

**The Committee for the Coordination of Services to
Displaced Persons in Thailand
(CCSDPT)**

and

**The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
(UNHCR)**

**Strategic Framework
For Durable Solutions**

January 11, 2011

Executive Summary

After twenty-six years, the need for durable solutions to long-term encampment of displaced persons/ refugees along the Thailand-Myanmar border has become acute. This draft Strategic Framework represents a re-thought and re-visioned follow-on strategy to the 2009 *CCSDPT/ UNHCR Strategic Plan*. It is a “living document” intended to be used as a basis for continued dialogue with both the Royal Thai Government (RTG) and donors, periodically reviewed to achieve common ground for a forward-looking, solutions-oriented approach.

The Framework envisions moving humanitarian assistance from ‘relief’ towards a ‘developmental’ approach by integrating services for displaced persons/refugees with those being provided to Thai and non Thai populations; providing means for them to enhance their self-reliance with more access formal education and livelihoods in Thailand; more fully realising their human potential and reducing the perceived threat to Thai national security due to pent-up frustrations; and contributing to the Thai economy during their exile.

While supporting RTG’s endeavors to maintain adequate **protection** and enhance asylum space, the Strategic Framework also places emphasis on finding durable solutions to protracted displacement, including voluntary repatriation to Burma/ Myanmar and resettlement to third countries. The Framework promotes: a fair, efficient and transparent admission system in line with relevant international standards; supportive policies to streamline y displaced persons fleeing from Burma/ Myanmar within the RTG’s broader policy framework and national laws for the regularisation of non-Thai populations; displaced persons/refugees accessing the Thai justice system and protection related government service providers

The Strategic Framework recognises that the present ‘parallel’ **health** system in the camps funded by international donors is unsustainable in the long term. It envisages increased collaboration between NGOs and the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) on refugee health issues and responses that contribute to a border-wide health strategy and builds on current progress and partnerships.

The strategy envisages strengthening collaborations on **environmental health and infrastructure** management between camp committees and local/national Thai authorities and Thai civil society. It envisages addressing gaps where they exist in Sphere standards and engagement with Thai authorities to ensure consistency with Thai environmental health standards.

The plan recognises the importance of the need to provide standardised quality **education** in line with Thai and international standards. It proposes to build on recent initiatives with Ministry of Education (MoE) in order to provide quality curricula at all levels in line with international standards and recognised by MoE. It envisages access to the internet for students and to educational opportunities outside the camps.

The Strategic Framework envisions solutions in the form of working towards an incremental shift from near-blanket supply of **food** and non-food items towards encouraging self-reliance for the majority, with targeted assistance for the most vulnerable.

Shelter is identified as a separate sector no longer considered as a one-off annual task but an ongoing process throughout the year developing expertise in construction, production of materials and research into improving their durability. This approach lends itself not only to more efficient and appropriate provision of basic construction materials for shelter but also opens up various livelihood opportunities.

The development of **livelihoods** to promote self-reliance is a cornerstone of this Strategic Plan. The Strategic Framework envisages greatly expanding current initiatives to develop access to livelihood resources for displaced people/refugees and local Thai communities under supportive policy frameworks and within the wider context of Thai border and rural development strategies.

The existing model of community-based **camp management** is quite unique. The Strategic Framework envisions a gradual shift towards increased self-reliance but also increased accountability Ongoing and accelerated capacity and skills development within existing camp management is needed to support this process and, to enable an efficient, transparent and sustainable delivery of services in camps on the basis of principles of accountability, good community governance and democratic processes, including optimal participation by the refugees.

Introduction

The first large influx of displaced persons/refugees from Burma/ Myanmar entered Thailand in 1984. At the end of 2010 Thailand remains host to around 150,000 displaced persons/refugees of whom less than 100,000 are registered and an estimated 60,000 are unregistered persons. They live in nine temporary shelters along Thailand's western border in proximity to local Thai communities

The need for durable solutions to long-term encampment has grown more acute for both refugees and the host country. Some displaced person/ refugees have been confined to the temporary shelters for more than twenty years. Others born in camps have only known life in a confined setting. Protracted confinement has prevented them from developing their full human potential, and from making concrete and positive contributions to the Thai economy and society.

The displaced persons/refugees have relied upon basic humanitarian assistance and services from Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) members of the Committee for the Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand (CCSDPT) since 1984 whilst The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has promoted enhanced protection space and services in the camps since 1998.

Since 2005, the CCSDPT and UNHCR have been in dialogue with the Royal Thai Government (RTG) to achieve the vision of an improved, comprehensive, solutions-oriented humanitarian policy for displaced persons/refugees. During this period large scale resettlement to third countries began; more protection programmes were initiated in the camps; education opportunities were expanded, including Thai language education; permission was granted to expand vocational training and income generating activities, and ID cards were issued to refugees as a step towards providing a documentation basis for increased mobility. Yet, in 2009, there remained a pressing need to build on this joint progress in order to achieve comprehensive solutions where resettlement was an option for only a portion of the population and voluntary repatriation remained a distant possibility.

CCSDPT and UNHCR developed the first draft of a medium-term strategy entitled the *CCSDPT/UNHCR Five Year Strategic Plan* (22 September 2009). The Plan envisaged sustainable solutions allowing for significantly expanded refugee self-reliance and has proven a valuable planning tool for CCSDPT and UNHCR to focus future activities on common objectives. The plan did not however adequately acknowledge the complexities in RTG refugee policy and did not incorporate realistic timeframes within which these objectives might be achieved

This document is therefore a re-thought and re-visioned follow on strategy to the Strategic Plan. It is a "living document" intended to be used as a basis for continued dialogue with both the RTG and donors, periodically reviewed and adapted accordingly to achieve common ground for a forward-looking, solutions-oriented approach.

Thailand, as a democratic, increasingly human-rights-oriented middle-income country is already assisting poorer ASEAN countries with their economic and social development (e.g. Cambodia, Burma/Myanmar and Laos) and has established mechanisms with neighbouring governments to receive migrant workers needed in the Thai economy. While the RTG has been a generous host, prolonged encampment of displaced persons/refugees with little means for self reliance and limited durable solution options whilst continuing to rely on external donor funding for the majority of costs is increasingly undesirable and unsustainable.

The draft Strategic Framework envisions moving humanitarian assistance from "relief" towards a "developmental" approach by integrating services for displaced persons/refugees with those being provided to Thai and non Thai populations; providing means for displaced persons/refugees to enhance their self-reliance such as allowing displaced persons/refugees access to more formal education and income-earning livelihoods in Thailand, thereby more fully realising their human potential whether their future is in a third country or back home in Burma/Myanmar; reducing the perceived threat to Thai national security due to pent-up displaced-persons/refugee frustrations; and contributing to the Thai economy during their period of exile.

Key Strategies by Sector and Cross-cutting Themes

The strategy encompasses six critical sectors and two cross-cutting themes, as follows:

1. Protection

The CCSDPT/ UNHCR Strategic Framework promotes a developmental model, building opportunities and capacities for sustainable durable solutions to protracted displacement.

In accordance with Thai legislation, a large number of forcibly displaced persons/refugees from Burma/ Myanmar have been admitted to designated temporary shelters through the Provincial Admission Board (PAB) system. They are protected from *refoulement* and are eligible for humanitarian assistance. While supporting RTG's endeavors to maintain adequate protection space and enhance asylum space, the Strategic Framework also places emphasis on finding sustainable durable solutions to protracted displacement, including resettlement to third countries and voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity.

Voluntary repatriation can be realized only when the requisite conditions of physical, legal and material safety are met in the country of origin and national protection is restored. On the other hand, resettlement has emerged in recent years as a durable solution for a portion of refugees and should continue to be pursued. It is recognized that both voluntary repatriation and resettlement would be more sustainable if greater opportunity could be given for the displaced persons to build their capacity and develop their full human potential.

A positive development in the last few years has been the increasing access afforded to displaced persons/refugees to Thai justice and national institutions and government services. This encouraging development should continue in close cooperation with the RTG, civil society and local communities, ensuring their understanding and support. Support to the RTG's efforts to ensure full implementation of the existing protection mechanism, including the PABs, as well as other policy frameworks and legislation to address the non-Thai population should be encouraged. This includes promoting a fair, efficient and transparent admission system in line with relevant international standards within a streamlined policy for displaced persons/refugees fleeing from persecution in Burma/Myanmar as part of the RTG's broader policy and legal framework, including the Civil Registration Act.

2. Health Sector

The health system in the temporary currently operates somewhat independently of Thailand's public health sector and is funded by international donors with displaced persons playing a major role in management and provision of services. This system is unique among refugee settings globally and has been put under strain in recent years as resettlement has resulted in many trained staff departing for third countries.

The Strategic Framework recognises that the 'parallel' system funded by international donors is unsustainable in the long term and aims to encourage collaboration, capacity building and community participation to address border health issues.

It envisions immediate steps to facilitate and build on collaborative initiatives such as disease surveillance, outbreak response, health data collection, technical exchanges between NGOs and Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), and partnerships in refugee health training and continued partnerships in immunization.

A longer-term strategy would also take into account an economic analysis of potential health financing mechanisms for displaced persons and would look at the further development of models such as the MoPH's Border Health Strategy.

The benefits of this approach are that it allows a more coordinated healthcare system encompassing health promotion, disease prevention, and access to direct medical care for displaced persons, while contributing towards the overall public health of local Thai communities by minimizing disease outbreak and transmission.

3. Environmental Health and Infrastructure Sector

The environmental health and infrastructure sector includes water, sanitation, natural environment and access roads into and around the temporary shelters. The approach adopted until recently, in which various NGOs were addressing these issues on an ad-hoc needs basis, is inadequate for the longer term. A comprehensive approach is needed to prevent further risks to the safety and health of camp residents, negative impacts on the general environment and subsequent consequences for local Thai communities.

The strategy aims at increasing the Environmental Health and Infrastructure (EHI) camp management capacity and strengthening collaboration on environmental management between the camp committees and the local/national Thai authorities and civil society. To facilitate management by the community, operational costs of all camp facilities must be reduced to make them sustainable.

The strategy also aims to address existing gaps in EHI to meet Sphere standards and engagement with the Thai authorities to ensure consistency with Thai environmental health standards and community expectations. Specific areas to be addressed include site planning to achieve reasonable population densities where possible to improve quality of life and living conditions, and the creation of space in the temporary shelters for new facilities, systems and approaches compatible with Thai standards.

4. Education Sector

Support for Education was first allowed in the temporary shelters in 1996 and has since been provided by CCSDPT member agencies through refugee organisations that deliver the actual services.

Support initially focused on formal education at the primary, middle and secondary school levels. This expanded to include nursery schools, special education, libraries, vocational training, non-formal education, sports and recreation activities, adult literacy and other aspects of education.

In recognition of the importance of the ultimate need to provide standardised quality education in line with Thai and international standards, in 2006 the Thai Ministry of Education (MoE) led an initiative to provide Thai language instruction in the temporary shelters and it has embarked on dialogue and partnering with CCSDPT organisations on curricula and quality assurance.

The Strategic Framework envisages building on these recent initiatives in order to provide quality curricula at all levels in line with international standards and recognised by MoE (following recent impressive models and approaches being taken on migrant education). It envisages expanded support and involvement by MoE, access to the internet for students and improved access to appropriate educational opportunities outside the camps.

5. Food Sector

Refugees rely on NGO assistance to meet their minimum food requirements and after twenty-six years this level of dependency is becoming increasingly undesirable and unsustainable.

The strategy proposed for reducing aid dependency is to gradually reduce the food ration while protecting vulnerable groups by increasing and improving safety nets and ensuring cross-sectoral collaboration with other programmes targeting the most vulnerable.

This approach will require greater understanding of food consumption, eating habits, dietary adequacy and coping strategies with ongoing monitoring of the affects of camp and local economies and remittances from resettled displaced persons/refugees on the household food economy. Ongoing data collection on how households are responding to the ration changes while maintaining a nutrition surveillance system will be key to ensuring the most vulnerable are identified and protected.

6. Shelter Sector

Shelter has recently been designated as a stand alone sector. It will no longer be considered a one-off annual task but an ongoing process throughout the year developing expertise in construction, production of materials

and research into improving their durability. This approach lends itself not only to more efficient and appropriate provision of basic construction materials for shelter but also opens up various livelihood opportunities.

The focus will be on individual needs-based assessments for all shelter materials, and in camp production of materials for income generation. Local partnerships will be fostered to support and promote sustainable tropical forest management, to provide technical guidance for ongoing research into increasing the durability of shelter materials and create environmental awareness and community-led environmental management initiatives.

6. Livelihoods (Cross-cutting Theme)

The development of livelihoods to promote self-reliance and reduce the cycle of dependency is a cornerstone of the Strategic Framework.

Over the last three years, UNHCR and CCSDPT have begun to support pilot agricultural and income-generation activities with training for displaced persons in the camps and nearby Thai communities. This process has involved increasing engagement and collaboration with RTG agencies.

In addition, various ongoing interventions of NGOs in handicraft development, provision of micro-finance services and support of local Thai communities exist, which are important factors for formulating a coherent strategy.

The Strategic Framework envisages greatly expanding current initiatives to develop access to livelihood resources for displaced people and local Thai communities under supportive policy frameworks and within the wider context of Thai border and rural development strategies.

A CCSDPT-led coordination body, the Livelihoods Working Group (LWG), has been established in Mae Sot and serves as an inclusive forum for information-sharing and coordinating possible livelihood and self-reliance interventions in the area, with the participation of community-based organisations and other actors.

Among the current and future activities envisioned are non-formal education and vocational and skills training programmes (based on value chain analysis); income generation activities, apprenticeship placement projects, micro-credit schemes, self-employment, and job placement programmes.

7. Camp Management (Cross-cutting Theme)

The existing model of community-based camp management is quite unique. It enables the refugee community to participate in decision-making and implementation, and contributes to the longer-term vision of more self-reliance. However, as the current system essentially relies on the refugee leadership structures for the day to day running of the camps, the delivery of services and the distribution of assistance, as well as some aspects of law and order, it raises a number of legitimate governance issues which need to be addressed. In order to meet the desired results envisioned by the Strategic framework, the challenge will be to contribute to an effective mainstreaming of Camp Administration functions, such as security and access justice, into the Thai systems and the legal framework of the country of asylum, while preserving the existing level of beneficiary consultations and participatory approach.

Day to day camp management responsibilities have grown over the years from the basic provision of relief items to support for entire civic structures in logistics, security, health, education, water, sanitation, administration of justice and social welfare. The Strategic Framework envisions a gradual shift away from delegated provision of basic needs for all, towards targeted support for identified diverse vulnerable groups.

Ongoing and accelerated capacity and skills development on camp management is needed to support this process, in order to enable an efficient, transparent and sustainable delivery of services in camps on the basis of principles of accountability, good community governance and democratic processes, including optimal participation by the refugees.

CCSDPT/ UNHCR Strategic Framework for Durable Solutions: Background and Assumptions

<p>Medium-term Goal</p>	<p>Displaced persons/refugees are regularized under national law and afforded sufficient means for self reliance pending durable solutions including but not limited to voluntary repatriation in safety and in dignity or resettlement to a third country. Assistance to displaced persons/refugees is provided in a sustainable manner and progressively incorporated within existing RTG services for Thai and non-Thai populations.</p>
<p>Background</p>	<p>Since 2005, the CCSDPT and UNHCR have been in dialog with the RTG to achieve the vision of an improved, comprehensive, solutions-oriented humanitarian policy for displaced persons/refugees. CCSDPT and UNHCR developed the first draft of a medium-term strategy titled the CCSDPT/UNHCR Five Year Strategic Plan (22 September 2009) to provide a new conceptual framework for humanitarian assistance to displaced persons/refugees along the Thailand-Burma/Myanmar border. This document is a re-titled and reworked version of the strategic plan. It is a “living document” to be used as a basis for continued dialogue with both the RTG and donors, periodically reviewed and adapted accordingly to achieve common ground for a forward-looking, solutions-oriented approach.</p> <p>While the RTG has been a generous host, prolonged encampment of displaced persons/refugees with little means for self reliance and limited durable solution options whilst continuing to rely on external donor funding for the majority of costs is increasingly undesirable and unsustainable.</p> <p>The draft strategic framework is envisioned as moving from a “relief mentality” towards a more “developmental” approach by integrating services for displaced persons/refugees with those being provided to Thai and non Thai populations; providing means for displaced persons/refugees to enhance their self-reliance such as allowing displaced persons/refugees access to more formal education and income-earning livelihoods in Thailand and thereby to more fully realise their human potential whether their future is in a third country or back home in Burma/Myanmar; reducing the perceived threat to Thai national security due to pent-up displaced-persons/refugee frustrations; and contributing to the Thai economy during their period of exile.</p>
<p>Key planning assumptions</p>	<p>It is too early to predict the outcome of recent political events in Burma/Myanmar. Should the General Election lead to circumstances in which voluntary repatriation becomes feasible, the actors will work together for the displaced persons/refugees to return voluntarily in safety and in dignity to their home areas in Burma/Myanmar. In the immediate future, the more likely scenario is that the security situation in Burma/Myanmar will remain relatively unchanged, with continued low-intensity conflict in the border areas, and there remains possibility of a worsening situation which could cause significantly more displaced persons/refugees to seek asylum in Thailand.</p> <p>Third-country resettlement will continue at current levels, at least through 2011/2012 as a protection tool, a durable solution, and a burden sharing mechanism. However, there will remain a significant population for whom other durable solutions will be required.</p> <p>Thailand’s growing economy will continue to need hundreds of thousands of migrant workers from Burma/Myanmar and other nearby countries.</p> <p>Thailand’s “line” ministries (e.g. Justice, Public Health, Education, Social and Human Services, etc.) have expressed a willingness to work towards the provision of services for displaced persons/refugees in an integrated manner with those provided to Thai and non-Thai populations.</p> <p>Donors will continue to be engaged in supporting the displaced-person/refugee programme.</p>

1. Protection Sector: CCSDPT/UNHCR Strategic Framework

<p>Protection Sector Objective</p>	<p>A fair, efficient and transparent admission system in line with relevant international standards; Supportive policies to streamline displaced persons fleeing from Burma/ Myanmar within the Royal Thai Government’s broader policy framework and national laws for the regularisation of non-Thai populations; Displaced persons/refugees accessing the Thai justice system and protection-related government service providers.</p>
<p>Strategy</p> <p>Indicative interventions and activities</p>	<p>The protection sector moves from a relief to a sustainable development model, building opportunities and capacities for sustainable durable solutions to protracted displacement, including, but not limited to voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity when the requisite conditions are met in the country of origin.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support the government efforts in the implementation of a fair, efficient and transparent admission system in line with relevant international standards and support the implementation of the Civil Registration Act for displaced populations. 2. Strengthen the link between displaced persons/refugees and the Thai justice system, national institutions and government services to increase displaced persons direct access to quality services. 3. Support and develop increased understanding within Thai civil society of protection issues facing the displaced population. 4. Provide technical and capacity building support for camp self-governance and to civil society working in the protection sector, with a view to develop sustainable systems in line with Thai and international standards in child protection and SGBV, justice and good governance for promoting durable solutions. 5. Foster stronger strategic links between UNHCR and CCSDPT as well as other relevant protection actors including the RTG in key existing initiatives that include the Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (PSAE), protection mainstreaming, inter-agency coordination, advocacy and protection in emergencies. Increase the focus on sustainability within protection coordination, planning and implementation.

2. Health Sector

Health Sector Objective	Sustainable essential health services for displaced persons refugees and nearby Thai populations, implemented by international and local NGOs in close collaboration with the Royal Thai Ministry of Public Health (MoPH).
Strategy	<p>In partnership with RTG and MoPH, support development of frameworks and policies comparable to the MoPH border health system. Seek additional resources which would further support existing pilot programs and other initiatives that aim to increase collaboration efforts in support of refugee health services.</p>
Indicative interventions and activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue capacity building and training for refugees and surrounding Thai population, utilising Thai experts where possible, to reinforce understanding and practices of preventive community health, family planning, care of the elderly, nutrition, reproductive health and services for those with physical and mental health challenges. 2. In coordination with MoPH and local organizations, implement community strengthening programmes that provide training and initiate systems that empower refugee communities to be engaged in health services. 3. Continue to develop collaborative targeted initiatives such as outbreak preparedness & response, communicable diseases surveillance, SHIELD program, Sob Moei Health project, Global Fund, Expanded Program on Immunizations (EPI) and Thailand's National Access to Antiretroviral for People Living with HIV and AIDS (NAPHA) extension program. 4. Bring data collection on health conditions into line with Thai standards and systems to enable proper comparison, efficient referrals and to encourage inclusion. 5. In coordination with MoPH central and provincial levels, examine the feasibility of establishing more uniform approaches in an effort to establish more competitive charges for hospital referral costs. 6. Explore possibility and undertake an economic analysis of the Thai provincial/district health sector so as to assess the potential of alternative health care financing.

5. Food Sector

Food Sector Objective	Ensure continued access to adequate and appropriate food, prioritising assistance to the most vulnerable.
Strategy Indicative interventions and activities	<p>Provide a food basket to ensure that all eligible people have access to sufficient food to meet minimum nutrition requirements. As self-reliance increases, move towards targeted food assistance, focusing on meeting minimum nutritional needs of the most vulnerable. Explore alternative mechanisms for access to food.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Track levels of household food economy in various groups of camp-based refugees, which describes the economic situation of the different groups at the household level. 2. Review food basket. 3. Implement a surveillance system in camp to track nutritional status and coping strategies. 4. Develop a common understanding about vulnerabilities (cross-sector); define methodology for targeted feeding. 5. Continue support for Supplementary Feeding Programmes/ Therapeutic Feeding Programmes (SFP/TFP) and nursery school lunches. 6. Support in-camp and local pilot projects for new income-generating and income-saving activities targeted at producing relief (substitution) commodities including food production. 7. Explore potential for RTG to contribute rice or other food items. 8. Expand Food-for-Work schemes.

8. Camp Management (cross cutting sector)

<p>Camp Management Objective</p>	<p>Broaden focus from delegated delivery of basic services towards capacity building on camp governance, with a focus on the needs of an increasingly diverse group of displaced persons/refugees. Ensure efficient, transparent and sustainable delivery of services in camps on the basis of principles of accountability, good community governance and participation by the refugees Pay particular attention to the needs of the most vulnerable and under-represented groups, ensuring their equitable access to services, including justice. Strengthen existing Camp Administration structures with particular attention to the alignment of law and order and access to justice with Thai systems</p>
<p>Strategy</p> <p>Indicative interventions and activities</p>	<p>Build camp management capacity and resources towards good camp management governance and foster meaningful participation of refugees in the wider policy developments and prospects for durable solutions envisioned by the Strategic Framework.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governance/Community Participation: Camp leadership and Community based bodies are fairly selected, representative, responsible and accountable for actions taken in the exercise of their functions; training in camp management governance, and mentoring; Build capacity of women and other under-represented groups to assume community leadership positions and advocate with other stakeholders for their inclusion; uphold the peaceful and humanitarian (non political) character of camp management. 2. Camp Security and Justice: Develop and promote a culture of safety and security, law enforcement in line with Thai standards and ensure the civilian nature of camps. 3. Coordination/Collaboration: Support CCSDPT/UNHCR camp management and coordination structures for coordination of support, capacity building, resources and engagement with refugee leadership structures in the field and with local Thai officials. 4. Information management: Ensure all partners and service providers have access to and share operational data at camp and inter-camp levels 5. Towards durable solutions: Develop capacity of existing camp leadership and community based bodies to incrementally target assistance towards the most vulnerable and monitor and address gaps in access to services.