the local Community Based Organization (CBO) Social Awareness Development Group (SADG) to provide HIV/AIDS awareness training to rickshaw pullers and their wives in Damak, the vocational training students (both local and refugee,) and the loan scheme beneficiaries (i.e. vulnerable refugee women in the camps).

The Mission felt that the HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns should continue in both the refugee and local communities and recommend that emphasis be placed on targeting the most mobile population groups. The Mission also felt that, with support from UNHCR and WFP, coordination between AMDA, SADG and the District Health Office should be strengthened to ensure that the messages delivered are in line with the medical facts. Finally, the Mission recommended street theatre be used to disseminate information on HIV/AIDS both in the refugee camps as well as in the local communities.

In addition to the programmes listed above, the Mission also visited the IOM hospital and its lab, which is one of the most sophisticated in Asia for TB analysis. At the time of writing, IOM had not found any positive HIV/AIDS patients in their medical screening of refugees volunteering for resettlement.

### Nutrition & Supplementary Feeding

Based on the under-five mortality and acute malnutrition statistics, the overall health and nutritional status of the refugees is satisfactory.

A planned figure of 2,600 malnourished under-five children, pregnant and lactating women and chronically ill persons was used for the supplementary/therapeutic feeding programme for 2008. The Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA) is responsible for the supplementary feeding programmes, with support from WFP and UNHCR; WFP provides food for the supplementary rations and UNHCR provides funds.

The following table summarizes the supplementary rations:

WFP Supplementary Ration	Supplementary Feeding (grams/person/day)			
	Group I		Group II	
	Unilito	Premix	Unilito	Premix
Vegetable Oil	10	10	20	20
Sugar		15		30
Fortified Blended Food (Unilito/WSB)	95	80	200	170

The supplementary feeding programme targets pregnant women, lactating mothers and chronically-ill persons (Group I above), as well malnourished refugee children (Group II above); both groups are provided additional daily rations as outlined above.

The micro-nutrient sprinkles project, launched to reduce rates of anemia and micro-nutrient deficiencies among children in the camps, was assessed by the mission and found to be running smoothly. After meeting with the AMDA staff and the mothers of children involved in the project, the Mission felt that, should the upcoming evaluation conclude the project had a positive impact in reducing the prevalence of anemia, continued funding for this project should be sought.

WFP has an agreement with the Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA) to provide post distribution food monitoring. AMDA also submits monthly health-and-nutrition reports that summarize the food-basket monitoring, and provide statistics on morbidity and mortality rates, the nutritional status of children under five, and information on the beneficiaries in the supplementary/therapeutic feeding programmes. AMDA also undertakes periodic nutritional surveys to determine the nutritional status of the refugees in each camp.

The 2006 JAM report recommended AMDA provide greater supervision and guidance to the nutrition staff. The 2008 Mission found that the situation had not significantly improved and recommended training in nutrition data collection and reporting, and better supervision of the nutrition staff, particularly the camp community health workers (CHWs.)

### Water/Sanitation

Water supply, solid-waste management and the construction/maintenance of family latrines are the responsibility of LWF as per their agreement with UNHCR. Water testing and vector control are part of LWF's responsibilities. Although the Mission felt that in general these activities were functioning well, members recommended that periodic clean-up campaigns be organized and that a proper site for garbage disposal, safe for both the refugee and local population, be developed.

The Mission also recommended that water not only be tested at the distribution sites, but also at the resident water containers which should be checked on a random basis to ensure proper hygiene. Awareness campaigns for the basic public health messages should continue in all camps, possibly using the street theatre groups and youth forums as dissemination agents.

### Food: Security, Delivery, Distribution

As noted above, the overall health and nutritional status of the refugees is satisfactory. In general, refugees seem satisfied with the food ration; in fact, the JAM Mission was surprised at how few complaints there were about the food ration. This may be due to the focus on resettlement, and to the fact that many refugee

families have at least one family member earning an income either as an incentive worker in the camps, or by working outside the camps. Small markets in the camps and gardening projects provide families with fresh vegetables, condiments, and other items to supplement and vary their diets. The lack of available land inhibits families from growing more vegetables, however.

Under the current PRRO (10058.5,) covering the period 2007-2008, WFP assumed responsibility for the management of the entire food delivery and distribution. In the past, UNHCR was responsible for the food transported from the warehouse (Extended Delivery Point or EDP) to the refugees, at the food distribution counters (Final Delivery Point or FDP.) This cost-effective change, which was included in the global Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by WFP and UNHCR in July 2002, has allowed WFP to streamline the food distribution process, using one contract and one partner for the storage and distribution of food.

The 2004 JAM recommended that WFP's wheat soya blend (WSB) be included in the food basket which increased the basic ration to the 2,100 kcal standard, including 45 grams of protein, 30 grams of fat, and most of the essential micronutrients. The 2006 JAM report did not recommend any changes in the food basket. Therefore the food ration remains and reflects the cultural and dietary preferences of the Bhutanese refugees. The table below summarizes the general food ration:

Food Commodities	Quantity (grams/person/day)
Rice	400
Chickpeas (Small Whole Gram)	20
Lentils	40
Fortified Vegetable Oil	25
Sugar	20
Fortified Blended Food (WSB/Unilito)	35
Iodized Salt	7.5

In addition, UNHCR provides 250 grams of seasonal fresh vegetables and 10 grams of ginger per person per week in order to supplement the basic ration and provide some variation in the ration.

Due to variations in refugee numbers (births, deaths, etc.) WFP uses an estimated beneficiary number of 108,200 to plan food procurement. At the time of the mission, food was being distributed to 106,842 refugees, of which 1,847 were receiving supplementary feeding rations. There was some concern in the difference in figures for those refugees who had left the camp permanently or for extended periods. The Mission recommended that UNHCR and WFP assess the extent of the problem with support from the RCUs to ensure that the distribution figures (possibly through random "head counts" or requiring all family members with ID cards to appear for food distribution,) are adjusted to reflect the actual number of beneficiaries in the camps.

At the moment, only the RCU Camp Supervisor can add or remove refugee names from the camp registration and food distribution lists. The Mission recommended that UNHCR and WFP meet with the Chief District Officer and the RCUs and establish a registration/ration suspension committee. WFP, UNHCR, the RCU and possibly LWF would participate in the committee and together agree who would be added or removed from the food distribution and registration lists in the camp. The committee could also review the list of departures and adjust the food distribution lists accordingly.

LWF is WFP's implementing partner for food delivery and distribution. The

Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA) is responsible for post-distribution food basket monitoring. The Mission noted that there were some inconsistencies in the reporting and monitoring of food distribution and recommended that WFP review procedures with LWF as soon as possible to resolve any problems and ensure compliance with WFP standards (i.e. women, children, elderly should not be unloading heavy food bags.) The review should also take place in light of resettlement, as several of the food distribution workers and monitors have departed or will depart for third countries and need to be replaced and trained.

Ration cards will be collected and the food quantities adjusted downward as refugees leave the camps for resettlement. The mission found that details of this procedure vary between the camps and RCU supervisors. A standard procedure needs to be developed and adhered to by the RCU, CMC, UNHCR, IOM, WFP and LWF, the implementing partner.

### Non-food Items (NFI)

UNHCR is responsible through its partners for the distribution of non-food items (NFI). In light of resettlement, UNHCR plans to continue the regular distribution of NFIs, in part to meet refugee needs but also to refute any claims by anti-resettlement refugees that UNHCR plans to reduce assistance in order to encourage resettlement.

### Cooking Fuel

Despite efforts to control overuse of locally available resources, particularly from the forest, by providing a regular supply of kerosene, the camps have placed increased pressure on the environment. In order to prevent further environmental degradation, briquettes were identified as the most viable source of fuel for cooking in the camps. Since January 2006, briquettes have replaced the kerosene previously distributed to each household. The current ration for briquettes is 25 kg/month for a household with 1-5 members; 30 kg/month for 6-10 members; and 35 kg/month for households with 11 or more members.

### Shelter and Public Buildings

UNHCR through its partners is responsible for the maintenance of the camps and the provision of non-food items. Repair of the housing and public buildings is ongoing. After the fire in Goldhap camp, most of the houses and public buildings have had to be rebuilt. UNHCR took advantage of the fire to redesign the layout of the camp and include firebreaks between sections. Materials have been in short supply and the CMC camp secretary has been preoccupied with the type of roofing materials to use, preferring "sandwich panels" (bamboo lined with plastic sheeting) over thatch. For cost and health reasons, UNHCR opted to use thatch but with the upcoming rainy season it has been difficult to obtain sufficient quantities of thatch. Several families are still living under plastic sheeting and, with the monsoon rains fast-approaching, their housing needs should be addressed as soon as possible.

### Soap

In the past, soap has been made in the camps by the refugees. There have been problems of supply of the raw materials, issues of poor quality, and of cost. Only a few refugees are involved in the soap making project, and no new people are being trained in soap making. The Mission recommended that UNHCR and its

implementing partner review the soap making project and, if not cost effective, that they arrange for local procurement of soap for the refugees.

### Capacity Building and Self Reliance

Both UNHCR and WFP support capacity building and self-reliance activities for the refugees and the local community. WFP is able to do this through the sale of empty WFP food bags and oil tins and some ODOC (Other Direct Operational Costs.) The idea is to strengthen capacity, generate income, and provide skills that will be useful for both communities in the future.

### Education

CARITAS is UNHCR's main partner in providing primary education (preschool through 8<sup>th</sup> grade). CARITAS solely funds the education of students in grades 9 and 10 in all of the camps. According to CARITAS, more than 30,000 students are presently enrolled in the refugee camp schools, and more than 11,000 students have received the Nepali SLC (School Leaving Certificate equivalent to 10<sup>th</sup> grade), from 1992 through 2007.<sup>7</sup>

With its own funding, CARITAS has established child play centers in all the camps and provided some financial support (3,000 Rs per year) for students continuing their high school or higher level education.

The Mission found the Primary Education programme to be running smoothly, meeting the needs of the refugee population and ensuring that the refugee children had the same standard of education as their Nepali counterparts. The issue of teacher turnover was compounded with resettlement; in the past, teachers left to continue their education or teach in Nepali or Indian schools for better pay. As with refugee health workers, the Mission recommended that UNHCR, CARITAS, IOM and the RCU work out a procedure to encourage newly trained teachers to stay for at least one year before going to a third country. The Mission also urged CARITAS to continue to try to recruit female teachers.

With financial support from UNHCR, CARITAS has also established Youth Friendly Centres (YFC) in all of the camps. Youth between the ages of 18-25 participate in a variety of training, awareness and social activities within the camps with the objective of minimizing high risk behavior and encourage the youth to become active members in their communities. As of 2008 there are more than 13,000 members in the Youth Centres; the mission recommended that UNHCR and CARITAS review some of the activities the YFC are involved in, and for the protection of the youth, discourage any activity which takes place after dark. In addition the Mission recommended that both WFP and UNHCR look into involving the youth in awareness campaigns (HIV/AIDS, resettlement, clean-up campaigns, etc.)

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) works with both refugee organizations (Bhutanese Refugee Women's Forum or BRWF, Bhutanese Refugee Children's Forum or BRCF, etc) and has a host community support programme. The Mission visited BRCF, and although was impressed with the number of members and their enthusiasm, it was concerned that they were taking on activities that may not be appropriate for the age group. The Mission recommended that UNHCR and LWF, with possible input from CARITAS review the BRCF training to ensure that their activities did not endanger them (no programmes after dark,) and were appropriate. The BRCF, like the YFC, could be used for awareness raising,

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<sup>7</sup> CARITAS Nepal Bhutanese Refugee Education Programme (BREP) JAM Briefing Report  
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information dissemination, but the messages need to be tailored for the age groups.

### Vocational Training

Both UNHCR and WFP provide funding to CARITAS for Vocational Training (VT). The WFP funded programme provides training to youth from both the refugee and local communities who have dropped out of high school. Classes are mixed with both male and female students from both refugee and local communities (except for tailoring, cosmetics, beautification, and computer classes, which select only female students).

The Mission visited the VT training centres in Damak, Birtamod and in the camps. Although impressed with the courses, the Mission was concerned about possible overlap and duplication of the courses. There was also concern about the number of drop-outs from these courses and suggested that students undergo stricter interviews to obtain commitments from the students, and attend counseling to ensure they continue the course. The Mission also recommended that the "refugee affected area" be more closely defined, so that local Nepali students from the most affected communities are selected for the VT courses.

The Mission recommended that the VT courses be certified by the Government of Nepal recognized body. The certificates would then be more useful for both the Nepali and refugee graduates. Finally, the Mission suggested that with resettlement increasing, UNHCR and IOM discuss with the main resettlement countries to identify the main skills and job opportunities the refugees will need, and adjust the training courses accordingly.

### Medical Training

WFP also supports training medical staff. Implemented by the Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA) some 40 women (an equal number of women from the refugee population and adjacent host communities) participate in an eighteen month course in midwifery and nursing.

With resettlement increasing it will be necessary to continue if not expand this training. UNHCR and WFP should consider increasing the participation of local Nepali staff in the programmes as the refugee population decreases.

### Home Gardening

WFP with LWF and UNHCR as implementing partners supports a home gardening project to supplement the basic ration and facilitate access to fresh vegetables. According to the current PRRO more than 48,000 refugees receive green leafy vegetable seeds and seedlings.<sup>8</sup> Some 18,000 refugees are expected to participate in the home gardening programme in 2008.

The Mission visited some of the agricultural demonstration plots. There was some concern about the demand for the project and its usefulness to the refugees, particularly since many families have at least one person who works outside the camps to supplement family income. Although the project does provide variety in the diet and helps meet the micronutrient requirement of the refugees, the Mission felt that the project should be reviewed by WFP, UNHCR, and LWF with input from the refugees to evaluate whether the project should be continued.

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<sup>8</sup> Nepal PRRO 10058.5 "Food Assistance to Bhutanese Refugees  
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### Supplementary Income Generating Activities

WFP has set up a micro credit loan scheme with the Bhutanese Refugee Women Forum (BRWF,) a voluntary refugee organization that aims to improve the status of women in the camps. Small loans are provided to groups of selected vulnerable refugee women in each camp. The funds are used to set up small scale income generating activities (small shops, tailoring, weaving, etc.) The micro-credit loan scheme project was set up in 2002; the repayment rate for the loans has been 91% over the years. As with the other supplementary activities, the micro-loan activities are funded by the sale of empty WFP food bags and oil tins and other direct operational costs (ODOC).

The Mission noted the success of the micro-loan schemes and recommended that procedures be worked out to ensure that any outstanding loans are repaid before the women and their families save the camps for resettlement in a third country.

### Coordination and Contingency Planning

#### Coordination

The Government of Nepal coordinates the overall assistance provided to the refugees by UNHCR, WFP and NGOs. The Government of Nepal (GoN) provided WFP with an annual contribution of \$100,000 for the procurement of food for the refugees from 1996 to 2006.

UNHCR and WFP have separate agreements with implementing partners for the provision of basic services and assistance to the refugees, especially for food distribution, health, education and training. UNHCR is responsible for the protection of refugee rights as well as health, education, and overall camp management implemented through NGO partners including CARITAS, Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA), and Lutheran World Federation (LWF). IOM is responsible for the transfer of the refugees to and from the camp for interviews and medical screening, and arranges flights from Damak to Kathmandu and then on to the resettlement countries.

The Refugee Coordination Unit (RCU) in Jhapa and the Armed Police Force (APF), under the authority of the Ministry of Home Affairs, oversee refugee security. The RCU is responsible for registration of the refugees including identification documents and travel permits. UNHCR has an agreement with the Ministry and provides some basic operating expenses for the RCU. The Mission recommended that UNHCR and IOM share departure lists with the RCU and WFP as soon as possible. This will ensure that any unresolved issues can be settled before departure, and that the food rolls can be adjusted to reflect the decrease in the population.

Regular inter-agency coordination meetings between the UN agencies, NGOs and government counterparts are held at the central level in Kathmandu. Monthly inter-agency coordination meetings with the RCU, UNHCR, and NGO partners are held at the field level in Jhapa. Sector meetings (food distribution, social services, infrastructure, health, nutrition, etc.) take place as required in Damak or in the camps. The Mission recommended that a sector meeting be set up to review the various vocational training (VT) programmes to minimize duplication and establish standards for the courses.

The refugees are actively involved in the management of the camps, in close coordination with the RCU camp supervisors. UNHCR, WFP, and the implementing partners provide technical and logistical support to the camp management committees.

The camp management committees (CMC) are elected annually by the refugees in each camp. The CMC consists of a camp secretary and deputy, sector heads and sub-sector heads; a coordinator for the community watch team (CWT,) and a gender focal point. Six subcommittees have been created in each camp for administration, infrastructure services, food and non-food distribution, social services, health, and community mediation. (See the Camp Administration Organogram in Annex 6.) The Mission recommended that UNHCR continue to support awareness campaigns on refugee policy, particularly on durable solutions with the refugee leadership in the camps. The Mission also recommended that UNHCR and WFP along with the RCU and APF support and strengthen the Peace Mediation Committees set up with representatives from both the refugee and local host communities to resolve problems between the two groups.

WFP, UNHCR, and the NGO implementing partners promote the role of women in leadership positions. According to the most recent election results 55% of the members of the distribution committee were women, and 50% of the sub-sector heads and assistants were women. Two of the seven camp secretaries are women. The Mission recommended that both UN agencies continue to support and promote the role of women in both the refugee camps and the local communities.

### *Contingency Planning*

Together UNHCR and WFP prepare an annual work plan. This document outlines the major activities planned for the year, and who is responsible for their implementation. With the number of refugees leaving for resettlement, the plan may need to be reviewed periodically. In addition, the Mission recommended that the programme units from each office share information on contracts with implementing partners. This will prove cost efficiency and minimize duplication of staff recruitment, procurement of supplies and materials, etc. The Mission also recommended that detailed procedures be worked out to remove the names of refugees from the registration and food rolls once they leave for resettlement. These procedures need to be standardized with the RCU in all camps.

### Recommendations

The sections above outline the major findings of the 2008 Joint Assessment Mission. The Mission recommendations are included in the above, but for ease of reference they have been summarized in the following table. Each recommendation has a reference to where it is discussed in the text.

UNHCR/WFP Joint Assessment Mission 2008		
Issue	Recommendations	Reference in JAM Report
Resettlement	<u>Ration Suspension due to resettlement:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish clear guidelines for removing names of resettled people from the ration lists.</li> <li>● UNHCR/IOM: share the departure list with the RCU in a timely manner so unresolved issues can be settled prior to camp departure.</li> </ul>	Coordination page 17
	<u>Food distribution and recording:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● WFP: In cases where Assistant Sub-Sector Head (ASSH)/Sub-Sector Head (SSH) have gone for resettlement, organise training for new ASSH/SSH on distribution record keeping. Continue to provide training to current ASSH/SSH and LWF on proper distribution recording procedures.</li> </ul>	Food page 12
	<u>Health Care:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase training of CHW staff and clinic health workers to deal with the loss of trained health care staff (departing for resettlement) and set up procedures to have trained health workers commit for a least one year.</li> <li>● AMDA &amp; UNHCR: investigate strengthening Nepali health facilities and using them as resettlement increases.</li> </ul>	Public Health Page 11 Host Communities page 10
	<u>Education:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue teacher training, particularly for women, and stress the importance of quality teaching in order to cope with increased turn-over and decline of teaching quality due to resettlement</li> </ul>	Resettlement page 7, and Education page 15
Logistics	<u>Food unloading:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review food unloading guidelines with LWF, to resolve any problems and ensure compliance with WFP standards (i.e. food unloading should not be done by children, women or the elderly).</li> </ul>	Food Page 14
	<u>Warehouse and handling losses (LWF responsibility):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● WFP &amp; LWF, with CMC and refugees involved in food distribution: improve and reinforce the existing recording system to ensure better transparency and clarity.</li> </ul>	Food Page 13-14
	<u>Ration Suspension due to long absence:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● UNHCR &amp; WFP: assess the extent of recorded vs. actual absenteeism, potentially through a head-count exercise, to ensure food/non-food rations are not distributed to non-existent beneficiaries.</li> <li>● UNHCR, WFP, LWF &amp; local authorities: discuss the establishment of a ration suspension committee to ensure their involvement in any decisions to suspend rations.</li> <li>● Proposed ration suspension committee: work to collect ration cards and remove the names of the resettled refugees from the food lists.</li> </ul>	Food page 13-14

Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue to support awareness campaigns among camp leaders on refugee policy, especially regarding durable solutions.</li> <li>● Given the security situation in the camps, discourage night activities by refugees or CBOs and regularize coordination between refugee organizations and the camp security system.</li> <li>● Improve coordination between APF and civilian police.</li> <li>● Continue APF &amp; local police SGBV training and strengthen the rotation system.</li> <li>● Immediately investigate any incidents with APF members and transfer/remove such members from a position of authority.</li> </ul>	<p>Coordination page 18,</p> <p>Education page 15-16</p> <p>Protection page 9</p>
Health & Nutrition	<p><u>Home Gardening:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Undertake a joint WFP/UNHCR evaluation of the nutritional impact of the home gardening project, in order to determine if the programme could be expanded to include other vulnerable groups.</li> </ul>	Home Gardening page 16-17
	<p><u>Vita-mix-it (Sprinkles):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify funding sources should the upcoming final evaluation conclude the project be continued.</li> </ul>	Nutrition page 12
	<p><u>Training:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● UNHCR, WFP &amp; AMDA (with possible input for the DHO): provide Health care staff with a refresher course in general nutrition practices (anthropometric measurements, breastfeeding, nutritious foods, weaning etc.).</li> </ul>	Nutrition Page 12
	<p><u>Coordination:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strengthen cooperation between UNHCR, AMDA, the Gov't Hospital, and refugee health staff; improve the CHW reporting and supervision system; and revise the referral system.</li> </ul>	Health Page 11-12
Self-Reliance	<p><u>Vocational Training (VT):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Revise the definition of "refugee-affected areas."</li> <li>● Obtain official government certification for Vocational Training programmes.</li> <li>● Create a database of graduates and ensure effective follow-up.</li> <li>● Address the issue of the drop-out rate, possibly through a stricter interview and selection process, and periodic counseling.</li> <li>● Obtain information from resettlement countries on their labour needs and incorporate these into VT programmes.</li> </ul>	Vocational Training Page 16
Partnership, Coordination and Host Community Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SADG should coordinate with AMDA and the District Public Health Officer (DHO) in order to strengthen their HIV/AIDS training programmes.</li> <li>● Strengthen and improve links with local health authorities and local NGOs providing AIDS awareness. Conduct street theatre /arts programmes on SGBV &amp; HIV/AIDS more than once a year to reach the entire population and especially mobile, high-risk persons. In relation to SGBV, stress the importance of rapid reporting of incidents.</li> <li>● WFP/UNHCR: coordinate with CARITAS to maximize the potential of YFC in the camps, with regards to information dissemination.</li> <li>● Continue to support to the Mediation and Peace Committees in the camps and host communities by all stakeholders.</li> <li>● Continue to support communication and relationship-building between locals &amp; refugees (e.g. further vocational training programs).</li> <li>● LWF, BRWF, AMDA &amp; CARITAS: strengthen coordination between existing VT programmes to avoid training duplication.</li> <li>● Continue to encourage information sharing between all agencies and implementing partners on common programmes and contingency planning.</li> </ul>	<p>Health HIV/AIDS Page 11</p> <p>Education page 15</p> <p>Coordination page 18</p> <p>Contingency Planning page 18</p>

## Annexes

Annex	Content
1	Camp Locations
2	Mission Programme (List of Participants, Itinerary)
3	Terms of Reference
4	Camp Population by Age & Gender as of March 2008
5	Camp Management Committee (CMC) Organogram

