

Final

Human Rights Coordination Structure

Objective

The objective of this document is to present the nature, composition, responsibilities and functioning of the Theme Group on Human Rights (TGHR) and its relation with the other human rights related coordination structures.

Background

Pursuant to the Secretary' General's report "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change"¹ a Plan of Action (known as "Action 2") has been prepared to develop the capacity of the UN humanitarian and development operations, so that they can support the efforts of Member States in establishing and strengthening national human rights promotion and protection systems consistent with international human rights norms and principles. UN Country teams are crucial entry points and vehicles for implementation of this Plan, which should allow Member States to benefit from enhanced complementary and effectiveness of human rights assistance tailored to their needs and requests.²

To achieve this goal, the UN Country Team in Angola presented in December of last year its input to the global Plan of Action, setting some specific objectives and outcomes including the establishment of a "thematic group, or other appropriate mechanisms to deal with human rights issues"³

We are still awaiting a global implementation strategy to be presented by the OHCHR, ECHA and DGO headquarters. Meanwhile, we believe the time has now come to present a proposed country-specific implementation plan for Angola, which perhaps could even serve as an input to the global strategy.

In November 2002, the Country Management Team agreed to constitute a UN Theme Group on Human Rights, with the Human Rights Division from the United Nations Mission (UNMA) serving as secretariat. During the following months the initiative had no follow-up and the human rights/protection work has been done at the UN Agency level without a common coordination framework.

The current post-conflict context presents important challenges also in terms of human rights and rule of law enforcement that transcends the mandate of any single UN Agency. The no-discriminatory reintegration of almost one third of the Angolan population including former combatants, the preparation of the elections in a tolerant environment and the reconciliation among Angolans are only evident examples of issues to be closely monitored and eventually redressed to avoid that the permanence of a

¹ Executive summary of "Strengthening human rights-related United Nations action at country level; National human rights promotion and protection systems Plan of Action.

² Action 2. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will develop and implement a plan, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Group and the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs, to strengthen human rights related United Nations action at the country level.

³ idem

culture of abuses and privileges slows down the implementation of a participative democratic society.

The UN system, in order to be effective, needs to act as a whole, conveying the same message to multiple stakeholders from different sources. A strong coordination framework that creates synergies among the Agencies could facilitate the task.

The proposed structure includes the new TGHR, building on the existing Protection of Civilians Working Group, as well as on the networks on child protection, refugees and the network that UNHROA is already maintaining with the donor community and the NGOs.

Nature

The TGHR is a mechanism established by the UN Country Team to ensure an increasingly functional, relevant and effective programme of assistance in the area of human rights in Angola. The TGHR is responsible for coordinating the action on human rights of different stakeholders as well as for monitoring the human rights situation, providing policy and strategic guidance on human rights, and for defining and implementing a common advocacy strategy.

The THGR will also serve as a vehicle for the Un Country Team to progressively integrate human rights into its mission and consider its implications for their humanitarian and development programmes, as an implementation instrument of Action 2.

Composition

The TGHR is a body comprised of the Heads of all UN Agencies and Programmes, WB, IMF, IOM, as well as a maximum of three representatives of the Angolan and international civil society.

Coordination and operating procedures

The RC/HC or his designee chairs the TGHR with the assistance of UNHROA. The latter will be acting as the secretariat, after discussion with the Office of the RC/HC and on the basis of the inputs from the Protection of Civilians Working Group and from the three existing thematic networks. The Secretariat is in charge of:

- organising and preparing the meetings;
- preparing the minutes of the meetings;
- preparing briefing notes on the situation and on activities implemented;
- preparing proposals and recommendations to be presented to the TGHR;
- preparing periodical reports on the Human Rights situation.

The TGHR functions through regular meetings once every second month and extraordinary sessions whenever the need arises.

Responsibilities

The TGHR is responsible for:

1. Analyzing the main factors of human rights change, examining issues and identifying pattern of human rights abuses facing the Angolan society (not least in the provinces), assessing the adequacy of policy and measures undertaken by the relevant authorities;

2. Creating advocacy mechanisms to raise protection and human rights concerns with the Government, civil society and the donor community whenever it is needed;
3. Identifying opportunities for cooperation in programming, conceptualizing proposals and plans of action in human rights areas identified as strategic in the next future, including resettlement, return and reintegration, civil and electoral registration, land tenure, protection in particular of vulnerable groups, human rights enforcement, technical cooperation, training and dissemination;
4. Working with other donors to ensure that financial support to the country's reconstruction efforts, i.a. through a donors' conference, will be based on a set of objectives and milestones, reflecting universal principles of human rights and democracy and that fundamental human rights issues will be fully reflected in every stage of the negotiations;
5. Actively encouraging the Government of Angola to ratify/accede to international human rights treaties to which they are not a party, to fulfill their reporting obligations under those treaties, to follow up on human rights issues agreed at various global conferences, and generally to implement the full range of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, including the right to development, through coordinated and integrated action to those ends;
6. Ensuring that the country's upcoming electoral process is prepared and implemented in full accordance with the internationally recognized principles of democracy and the rule of law, and coordinating whatever support the UN system is requested to offer in that regard;
7. Monitoring that the Strategy to combat poverty and the MDG, as well as the reform process of the judicial sector (ref. The Presidential Commission established for that purpose) are all systematically implemented according to the country's obligations with regard to international human rights treaties;
8. Supporting the implementation of the NHRAP and the establishment of national human rights institutions, as foreseen in the Draft Constitution;
9. Ensuring adequate agency representation in the Protection of Civilians Working Group, and providing overall guidance to the Protection of Civilians Working Group and the networks, review their recommendations, take appropriate actions, and instruct them on further steps to be taken.

Methodology

The TGHR can rely on a Protection of Civilians Working Group and the three thematic networks (see below) for addressing specific issues and tasks that fall within their mandate.

The Protection of Civilians Working Group currently chaired by OCHA, will be co-chaired by the UNHROA and the TCU, will meet twice a month and will assist the Secretariat in identifying the main issues for the discussion of the TGHR and will formulate proposals to be submitted to the TGHR. In addition, the Protection of Civilians Working Group is expected to work out the more technical aspects of the decisions taken by the TGHR, to conceptualize and elaborate policies and strategies, and to oversee the practical implementation of the decisions.

The Child Protection Network chaired by UNICEF, the Refugees Protection Network chaired by UNHCR and the Human Rights Network chaired by UNHROA will regularly

provide information and inputs to the Protection of Civilians Working Group through their chair persons which are members of the PCWG.

An overall strategy shall be agreed upon by the TGHR, and plans of action shall be worked out in accordance thereto.

Programme objectives as well as activities and intended outcomes are to be defined, bearing in mind priorities and available resources. The TGHR shall establish indicators for measuring outcomes and progress towards the set objectives. Reviews of progress will be made at regular intervals.

Members of the TGHR may decide that a special on-site- fact-finding mission needs to be undertaken, whenever necessary. The TGHR may also decide to deploy a team, to carry out specific assessments or obtain relevant information on a particular situation.