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International Council of Voluntary Agencies
Conseil International des Agences Bénévoles
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ICVA Mission Statement

Adopted by the 12th ICVA General Assembly, February 2003

ICVA – An Advocacy Alliance for Humanitarian Action

The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) is a non-profit global association of non-governmental organisations that works as a collective body to promote, and advocate for, human rights and a humanitarian perspective in global debates and responses. The heart of the ICVA mission is to support NGOs to protect and assist people in need, to address the causes of their plight, and to act as a channel for translating patterns and trends into advocacy.

ICVA seeks to strengthen NGOs as part of civil society through the relationships among member organisations from around the world. It facilitates the sharing and creative use of practical experience and strategies to promote and protect human rights, including those of refugees and displaced peoples, and to provide humanitarian assistance from the perspective of justice and sustainable development. ICVA fosters partnerships among agencies for the sharing and dissemination of information to attain consensus among member agencies on prioritised issues in order to effect change, particularly at the international level.

ICVA advocates vis-à-vis governments and international agencies for a strong NGO role in efforts to secure human rights, prevent conflicts, prepare for disasters, and improve humanitarian responses to distressed populations. Through its cooperative and catalytic nature, it gathers and exchanges information and raises awareness on the most vital matters of humanitarian concern before policy-making bodies.

ICVA has been in existence since 1962. It works to secure the commitment of the world community to address injustice, ensure dignity and rights, and promote international strategies that attend to human needs. Today's NGO members are strengthened in their missions to provide global assistance through the power and persuasion of the ICVA alliance. Tomorrow's members will continue to enrich the network with experience and opinion and will strengthen the impact of this alliance in bringing about a just world.

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FOREWORD FROM ICVA'S CHAIR

The ICVA Conference in February 2003, on the theme of “*NGOs in a Changing World Order: Dilemmas and Challenges*,” included plenary discussions on the increasing presence of military forces and the independence of NGOs, on the effects of the changing world order on the protection of displaced persons and migrants, and on so-called “forgotten crises.” Unfortunately, during the course of the year, all three of the issues highlighted in February became more troubling. The 19 August 2003 bombing of the UN headquarters in Iraq, the targeting of foreign aid workers, the increased blurring of humanitarian and military action, and the continuing “forgotten emergencies” are all indications of the deteriorating environment for humanitarian action.

The context in which humanitarian assistance is carried out has become more complex, more difficult, and more dangerous. The “war on terrorism” has introduced new levels of restrictions on the movement of people and a further blurring of humanitarian and security concerns. Long-established humanitarian principles are being called into question. The actors in humanitarian assistance are becoming more diverse. Along with the UN agencies and international and national NGOs, military personnel, for-profit humanitarian actors, and a host of new NGOs are now providing assistance. In this context, it is more important than ever that ICVA offers a forum for discussion of key burning issues

The difficult climate for humanitarian work also presents new opportunities for ICVA to become even more active in the international policy debates. At a time when there are so many questions about the future of humanitarian action and where no one has clear answers, NGO contributions are increasingly valued.

ICVA'S OBJECTIVES

Within the framework of ICVA's mission statement are definable objectives, which are aimed at the members and also at the Secretariat. While these objectives are quite broad, they are to be read in conjunction with ICVA's mission statement.

- ◆ Enhance the ability of NGOs to follow and influence current themes and practice in the humanitarian sector;
- ◆ Bring field-based perspectives into international policy and decision-making bodies and forums;
- ◆ Ensure that international policy and discussions inform field practice through the translation of those discussions into practical relevance;
- ◆ Enhance the capacities of members by having them work together; and
- ◆ Ensure full transparency and accountability of the functioning of the Secretariat.

ICVA continues to be an influential spokesperson for the NGO community in various international forums, including UNHCR, OCHA, and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. ICVA's unique North-South membership has enabled it to speak not only on behalf of large international NGOs, but to express the concerns of smaller organisations in the South that are rarely able to be present in UN meetings. In particular, ICVA made substantial contributions in the course of the year to the continuing debate on internally displaced persons.

The ICVA Executive Committee (EXCOM), elected at the February 2003 General Assembly, has worked hard this past year. In addition to engaging in substantive discussions on humanitarian work, the EXCOM spent considerable time on ICVA's always difficult financial situation and a new membership dues policy was adopted.

In spite of these difficulties, it has been a good year for ICVA, with new initiatives undertaken and with growing recognition of its role as a credible NGO spokesperson. These accomplishments are due in large measure to the dedicated work of the small staff of the ICVA Secretariat, as well as to the strong support of the membership, partners in the NGO and UN communities, donors, and the dedicated members of the Executive Committee.

With gratitude for your continued support of ICVA.

Elizabeth Ferris
Chair, ICVA Executive Committee

ICVA'S PRIMARY FUNCTIONS

Together, the objectives and the mission statement serve as the signposts that guide the five primary functions of ICVA:

1. Information-sharing;
2. Advocacy, particularly in terms of putting issues on the international agenda;
3. Strengthening the NGO community;
4. Facilitating relationships with UN agencies and other international organisations; and
5. Enhancing NGO visibility through representation.

AN INTRODUCTION TO ICVA

With approximately half of ICVA's membership of humanitarian, human rights, and development NGOs based in developing countries, ICVA is the only network focusing on humanitarian and refugee policy issues with such a broad membership. ICVA attempts to influence policy and practice to reflect humanitarian principles and human rights through information-exchange and advocacy.

In 2003, ICVA's members came together for the 12th ICVA General Assembly in Geneva and adopted a three-year work plan for the network, as well as a mission statement reaffirming ICVA's direction. The strength and importance of such a network was reiterated and the commitment to working together as NGOs was renewed.

One of ICVA's greatest strengths is the ability to bring the field-based perspectives of its member NGOs to various international decision-making bodies and to enable those decisions to be subsequently translated to the field level. Individual NGOs are often not able to access such forums, but through a network like ICVA, NGOs are able to consolidate their input and use ICVA as a vehicle or channel for NGO views in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC – the UN's humanitarian coordination body) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' Executive Committee (EXCOM), for example.

In terms of refugee policy issues, ICVA is in a unique position vis-à-vis UNHCR. ICVA continued to coordinate NGO input to UNHCR's Standing and Executive Committees and to co-host the NGO-

REACH OUT – CONTRIBUTING TO BETTER REFUGEE PROTECTION?

ICVA continued to participate in the inter-agency Reach Out Refugee Protection training project, particularly with a greater commitment to help in the management of the project towards the end of 2003. An external evaluation of the project found that the project had essentially achieved what it set out to do in terms of training, but that certain improvements could be made. At the same time, a number of areas for future development were identified. As such, the Working Group overseeing the project decided to continue the project until the end of 2005. The two-year extension was agreed so that the project could, *inter alia*, continue to provide targeted trainings in regions that had not been sufficiently covered; ensure a smooth exit strategy allowing for the training materials to be housed in appropriate locations; and to look at developing materials that would target senior managers in organisations.

UNHCR Pre-Executive Committee Consultations. There is also an ongoing relationship between UNHCR and ICVA through which ICVA constantly works to improve partnership between UNHCR and NGOs in order to enhance refugee protection – on the ground and through advocacy.

A key function of ICVA is to share timely and accurate information on humanitarian affairs with, and among, its members to better enable them to take informed decisions with regards to their operations and/or advocacy. ICVA's information tools are well-known: a website (www.icva.ch) with a members' only section; an electronic newsletter, *Talk Back*, meeting reports; and regular notes for the file or updates. On the website's members' only section (accessible with a username and password for all staff of ICVA member agencies by writing to webmaster@icva.ch), documents can be found that require members' input, feedback, or discussion and that are not (yet) available in the public domain.

UN agencies or governmental actors often turn to ICVA as a mechanism for “consultation with NGOs.” While the ICVA Secretariat repeatedly resists being seen as speaking on behalf of all NGOs or even of its whole membership, the importance of a mechanism that brings together NGOs that can act as an NGO representative at meetings where access is limited and that can refer governments and international organisations to the role and experiences of its members has been widely recognised as a role fulfilled by ICVA.

Despite these initiatives, the outstanding question does remain as to how much of an impact a training project can have on refugee protection. While training is very much needed among humanitarian workers, translating that training into longer-term institutional change is a challenge that NGOs and the Red Cross movement still have to tackle. Reach Out has, however, helped to at least get many organisations thinking about protection – a necessary step to more permanent inclusion of protection considerations in programming.

THE ROLE OF NGOs IN CHALLENGING

A key-theme for ICVA in 2003 has been the implications of the post-11 September 2001 political agenda for NGOs, in general, and for ICVA, in particular. In his report to the General Assembly held at the end of February in Geneva, the outgoing ICVA Chair, Anders Ladekarl, noted that “instead of believing in the strengths of our democratic institutions, the rule of law, international cooperation and fighting the root causes of the threat, we accepted to fight the war against terror just the way that the terrorists expected us to do – by going to war.”

Two days earlier, at the ICVA Conference preceding the 12th General Assembly, “*NGOs in a Changing World Order: Dilemmas and Challenges*,” the keynote speaker, Iain Levine of Human Rights Watch had expressed similar concerns: “An anti-terrorism policy that ignores human rights is a gift to terrorists. It reaffirms the violent instrumentalism that breeds terrorism as it undermines the public support needed to defeat terrorism.” As defenders and promoters of the fundamental international standards of human rights and humanitarian action, NGOs need to reflect on the implications of this new context for their positions, policies, and programmes.

In offering a venue for such a reflection, the ICVA Conference, held on 14 and 15 February, presented several challenging questions and dilemmas for NGOs. A special issue of *Talk Back* was produced for the Conference, which provided background papers to stimulate thinking and debate. These included the question of what position to take on the (then imminent) war in Iraq, the politicisation of humanitarian action, the relationship with military forces, and the impact of the war on terror on the rights of migrants and refugees.

Among the many thought-provoking speeches and debates, Professor B.S. Chimni’s introduction was certainly one of the most controversial presentations of the Conference. In pointing to the dominance of hegemonic Western States, he challenged the position of humanitarian NGOs, citing them as “an integral part of their [the hegemonic states’] global strategy to give violence and injustice a human face.” “Humanitarianism is the ideology

FORGOTTEN CRISES

The 2003 ICVA General Assembly selected the theme of “forgotten crises” as a main priority for the network. Many humanitarian crises are, in fact, more ignored than forgotten. The main reason for using the term “forgotten” is to highlight the inequality in addressing humanitarian need world-wide because of the lack of international attention, money, and/or strategic interests. From a moral, if not principled point of view, humanitarian NGOs cannot accept these differences.

THE NEW WORLD ORDER

of hegemonic states in the era of globalisation marked by a growing North-South divide and humanitarian NGOs are its key carriers,” he added.

He also urged that, “NGOs should avoid becoming an arm of the status quo, rushing towards every new crisis with the salve of humanitarian action, but lacking any broader, more critical, analysis.” According to him, this reactive approach may not only improve the situation of the population, but it may also benefit the aspirations of Western States, a dilemma that NGOs need to take into consideration.

One key theme raised in this regard relates to the question of independence. According to Chimni, only independent NGOs will be able “to manifest their refusal to legitimise and sustain the changing, but unjust world order.” In discussing this point, it was noted that independence does not only depend on the amount of governmental funding, but on a variety of factors, including the particular “personality” and profile of the relevant NGO.

The extent to which NGOs are change-focused and not just “followers” was another issue for debate. Adopting a wider connotation of humanitarianism allows NGOs to do more than just respond. Many NGOs engage, nowadays, in conflict prevention activities. They are not automatic upholders of the status quo.

Throughout the Conference and General Assembly, it was felt that the new context of the war on terror requires NGOs to increase their collaboration and to form new strategic alliances among NGOs, as well as between NGOs and progressive thinkers within the UN. There was wide agreement that common values and interests will bring us together. As one expression of this consensus, the General Assembly emphasised the desire to increase the cohesion among the ICVA family in an effort to jointly address the contemporary challenges confronting us.

In picking up one such situation, ICVA members and the Secretariat brought the crisis in the Indonesian province of Aceh to the attention of the IASC and spoke out against the lack of action on the part of the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator and other UN officials based in the country to push for unconditional humanitarian access to the area. In September 2003, the IASC Working Group agreed on a strategy to step up efforts to negotiate access with the authorities. While the advocacy of the NGOs can be seen as successful in raising the profile of the Aceh crisis within the UN, there have been few significant improvements on the ground.

THE STATE OF PROTECTION IN THE

Over the past several years, many humanitarian agencies have become increasingly aware of their responsibility to not only assist crisis-affected populations through the provision of basic services, but to also contribute to the protection of their human rights. Yet, the operationalisation of protection on the ground still leaves much to be desired. ICVA, therefore, continues to promote, support, and facilitate policy discussions on protection, and to help translate these discussions into practical action.

Examples of this involvement are the contributions to the IASC Task Force on Humanitarian Action and Human Rights, the emphasis on protection-focused activities within the response to internally displaced persons (IDPs), and participation and involvement in refugee policy forums, such as UNHCR's Standing and Executive Committees and the refugee protection training programme, Reach Out.

More specifically, ICVA also convened or helped to organise meetings or events devoted to protection. In March, the ICVA Secretariat organised a roundtable meeting on the report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty on "the responsibility to protect," a meeting which ICVA co-convened with the World Federalist Movement. This report defines a threshold for military intervention in the case of large-scale loss of lives or large scale ethnic cleansing. As the meeting illustrated, many NGOs find it difficult to take a position on when there is a need for such an intervention. They pointed, however, to the relevance of the debates in the Security Council on the protection of civilians in armed conflict and the need to monitor this process more rigorously. These debates also offer a mechanism for linking the political and humanitarian dimensions of protection.

At the end of the year, UNHCR and NGOs met in a retreat to discuss their collaboration in refugee protection. UNHCR's main question for this meeting was what NGOs understand as their role in protection. The NGOs wanted to know if UNHCR is really open to collaboration on protection. The collaboration and coordination on

STRENGTHENING THE LINK BETWEEN SPHERE STANDARDS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Significant time and efforts were devoted to the revision of the Sphere Handbook in 2003. The ICVA Coordinator acted as the focal point for incorporating protection elements into the new version. ICVA also helped to organise a meeting between human rights experts and humanitarian practitioners on the "rights" basis of the technical standards in April as part of the revision process.

While Sphere has often been cited as one of the examples of a "rights-based" instrument that guides the delivery of humanitarian assistance, there is less understanding of what this actually means. Following the experts' meeting, the new 2003 revised Sphere edition enhances the linkage between the technical standards and human rights by explaining the foundations in international law (human rights law, international humanitarian law, refugee law, and other international instruments) of the various sectors of humanitarian assistance, including water and sanitation, food, shelter, and health-care. The 2003 edition of the handbook also contains a reference to the collection of humanitarian information, for example through needs assessments and continuous monitoring, and that this information may include human rights indicators that should not be forgotten.

HUMANITARIAN SECTOR

protection activities between UNHCR and NGOs seem to be more ad hoc and/or personality driven than mainstreamed and part and parcel of the organisational culture, in spite of earlier commitments made. UNHCR and NGO staff must be engaged in a continuous dialogue, on an equal footing, to discuss their differences and to explore their commonalities in the protection of refugees.

More needs to be done, however, in order to operationalise protection on the ground. More UN agencies and actors need to step up their role. Also in 2003, ICVA continued to push the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to become more active in collaborating with humanitarian agencies. The Office should ensure that mechanisms for collaboration with operational agencies are put in place and that human rights monitors are deployed in a timely manner in crisis areas.

Priority also needs to be placed on ensuring that humanitarian coordinators do not ignore, or, worse, avoid their responsibilities in protection. The several studies on the response to IDPs in 2003 showed that, too often, these high-level officials leading in the coordination of the humanitarian response do not want to engage in protection and human rights issues. Protection needs to be an integral part of all inter-agency coordination meetings. Fortunately, more and more inter-agency protection working groups are emerging on the ground. These groups, however, are not an option, but a necessity.

For 2004, ICVA has set the priority to take stock of the state of inter-agency processes and initiatives on protection to date. While much work has been done at the headquarters level, the priority now must be on implementation at the field level. Experience shows that emergency response is still largely dominated by the hardware of full cargo planes, four-wheel drives, and bladder tanks. When do we start sending out armies of protection officers to join our logisticians, field officers, doctors, and nurses?

RESPONDING TO ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION

Following the reports of sexual exploitation in refugee camps in West Africa, there has been an increased focus on the development of codes of conduct or standards and complaints mechanisms that cover the behaviour of field staff of humanitarian agencies. Mechanisms for investigations looking into allegations of abuse and exploitation by field staff have received lesser attention. In making an effort to deal with this issue, UNHCR, in particular its Inspector General, requested the secondment of an NGO gender and child specialist to the Investigation Unit to build additional expertise.

The International Rescue Committee, an ICVA member, provided an initial secondment for the development of a handbook on how to conduct investigations into allegations of staff misconduct. During 2003, the ICVA membership demonstrated a great deal of interest in such a project and in becoming involved. In addition, other (UN) agencies, such as Unicef, were supportive of the idea to further develop this initiative into an inter-agency project. As a result, it was decided that ICVA would become the host of this inter-agency project. A project full-time staff member will be recruited in 2004 who will complete the handbook and lead a training process.

DEBATING THE FUTURE OF HUMANITARIANISM

The devastating bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad on 19 August 2003, as well as a series of other attacks on aid workers in Iraq and Afghanistan, prompted a serious reflection on the security of humanitarian staff within the humanitarian community in the second half of 2003. Questions were being debated in humanitarian forums, including the IASC and others, such as: what are the reasons and factors behind these attacks? Are the security problems specific to the context of Afghanistan and Iraq? And, how to respond to these new challenges?

The debate, loosely labelled as “the future of humanitarianism,” about the new security challenges cannot be separated from the more fundamental issues relating to humanitarian identity and principles. As the nineties saw a huge increase and proliferation in the numbers and types of actors calling themselves “humanitarian,” it is thought now that the term has become too much of a catch-phrase for all sorts of actors and activities that, in fact, do not adhere to or conform with humanitarian principles or the Red Cross/NGO Code of Conduct.

In particular, the encroachment of international military forces on the humanitarian sphere has caused anxiety among many humanitarian agencies. These agencies fear too close an alignment or association with these military forces and/or the countries and the politics from where they come. Many NGOs feel that the blurring of lines between political and humanitarian action has created serious access and security problems. They are also critical of the UN’s coherence agenda and trend of setting up “integrated missions,” which bring political objectives and humanitarian concerns under a single structure.

In this context, the ICVA Executive Committee decided in October 2003 to engage in a project to mark the 10th anniversary of the Red Cross/NGO Code of Conduct in 2004. This project, which is carried out jointly with the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR), not only aims to reinvigorate the Code, but also seeks to support and promote a better understanding and application of the Code by humanitarian agencies in general and the ICVA membership in particular. In this sense, it is hoped that a better application of the Code could contribute to more clarity over who is who in the humanitarian sector. The findings of the Project may also suggest particular changes that could improve the Code.

NGO-UNHCR PRE-EXCOM CONSULTATIONS

Once a year, NGOs and UNHCR have the opportunity to sit down to discuss various aspects of refugee protection and partnership between UNHCR and NGOs. The Pre-EXCOM Consultations of 2003, for the first time, had the agenda set in broader consultation with NGOs by asking their opinions on possible topics that they would like to see discussed. The result was an agenda that reflected the interests of a broad range of NGOs. ICVA also provided an introductory briefing/orientation for interested NGOs prior to Pre-EXCOM that also allowed UNHCR and NGO staff to make contacts.

In the debate in the IASC on the security of humanitarian staff, ICVA's contributions have focused in particular on the differences in how the UN and NGOs approach the issue: the UN is more risk-averse while NGOs try to manage risk and, hence, their security. Central in this management for NGOs is the relationship between humanitarian needs, (in)security, and risk. The greater the needs of civilians and the greater their insecurity, the greater the need for humanitarian assistance and the greater the risks that many humanitarian NGO staff are prepared to accept.

Another crucial aspect on which ICVA has insisted relates to the inclusion of national NGOs and national staff of international agencies in the security debate. Too often, the debate focuses exclusively on the security of Western expatriate staff, whereas national NGOs and/or national staff are key actors in maintaining close relations with local communities, and, because of these relations, may have a different perspective on the security situation.

The issue of perceptions in this regard is equally important. The more an NGO's background is understood by the local population, and the more the behaviour and lifestyle of NGO staff reflect local norms and standards, the more positively the NGO may be perceived by the local population.

However important these points are, it should also be realised that humanitarian action will always be disputed or challenged as it often takes place in highly political settings. Moreover, the humanitarian community is far from homogeneous and there will always be differences of opinion in terms of compromising on some humanitarian principles for the benefit of having access. In this respect, as was said during an ICVA EXCOM meeting, we may never come up with all the answers to the questions we have relating to our identity and the relevance of our missions. The key point is to identify the right issues, to be frank and open about our problems and dilemmas, and to be transparent in our choices. ICVA has created a section on the Information Resources page of the ICVA website (see "Issues") on "The Future of Humanitarian Action": www.icva.ch.

One of the closing sessions of Pre-EXCOM saw the Inspector-General of UNHCR, Dennis McNamara, reflect on the state of humanitarian action following the tragic bombing of the UN office in Baghdad in August 2003. He raised a number of questions that both UNHCR and NGOs needed to tackle, including: how to avoid being too closely associated with political or military interventions; how to decide when to continue providing humanitarian assistance in an insecure environment; and do we need to reassert humanitarian principles and values in light of a situation where humanitarian action is being used as a fig leaf.

PROTECTING IDPs CONTINUES TO REMAIN

Efforts to make the collaborative approach to internally displaced persons (IDPs) work continued in 2003, but with some major indications that the response is still inadequate. The Protection Survey, undertaken by the inter-agency Internal Displacement Unit (IDP Unit) and the Brookings-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement, examined the response to IDPs in various countries. The findings pointed to a lack of leadership among Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) – a key element if the collaborative approach is to be effective. The Response Matrix, undertaken by the IDP Unit and which mapped the response to IDPs in various countries, also indicated that there were still major gaps in the response, with protection being the most glaring gap. Throughout the undertakings of both these studies, ICVA continued to play a facilitating role to ensure NGOs engaged in the processes and were aware of the findings.

The leadership role of Humanitarian Coordinators is key to ensuring that the collaborative approach to IDPs works. Without a strong HC that has an overall perspective of where the gaps in the response to IDPs are, there is the tendency for those gaps to remain unfilled. In light of the Protection Survey and Matrix, there was a recognition that more needed to be done to ensure that HCs are aware of existing IDP policy documents and tools.

ICVA continued to participate in the Senior Network on Internal Displacement, which acts as an information exchange and advisory body for the IDP Unit, along with the lead ICVA member on IDPs, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). Efforts were made in the second half of 2003 to revitalise the Senior Network and the improvements have been seen in 2004 with work around the revision of the IDP policy package. There was also work within the context of the Senior Network, with ICVA playing a strong role, to formulate what has been termed the “Procedural Road Map,” which lays out the steps to developing an IDP response. The road map was adopted by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in 2004.

OCHA AND THE IASC PROCESS

The appointment of the new Emergency Relief Coordinator, Jan Egeland, in August 2003, raised expectations of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) as the facilitator and coordinating office for the inter-agency coordination process, the IASC. NGOs were particularly encouraged by his appointment as they were assured that IDPs, humanitarian access, staff security, and “forgotten crises” would be among the new ERC’s priorities.

The appointment of Egeland came at a time when the functioning of the IASC was undergoing a thorough, external review. As recognised in the external review, the ERC’s leadership in the IASC is vital to moving this body forward. The IASC must

A CHALLENGE

Through e-mail updates and contact with ICVA members and other NGOs, ICVA, in consultation with InterAction and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR), continued to ensure the involvement of NGO participants in inter-agency IDP missions. In addition, updates were sent out to NGOs on activities of the IDP Unit, as well as its missions, so as to ensure that NGOs were able to provide their views to the mission participants.

In 2003, the only inter-agency IDP mission that took place was to Afghanistan in May and had an ICVA Secretariat staff member as the NGO participant. NGO participation on such missions may help to improve UN-NGO dialogue and collaboration in IDP operations. It may also reveal, however, fundamental differences in how the UN and NGOs view the priorities with regards to responding to IDPs. In the case of this mission, the NGO participant from ICVA put a disclaimer on the mission's report as it did not prioritise protection, but was too focused on furthering UN and other international agencies' interests in the situation.

An external evaluation of the IDP Unit concluded that the Unit had done a fair amount of work since its creation at the beginning of 2002, but the results had not amounted to much. The evaluation recommended the focus be changed in order to ensure that an improvement in the response to IDPs is made. The Emergency Relief Coordinator, Jan Egeland, who began in September 2003, realised the need to reinvigorate the work being done on the collaborative approach. He has since worked on expanding the Unit – making it a Division – and brought in a new head of the Division (which started to function in July 2004) in order to give the collaborative approach another, and perhaps final, chance. Various documents related to IDPs, including the inter-agency IDP mission report, are available on the Information Resources page of ICVA's website (www.icva.ch) under IDPs (see “Issues”).

become more efficient in addressing systemic coordination problems, such as the lack of competent Humanitarian Coordinators, the failure in the response to IDPs and in addressing mandate gaps, and developing system-wide policies. In order to ensure that the IASC is reflective of the humanitarian community, the review also highlights the need to more directly include NGOs and their operational experiences within the IASC process. The monthly NGO-IASC meetings that ICVA organises in Geneva are one example of such NGO participation, with NGOs presenting issues for discussion. Minutes of these monthly meetings are available on ICVA's website (www.icva.ch) on the Information Resources page.

IMPROVING REFUGEE PROTECTION

NGO Input to Convention Plus and Other UNHCR Initiatives

ICVA's role of facilitating NGO input to UNHCR's various bodies continued with its usual coordination of NGO statements to the Standing and Executive Committees of UNHCR. NGOs are allowed to make one intervention per agenda item and, as such, ICVA sought to ensure that NGOs attending the meetings and those unable to attend the meetings were able to provide their input to the statements. Usually a lead NGO is identified to draft the statement, taking into account opinions and information from other NGOs. ICVA continued to provide a final editing and quality check on the statements, which are all available on the Information Resources page of ICVA's website (www.icva.ch).

In addition, ICVA also facilitated NGO perspectives and views on the "UNHCR 2004" process initiated by the High Commissioner. The 2004 process was meant to look at how UNHCR is situated "within the United Nations system and vis-à-vis States and partners." The process was to identify ways in which UNHCR could better carry out its mandate in light of the "challenges of modernity" and focused *inter alia* on the mandate, the governance structure, the migration-asylum nexus, as well as partnerships. A report was presented to the General Assembly (A/AC.96/980) outlining the results of the process and the various actions to be taken forward.

For the first time, NGOs were invited to participate in the informal consultations that UNHCR has with donors every year. The consultations looked at the case study of Kenya where, for the first time, the budget was based on needs as opposed to resources – a change in approach for which many NGOs have long advocated. The differences in the two types of budgets became very obvious to donors. There was a discussion around how partnerships can better contribute to covering the assessed needs. Later in the year, an instruction was sent by the High Commissioner to all field offices on "Better Meeting Needs of Refugees through Strengthened Collaboration with Operational Partners." The instruction noted the need to ensure the "full participation" of operational partners as opposed to just consulting with them.

June 2003 saw the start of the High Commissioner's Forum and his process known as "Convention Plus," which was set up by the High Commissioner to "inject more predictability into the system, and adjust it better to today's realities, in the interests of both States and those who need international protection." The first of the three strands under Convention Plus to really move forward was the Resettlement strand. NGOs were invited, through ICVA, to provide comments on the various drafts of the document that eventually became a *Multilateral Framework of Understandings on Resettlement*. ICVA would not only provide consolidated NGO comments to the co-chairs of the process, UNHCR and Canada, but also provide NGOs with notes based on debriefings provided by the co-chairs.

TALK BACK

The Newsletter of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)

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SPECIAL ICVA CONFERENCE ISSUE: NGOs IN A CHANGING WORLD ORDER: DILEMMAS AND CHALLENGES

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- ◆ The Strategic Value of Forgotten Crises: The Determining Factor?
 - Case Study: The Rohingyas: Unwanted, Unwelcome, Forgotten (Azeen Salimi, former MSF Holland)
 - Case Study: Where Forgetting is Not an Option: Burmese Refugees in Thailand (Cynthia Buiza, Jesuit Refugee Service-Asia Pacific)
 - Case Study: Burundi: Terminally Hopeless, Piero Calvi-Pariseti (former Head a.i. of the OCHA Office in Bujumbura)

IN THE NEWS:

- ◆ Iraq: Operational Dilemmas for Humanitarians
- ◆ Short Distances, Big Differences: The Afghanistan/Pakistan Border (MSF Holland)
- ◆ The Fight Over "Military-Humanitarian" Guidelines

ICVA has been producing *Talk Back*, its primarily electronic newsletter, since April 1999. Back issues of *Talk Back* are available on ICVA's website: www.icva.ch on the Information Resources page. *Talk Back* is generally published in English, French, and Spanish.

Articles in *Talk Back* are written with information gathered from various sources, including from member agencies and partners.

To subscribe to *Talk Back*, send an e-mail to talkback@icva.ch with the message subscribe, indicating your language of preference (English, French, and/or Spanish).

Comments on *Talk Back* are welcome: talkback@icva.ch.

ICVA CONFERENCE AGENDA

NGOs IN A CHANGING WORLD ORDER: DILEMMAS AND CHALLENGES

14-15 FEBRUARY 2003

Maison des Associations, Geneva, Switzerland

Day I – Friday, 14 February 2003

Opening

- ◆ Mr. Anders Ladekarl, *Chair, ICVA Executive Committee*
- ◆ Ambassador Jean-Marc Boulgaris, *Permanent Representative, Swiss Mission*

Keynote Address and Q&A – *NGOs in a Changing World Order: Dilemmas and Challenges*

- ◆ Mr. Iain Levine, *Programme Director, Human Rights Watch*

Plenary I – *The Increasing Presence of Military Forces and the Independence of NGOs. Panel and Discussion*

Panellists:

- ◆ Mr. Rafa Vilasanjuan, *Secretary-General, Médecins sans Frontières International*
- ◆ Prof. Hugo Slim, *Oxford Brookes University*

Moderator:

- ◆ Mr. Edward Girardet, *Executive Director, Media Action International*

Working Groups

- A – Moderator: Mr. William Canny, *Secretary General, International Catholic Migration Commission*
- B – Moderator: Ms Callie Long, *Communications Officer, ACT International*
- C – Moderator: Mr. Sean Lowrie, *The Sphere Project*

Plenary Session on Conference Statement

Moderator:

- ◆ Dr. Elizabeth Ferris, *World Council of Churches, Vice-Chair, ICVA Executive Committee*

Day II – Saturday, 15 February 2003

Plenary II – *The Effects of the Changing World Order on the Protection of Displaced Persons and Migrants. Panel and Discussion*

Panellists:

- ◆ Prof. B.S. Chimni, *Jawaharlal Nehru University*
- ◆ Ms Christina Jespersen, *Programme Coordinator for North Caucasus, Danish Refugee Council*

Moderator:

- ◆ Ms Monette Zard, *Policy Analyst, Migration Policy Institute*

Working Groups

- A – Moderator: Mr. William Canny, *Secretary General, International Catholic Migration Commission*
- B – Moderator: Ms Callie Long, *Communications Officer, ACT International*
- C – Moderator: Mr. Sean Lowrie, *The Sphere Project*

Plenary III – *The Strategic Value of Forgotten Crises: The Determining Factor?: Panel and Discussion*

Panellists:

- ◆ Mr. Keshav Gautam, *Regional Programme Director, ActionAid, China*
- ◆ Mr. Larry Thomson, *Refugees International*

Moderator:

- ◆ Mr. Jeff Crisp, *Head of Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit, UNHCR*

Working Groups

- A – Moderator: Mr. William Canny, *Secretary General, International Catholic Migration Commission*
- B – Moderator: Ms Callie Long, *Communications Officer, ACT International*
- C – Moderator: Mr. Sean Lowrie, *The Sphere Project*

Closing Session

Papers presented at the conference are available on the ICVA website, as is the Conference Report: www.icva.ch.

ICVA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND SECRETARIAT

ICVA Executive Committee Members until 17 February 2003

Chair: Mr. Anders Ladekarl, *DRC*
Vice-Chair: Dr. Elizabeth Ferris, *WCC*
Treasurer: Ms Roswitha Dinger, *LWF*

Mr. Kebede Asrat, *CRDA*
Mr. Jim Bishop, Mr. Rick Augsburg, *InterAction*
Mr. William Canny, *ICMC*
Mr. Thomas Getman, *WVI*
Mr. Paul Meijs, *CARE*
Mr. Mamadou Ndiaye, *OFADEC*
Mr. P.M. Tripathi, *AVARD*

ICVA Executive Committee Members as of 17 February 2003 (following the elections at the 12th ICVA General Assembly)

Chair: Dr. Elizabeth Ferris, *WCC*
Vice-Chair: Mr. Mamadou Ndiaye, *OFADEC*
Treasurer: Mr. Thomas Getman, *WVI* (interim from February to June)
Mr. Paul Meijs, *CARE* (interim July to 31 December 2003, pending appointment of CARE Director in Geneva)
Mr. Jan A. Erichsen, *NRC* (current as of 1 January 2004; NRC was co-opted at the end of 2003)

Mr. Joseph Aguetant, *IRC*
Mr. Saman Amarasinghe, *NNCSL*
Mr. John Damerell, *LWF*
Mr. Keshav Gautam, *ActionAid*
Mr. Thomas Getman, *WVI*
Mr. Paul Meijs, succeeded by Mr. Guillaume Aguetant, *CARE*
Ms Ann Mary Olsen, *DRC*
Mr. Sayed Fazlullah Wahidi, *ANCB*

ICVA Secretariat 2003

In 2003, the ICVA Secretariat worked on the basis of a 3.2 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff for half the year and then 2.5 FTE staff for the latter half of the year. The positions at the Secretariat were filled by:

Mr. Ed Schenkenberg van Mierop, Coordinator
Ms Manisha Thomas, Humanitarian Affairs Officer

Ms Dominique Gilliéron, Secretarial Assistant (until July 2003)
Ms Tina Pfenninger, Finance Officer
Ms Lieske Pott Hofstede, Programme Advisor (voluntary position)
Mr. Jan Ven, Programme Advisor (voluntary position for the General Assembly)

FINANCES

MEMBERSHIP DUES

At the 12th General Assembly, the membership requested the ICVA Executive Committee to revise the membership dues policy. The EXCOM adopted a new membership dues policy in late 2003, which attempted to bring about a more equitable distribution in the payment of dues between members by bringing the categories down to four from seven. The policy was implemented as of 1 January 2004 with the goal of raising a greater percentage of ICVA's core costs from the dues than the approximately 35.5% of income for which dues accounted in 2003.

AUDIT REPORT

ICVA's full audit report is available upon request: secretariat@icva.ch.

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURES 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003 with comparative figures (all figures in Swiss francs)

	2003	2002
INCOME		
Membership fees	186,975.44	186,413.17
DANIDA via Danish Refugee Council (DKK 400,000.00)	82,533.90	78,000.00
Norway - Ministry of Foreign Affairs via Norwegian Refugee Council (NOK 250,000.00)	46,375.00	39,400.00
Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs SDC	100,000.00	50,000.00
UNHCR, Switzerland (USD 35,000.00)	45,427.50	32,288.30
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (EUR 60,000.00)	93,540.00	0.00
World Council of Churches, Switzerland	12,000.00	0.00
Participations in Support Services from Projects	0.00	25,720.94
Reserve liquidation	0.00	20,000.00
IM World Aid loan-related adjustments	3,340.00	77,131.25
Ford Foundation, USA project balance to core	0.00	10,968.07
Stichting Vluchteling, Netherlands project balance to core	4,705.81	0.00
OHCHR, Switzerland project balance to core	17,527.40	0.00
WHO-OMS, Switzerland project balance to core	1,385.90	0.00
Conference Registration fees	3,902.55	0.00
Grants for Conference		
Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs SDC	50,000.00	0.00
Danish Refugee Council	10,000.00	0.00
Ford Foundation, USA	4,050.00	
Individuell Människohjälp, Sweden	1,400.00	0.00
Adjustment on payables	417.65	890.64
Exchange rate gain and bank interest	76.10	102.65
Miscellaneous	1,044.85	6,296.55
Total income	664,702.10	527,211.57
EXPENSES		
Core salaries	255,597.85	269,446.10
Consultancy fees	7,434.35	12,280.75
Social Charges	56,236.55	65,065.55
Provident Fund	31,957.10	34,222.50
Other Personnel charges	130.00	875.00
Website related charges	5,174.75	10,896.64
Executive Committee	10,114.15	18,844.90
Conference/General Assembly	59,918.43	1,682.00
Office supplies/equipment/maintenance	28,433.55	18,016.81
Travel and representation charges	17,958.87	12,505.06
Publication and translation costs	3,404.70	11,795.22

Office rental and utilities	40,174.50	40,821.90
Postage and telecommunication costs	18,263.47	19,603.91
Audit and legal fees	3,000.00	3,000.00
Bank charges, exchange rate adjustment	2,274.41	8,294.64
40th Anniversary ICVA	0.00	9,123.00
NGO Liaison Officer charges	11,582.55	0.00
Miscellaneous	1,985.32	290.00
Total expenses	553,640.55	536,763.98
Excess of income over expenses or - expenses over income	111,061.55	-9,552.41

BALANCE SHEET STATEMENT
as at 31 December 2003 with comparative figures
(all figures in Swiss francs)

	31/12/03	31/12/02
ASSETS		
Petty Cash	296.15	337.40
Cash in bank accounts		
UBS CHF	52,108.26	3,079.48
UBS USD (USD 0.00)	0.00	4,849.85
Accounts receivable and prepaid expenses		
Accounts receivable	95,876.60	6,195.33
Taxes on interest income	148.25	123.55
Prepaid expenses	0.00	3,326.00
Guarantee deposit	1,005.45	0.00
	149,434.71	17,911.61
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable	19,363.26	12,742.60
IM World Aid (member loan due 31.12.98)	139,125.00	145,465.00
Accruals & Provisions	44,500.00	700.00
Restricted Funds /reserves (1)	26,343.00	26,343.00
OHCHR, Switzerland	0.00	17,527.40
Stichting Vluchteling, Netherlands (USD 0.00)	0.00	4,705.81
Ford Foundation, USA (USD 0.00)	0.00	0.00
Wellspring Advisors, USA	0.00	0.00
WHO-OMS, Switzerland	0.00	1,385.90
Accumulated deficit carry over at 31.12 (2)	-79,896.55	-190,958.10
	149,434.71	17,911.61

NOTES TO 2003
FINANCIAL
STATEMENTS

- 1) Restricted funds represent CHF 26,343.00 Sustainable Development Case Studies balance.
- 2) The accumulated deficit carry over includes the net loss still outstanding from the initial ICVA deficit first incurred in the 31 March 1997 audit report.
- 3) Having faced a cash shortage during 2003, ICVA was obliged to refrain from carrying out, or reduce, certain of its activities throughout the year. As some donors only confirmed their contributions to ICVA in December, it was not possible to spend these funds during the current period. However, in accordance with these donors, the funds are to be used for ICVA's main activities as enumerated in the Annual Plan.

ICVA MEMBERS IN 2003

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in ICVA is open to international NGOs, regional NGOs, and national NGOs that have linkages with local NGOs (i.e. networks and consortia).

Details on membership requirements, as well as membership application forms, are available on the “Member Agencies” page of the ICVA website: www.icva.ch.

- ◆ ACTIONAID, *UK*
- ◆ Adventist Development and Relief Agency International (ADRA)
- ◆ Afghan NGOs Coordination Bureau (ANCB)
- ◆ Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA), *Ethiopia*
- ◆ African Council for Adult and Continuing Education (ARCACE), *Kenya*
- ◆ All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), *Kenya*
- ◆ AMEL Association (Lebanese Association for Popular Action) (AMEL)
- ◆ American Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC)
- ◆ Anatolian Development Foundation (ADF), *Turkey*
- ◆ Asian Institute for Rural Development (AIRD), *India*
- ◆ Asociacion Nacional de Centros de Investigacion, Promocion Social y Desarrollo (ANC), *Peru*
- ◆ Association Béninoise de Lutte Contre la Faim et la Misère du Peuple (ASCOFAM), *Benin*
- ◆ Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB)
- ◆ Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development (AVARD), *India*
- ◆ Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) (as of 10 March 2004; formerly known as Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA))
- ◆ British Refugee Council (BRC)
- ◆ Burmese Border Consortium (BBC), *Thailand*
- ◆ Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR)
- ◆ CARE International (CARE)
- ◆ Caritas Internationalis
- ◆ Chinese Refugees' Relief Association (CRRA), *Taiwan*
- ◆ Christian Aid (CA), *UK*
- ◆ Church World Service (CWS), *USA*
- ◆ Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA), *Ethiopia*
- ◆ Community and Family Services International (CFSI), *Philippines*
- ◆ Concern Worldwide (CONCERN), *Ireland*
- ◆ Consejo de Instituciones de Desarrollo (COINDE), *Guatemala*
- ◆ Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
- ◆ Disaster Mitigation Institute (DMI), *India*
- ◆ EMO-BARAKA, Union Pour la Promotion du Paysan (EMO-BARAKA), *Burundi*
- ◆ Federacion de Organismos No Gubernamentales de Nicaragua (FONG)
- ◆ Fundacion Augusto Cesar Sandino (FACS), *Nicaragua*
- ◆ General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS), *Jordan*
- ◆ Human Appeal International (HAI), *United Arab Emirates*
- ◆ Human Rights First (HRF) (as of 30 January 2004; formerly known as Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (LCHR)), *USA*
- ◆ Indian Institute of Youth and Development (IIYD)
- ◆ Individuell Människohjälp (Swedish Organisation for Individual Relief) (IM)
- ◆ InterAction (American Council for Voluntary International Action)

- ◆ InterAid International (IAI), *Switzerland*
- ◆ International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)
- ◆ International Islamic Relief Organisation (IIRO), *Saudi Arabia*
- ◆ International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- ◆ International Save the Children Alliance
- ◆ Islamic Relief Agency (ISRA), *Sudan*
- ◆ Italian Consortium of Solidarity (ICS)
- ◆ Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)
- ◆ Lebanese NGO Forum (LNF)
- ◆ Liaison Unit of Non-Governmental Organisations of Seychelles (LUNGOS)
- ◆ Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS)
- ◆ Lutheran World Federation (LWF)
- ◆ Mauritius Council of Social Service (MACOSS)
- ◆ Médecins du Monde (MDM)
- ◆ Media Action International (MAI), *Switzerland*
- ◆ Mission Armenia (MA)
- ◆ National NGO Council of Sri Lanka (NNCSL)
- ◆ Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
- ◆ Office Africain pour le Développement et la Coopération (OFADEC), *Senegal*
- ◆ Oxfam GB (OXFAM)
- ◆ Refugee Children and Vulnerable Citizens (RCVC), *Tajikistan*
- ◆ Refugees International (RI)
- ◆ Rural Development Foundation of Pakistan (RDFP)
- ◆ Salvation Army International (SA)
- ◆ Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya Inc. (SARVODAYA), *Sri Lanka*
- ◆ Sierra Leone Association of NGOs (SLANGO)
- ◆ Stichting Vluchteling (SV), *The Netherlands*
- ◆ Télécoms sans Frontières, (TSF), *France*
- ◆ Union for Support and Development of Afghanistan (VAF), *Germany*
- ◆ World Council of Churches (WCC)
- ◆ World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), *UK*
- ◆ World Vision International (WVI)

PERMANENT OBSERVERS

- ◆ Human Rights Watch (HRW), *USA*
- ◆ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- ◆ International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
- ◆ Médecins sans Frontières International (MSF)

NEW MEMBERS AND OBSERVERS IN 2003

- ◆ Christian Aid (CA), *UK*
- ◆ Community and Family Services International (CFSI), *Philippines*
- ◆ Concern Worldwide (CONCERN), *Ireland*
- ◆ Human Rights Watch (HRW), *USA*
- ◆ Oxfam GB (OXFAM)
- ◆ World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), *UK*

A number of agencies left ICVA or their membership was discontinued in 2003 for various reasons, including non-payment of membership dues for a number of years and a lack of communication with the ICVA Secretariat or closure of the organisation.

International Council of Voluntary Agencies

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