

22 November 2006

REFERENCE:

Dear Colleagues,

A subject of continued concern to us all has been enhancing security collaboration between the United Nations (UN) system and its NGO partners. Because our work in the field is more and more dangerous, such collaboration is more important than ever. Sharing security information, resources and training is essential to the maintenance of operations in hazardous environments, in which we are all too frequently compelled to work.

The IASC Security Task Force fostered efforts which promoted a common understanding of the situation and the factors that affect the safety and security of all humanitarian actors. As a result, we are pleased to provide *Saving Lives Together*, a product of extensive consultations conducted under the auspices of the IASC.

Saving Lives Together serves as a framework of best practices on security collaboration which may be implemented without imposing upon our respective mandates or compromising the neutrality of humanitarian efforts. The Framework has been well received by all concerned and was welcomed by Member States in an informal meeting at the UN in New York on 6 October 2006.

This initiative has been approved by the High Level Committee on Management (HLCM) as the framework for enhancing security collaboration between the UN system and non-governmental organizations.

We encourage UN Country Teams, particularly those responding to crisis situations, to convene meetings with relevant humanitarian partners, with the aim of identifying and implementing the procedures described therein relevant to their operational environment.

We hope that *Saving Lives Together* further increases the collaboration between the UN system and its humanitarian partners to improve the operational security environment for all organizations involved in humanitarian response.



Jan Egeland
Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs
and Emergency Relief Coordinator



Sir David Veness
Under-Secretary-General for
Staff Safety and Security

Saving Lives Together

“A Framework for improving Security Arrangements among IGOs, NGOs and the UN in the Field”

1. Collaboration in the UN Security Management Team with Participation of NGOs/ and IGOs

- a) That IGOs and NGOs may participate in relevant meetings of the UN Security Management Team (SMT) on an ex-officio¹, representative basis.
- b) That UN/NGO/IGO Security Collaboration be taken as a regular agenda item at UN Security Management Team meetings. As permitted within the framework of the UN Security Management System, consideration should be given to inviting Senior Managers of the NGO and IGO Communities to attend relevant portions of Security Management Team meetings.
- c) That Protocols for sharing and dissemination of information discussed in Security Management Team meetings shall be agreed to in advance by all parties in attendance.
- d) That where appropriate, the DO should coordinate security decisions with non-UN humanitarian actors.
- e) That IGO/NGO partners to UN organizations in specific humanitarian operations select among themselves one or a limited number of field security focal points.

2. Convening broad-based forums for field security collaboration and information sharing

- a) That fora for practical security collaboration among all humanitarian actors at area, country and sub-office level be convened, at regular intervals, in order to address practical security issues of common concern.
- b) That the fora may include the following regular participants:
 - DO / FSO / Area Security Coordinator or other DO Designee;
 - Members of the SMT as appropriate;
 - NGO field security focal point(s);
 - Representatives of IGOs;
 - The chairperson may be chosen on a rotating basis.

¹ Ex officio here refers to the fact that representatives of non-UN organizations are not bound by, nor participate formally in, SMT decisions on UN security policy.

c) That the fora may include topics of discussion, such as:

- The exchange of security related information;
- Incident reports;
- Security and trend analysis;
- Joint operational planning, as appropriate;
- Protocols for the sharing and further dissemination of information and documents presented or discussed.

3. Including Staff Security Concerns in the Consolidated Appeals

That structured efforts to include well conceived and developed UN / NGO / IGO security projects within CAPs to cover the additional resources potentially required for enhanced collaboration on staff security by UN Agencies and NGOs / IGOs, such as telecommunications and security training.

4. Meeting Common Security-Related Needs and Sharing Resources

That whilst recognizing that individual NGOs' financial resources are often more modest than those of the UN or IGOs, their contributions are nonetheless needed and that consideration should be given to what resources could be made available to help address common security related needs.

That UN organizations and their IGO/NGO partners, committed to security collaboration in each specific humanitarian operation, participate, to the extent feasible and based on the extent of their involvement, in meeting the uncovered, security-related needs of the humanitarian community.

5. Sharing Resources

That UN organizations and their IGO/NGO partners cooperating in humanitarian field operations, develop a local inventory for the sharing of their specialized, security-related human and material resources.

6. Facilitating Inter-Agency Security and Emergency Telecommunications

That telecommunication among UN organizations and their IGO/NGO partners at field level be facilitated by:

- a) The DO advocating with the relevant authorities for the use of telecommunication equipment within the framework of existing international agreements;
- b) The relevant UN body negotiating with the authorities a common, inter-agency frequency to facilitate greater interoperability for security collaboration for UN organizations and IGO/NGO operating in the same area without denying the need for agencies to have their own internal and integral communications infrastructure.

c) Humanitarian actors committing to security collaboration using standard communication procedures and, to the extent possible, providing staff with compatible communication systems.

7. Collaborating and Consulting in Security Training

That all UN organizations and their IGO/NGO partners at HQ and at field level:

- a) Carry out joint security training in collaboration and/or consultation with other agencies to the extent possible.
- b) When feasible, pool necessary resources to conduct field security training;
- c) Seek to increase their capacity for security training at all levels;
- d) Give consideration to the development of training packages that focus specifically on improving security collaboration.

8. Sharing Information

That security-related information be shared among UN organizations and their IGO/NGO partners while respecting the humanitarian character of the participants as well as the confidentiality required when dealing with sensitive information.

9. Identifying Minimum Security Standards

That UN organizations and their IGO/NGO partners jointly identify and agree on how to apply minimum security standards, principles, and/or guidelines adapted to local circumstances. In so doing, humanitarian actors will take into consideration already existing standards, principles, and/or guidelines for example the UN MOSS (Minimum Operational Security Standards) that are binding for the members of the UN system and InterAction's Security Planning Guidelines.

10. Seeking Adherence to Common Humanitarian Ground-Rules

That the security collaboration of the UN organizations and their IGO/NGO partners in specific field operations, to the extent possible, rest on respect for common, locally developed ground-rules for humanitarian action.