

**ANNUAL TRIPARTITE CONSULTATIONS ON RESETTLEMENT**  
**Geneva, 20-21 June 2001**

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**THE UNHCR – NGO RESETTLEMENT DEPLOYMENT SCHEME**

**Overview and Follow-up**

**Background**

1. The UNHCR - NGO deployment scheme for refugee resettlement began in 1997. Initially, the scheme, managed by the Resettlement Section at UNHCR Geneva, deployed a small number of NGO staff to the field to assist UNHCR offices in the work of identification and referral for resettlement. The scheme was intended to provide much-needed additional support to UNHCR in fulfilling its mandate especially as it relates to the resettlement of refugees as a means of protection and as a durable solution.
2. The scheme continues to be a mutually beneficial means for both UNHCR and the resettlement countries to respond to the needs of refugees who require resettlement as a tool of protection or as a durable solution. Through the generosity of its donors, the scheme has mobilised deployees from various countries to provide support and to return to their original organisations or to their NGO networks with broader perspectives and useful links to the sending side of the partnership.

**Follow-up to Annual Tripartite Consultations of 2000**

3. UNHCR and the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) reported on the work of the deployment scheme to the Annual Tripartite Consultations in July 2000. Partners raised concerns about particular aspects of the scheme such as the recruitment process, the need for training and a desire to facilitate greater involvement from NGOs in resettlement countries. It was agreed that a review of the deployment scheme was timely in light of its expected expansion, the increased needs of UNHCR for support in the field and at Headquarters, and a perception that the current management of the scheme required revision in order to support the deployees and the expanding programme.
4. The overall goal of the review was to identify the strengths and challenges of the deployment scheme in the changing environment within UNHCR and in the international resettlement context and to suggest changes where required. Further, it was hoped that this process will lead to a clearer vision and mandate of the deployment scheme, improved management of aspects of the scheme and greater satisfaction of the resettlement partners in meeting their own goals. The overall benefit of a revitalised deployment scheme is to the refugees who are in desperate need of resettlement for protection or as the most appropriate durable solution. Moreover, the current framework agreement between ICMC and UNHCR expires on June 30<sup>th</sup> 2001 and both organisations expected this review to form the basis for the renegotiation of the Agreement and for continuation of the deployment scheme.

## **The Review Process**

5. Following the Annual Tripartite Consultations of July, 2000, UNHCR and ICMC sent a letter to all appropriate and relevant governmental and non-governmental partners asking for in-put to identify issues of concern as well as suggestions and recommendations for improvement of the deployment scheme. Although views expressed at the Annual Tripartite Consultations indicated strong support for a review of the scheme given its dramatic expansion, the response to the initial letter was extremely limited, with only one government and one NGO sending written replies to the letter. Subsequently, UNHCR and ICMC agreed that a deployment assignment should be developed in order to provide an analysis of the current state of the scheme.

6. At the end of March 2001, UNHCR deployed an NGO consultant to Headquarters Geneva. The workplan called for an analysis of the current scheme, with particular focus on the challenges in administration and management as well as recommendations to the management of UNHCR and ICMC. The report to the Managers would inform the process for renegotiation of the framework agreement and recommendations were intended to provide guidance towards appropriate administrative changes. Following from decisions on revision of the scheme, the development of a procedural handbook on the deployment scheme will document and formalise information and procedures on the scheme.

7. Questionnaires were distributed to all deployees who could be located, all Field Offices where deployees were assigned and to all NGOs involved in the Tripartite process. Preliminary meetings with ICMC management and staff as well as with U.S. State Department officials took place in late March and early April. Telephone conversations, and wherever possible, personal interviews were undertaken with deployees, participating NGOs and with individual UNHCR Resettlement staff.

8. While the actual process may not be as comprehensive as some might wish, it has, nevertheless, tried to be inclusive wherever possible. Twenty-seven deployees responded to the questionnaire. Of those who replied, ten were interviewed either in person or by telephone. Nineteen Field Officers who had supervised deployments responded in writing and various staff at UNHCR Headquarters were interviewed to gain their perspectives. In-person and telephone interviews with NGOs who responded to the questionnaire took place in late April and early May. Meetings took place with staff and management at ICMC engaged in the deployment scheme and ICMC provided statistical and programme information during the course of the review. Through the consultative process, the overview has yielded a wealth of information on the current state of the scheme and on the underlying issues and concerns of the partners and of the deployees.

9. The overview tries, wherever possible, to comment on the areas identified for improvement in the scheme, often with practical examples provided. It would have been too easy to dwell on the weaknesses and inconsistencies, especially where the welfare and support of deployees are concerned. Instead, the overview endeavors to make practical suggestions for strengthening the program, for ensuring deployees are prepared and supported during their deployments, for building stronger ties between NGOs and UNHCR and ultimately assisting UNHCR to fulfill its mandate in the resettlement of refugees.

## Quick Facts on the Resettlement Deployment Scheme

10. A basic review of the statistics on the deployment scheme revealed exponential growth in the number of deployments (*Table 1*). Quantitatively, the deployment scheme is a huge contribution to UNHCR's resettlement work and is also fulfilling a relatively recent role in the provision of expert deployments both at Headquarters and in the field; moreover, UNHCR has come to rely on the deployment scheme as an integral part of its resettlement work.

11. As of April 13<sup>th</sup> 2001, since the beginning of the scheme in 1997, there have been a total of 77 deployment contracts involving 56 persons deployed. From the beginning of 2001 through mid-April 2001 alone, the scheme had mobilised 27 deployees. By June 30<sup>th</sup> 2001, the deployment scheme will have provided 470 person months, which translates into 39.1 person/years. By region, deployees have served in Africa for 174.5 months, in the Middle East for 118 months, in Europe for 60 months, to Asia for 42.5 months, in the Americas for nine months and Headquarters Geneva utilised 54.5 months of deployment services (*Tables 2 and 3*).

12. Of note is the actual number of sponsored deployees sent by their NGOs under the deployment scheme and the decline in participation in 1999 to the present. In 1997 and 1998 the NGO support for the program sent 12 out of 15 deployees to the field. In 1999, when ICMC undertook the broader recruitment and the new contracting arrangements, out of 28 deployments NGOs sponsored four. In 2000, there were 40 deployment contracts of which NGOs sponsored four. To April 13<sup>th</sup> 2001 there are 27 deployments this year; two of them sponsored by NGOs. Notwithstanding the above, many deployees do come from within the NGO networks and it is fair to assume that the overall benefit to the NGO community is greater than what it might seem at first glance.

13. Lengths of deployments varied from less than two months to a maximum of 26 months. Contrary to the assumption that deployments are becoming long term commitments this is only true for a few. In fact, 32 deployments were three months or less, 31 deployments were between three and six months. 17 deployments were between six and 12 months, 10 deployments were longer than one year. Current contracts expire with the framework agreement on June 30<sup>th</sup>.

## Summary of Findings in the Overview

14. There is no doubt that the NGO deployment scheme is a success. The goal of assisting UNHCR to expand its capacity in the field to increase refugee resettlement is being achieved. Refugees are benefiting as they are resettled through the use of the scheme. Deployments have become an integral part of UNHCR's resettlement efforts. The presence of so many deployees in the field, the length of their commitment and the scope of their work are a valuable contribution to refugee resettlement and also an affirmation of the overall strength of the programme.

15. The deployment scheme's success is also the key to its present weaknesses. It has outgrown the original plan and the management of the scheme has not kept up with the evolution. To a large extent, the deployees themselves are paying the price for serious gaps in the system. The overview identified deployees' concerns about equity with UNHCR staff especially with respect to wages and entitlements and raised the need to clarify responsibilities for security. The goals of partnership building need to be strengthened and given more focus.

16. The foundational principle of the deployment scheme remains the same. The scheme offers an opportunity to bring skilled people into the UNHCR organisation in order to enhance the capacity of UNHCR in refugee resettlement. Their temporary placement inside UNHCR provides the opportunity for deployees to understand the nature of the challenges in the field and the role of UNHCR in meeting those challenges. As they work within UNHCR, they develop a broader perspective of how the UNHCR resettlement programme functions within the context of the finite resources and the limitations of the local, political and international partnerships. The deployees returning to their home base and to their NGO context will build lasting bridges if the experiences have been positive and if opportunities are provided to draw upon their insights and skills.

17. The overview provides answers to some of the challenges raised in the current situation; however, the complexity of the UNHCR system and the differing contexts of the NGO communities in various resettlement countries is too multifaceted to provide a well-defined framework for the scheme. Instead certain principles must be agreed to and the roles and responsibilities of partners more clearly defined and described. Opportunities to address changing contexts must be built into the new model by ensuring that a training, monitoring and evaluation process is part of the overall scheme.

18. At first glance, the suggestions and recommendations for the revised model seem not much different from the existing program. However, the proposed model provides depth with which to strengthen the deployment scheme and ensure its viability into the future. It requires that the partners clarify their roles and become much more proactive in developing particular aspects of the scheme.

19. The overview recommends that there are some basic choices to be made regarding cost, principally around what salary scale to use as a base grid for the deployees and whether to expand benefits and special allowances especially with respect to cost of living expenses. The overview offers some options regarding different partnership models for recruitment and administration of the scheme. The recruitment process itself must be transformed and this will require effort from all partners. The overview also suggests new options to access sources of deployees from within the NGO community and possibilities for deployees to participate in different ways whether through intense short-term team rotation or longer-term ongoing assignments. The key to building greater NGO contributions is to ensure mutual benefits and achievement of mission objectives.

20. The status of the deployee within the UNHCR organisation is a major focus in the overview. This is, in part, because so many deployees voiced their concerns as part of the consultative process. It is also because of their great interest and commitment to building a better scheme that will allow them to continue to make their contribution to UNHCR and to the work with and for refugees. The concerns about equity, liability and security are balanced by their commitment to their work and the motivation to continue despite difficult challenges.

21. Deployees are not regular UNHCR staff members, nor within the context of any of the suggested models can they be. The options to place them within the UNHCR structure are limited by UNHCR's current fiscal situation and the corporate 'right-sizing' that involves cutting staff and posts. Despite the growing interest and focus on resettlement from within UNHCR and given the current fiscal and staffing reality in UNHCR, it seems unlikely that longer-term deployees who perform critical tasks to complement other protection activities would have their position converted to a permanent UNHCR post.

22. The overview notes that other deployment schemes within UNHCR keep contracts short, in most cases less than six months. The deployment scheme does address short-term, unanticipated needs; however, the scheme also fills long-term and ongoing assignments rather than the temporary, emergency or stopgap measures typical of other UNHCR models. The overview noted that issues of equity, status and affiliation become more focused the longer the deployee stays in the scheme and are even more relevant when deployees have responsible positions with supervision of UNHCR staff.

23. In order to balance the current inequities and build the profile of the deployment scheme within UNHCR, the overview suggests that the NGOs and the implementing partner explore ways to support and strengthen the identity and status of the deployees as NGO persons working within the UNHCR organisation. UNHCR must also commit to building, within its own culture, a support for and appreciation of the skill, expertise and contributions of deployees.

24. The overview urges UNHCR Resettlement Section to continue to advocate strongly for the essential posts required in the field. The funding structure, the budget process, the corporate ‘right sizing’ process and the interests of the donors will determine how far this can progress. Without adequate UNHCR staff posts, deployees, while able to fill the gaps temporarily, are too often left without adequate supervision and in vulnerable situations. Furthermore, the momentum gained and the expertise acquired are lost to UNHCR and to the refugees when the deployment ends. UNHCR staff must be available to provide continuity on resettlement files when a deployee finishes their assignment.

25. While NGO deployees will undoubtedly remain external to UNHCR yet working within UNHCR, the overview calls for a clearer definition of the deployees’ position within both organisations, UNHCR and the NGO partner. The current system places them in neither organisation and the results are often confusing and frustrating. Responsibility for security needs clarification. Wages must reflect recognition for skills and expertise. The costs of the deployments to the deployees have to be acknowledged and, to a certain degree, supported. Both partners, UNHCR and ICMC, must allocate increased resources and staff time to the overall management of the scheme. With better management, each partner will be able to focus on improving elements of the scheme that are their responsibility, in particular to a fair recruitment process, a transparent system on wages and entitlements, an effective training program and ongoing support for the deployee in the field.

26. The overview notes the underutilisation of returning deployees and the loss of opportunity to build the lasting legacy of the deployment scheme. It encourages the partners and the NGO community to tap the wealth of experience and perspectives of returning deployees. NGOs, community service providers, other organisations interested and involved with refugee resettlement can all benefit from the deployees’ experiences. Moreover, there are excellent opportunities to build up the resource base being developed by specialist deployees that will be useful to NGOs in the resettlement countries.

27. NGOs who participated in the consultation process for the overview expressed great interest in supporting the scheme and actively contributing to it. Their participation with staff allocations will depend on how their own interests and concerns are met. There is both enthusiasm and reservation about the sending of their staff, especially for periods of longer than three months, although several suggestions were offered for possible models such as rotating staff, team mobilisation and short-term deployments. As the partners explore these options, they should be cognisant that NGOs

must be able to see the benefits not only to the refugees but also to their staff deployees, their own organisation and the broader community and resettlement environment.

### **Follow-up to the Overview**

28. ICMC and UNHCR received copies of the overview in early May and immediately took steps to explore options for the implementation of recommendations contained in the report. (*See Recommendations attached.*)

29. The Framework Agreement was redrafted to reflect the collaborative nature of the partnership, to restate the roles of each partner, to provide a mechanism to respond to changing conditions and enunciate more clearly the status of the deployee within both ICMC and UNHCR.

30. UNHCR and ICMC made the decision to engage a manager for the deployment scheme in order to provide a focal point for both organisations. The manager is responsible for the overall planning and implementation of the deployment scheme and the facilitation of the partnership between UNHCR and ICMC. The manager is also responsible for co-ordinating and operationalising certain aspects of the deployment scheme, in particular those related to promotion, recruitment, contracting and training as well as other relevant elements.

31. The development of a *Handbook on the Resettlement Deployment Scheme* is currently underway. The *Handbook* will provide information to UNHCR, its implementing partner and deployees on many aspects of the deployment scheme including information on roles of the partners, procedural guidelines, outlines for training, tools for recruitment, monitoring and evaluation as well as standard documents for communication.

32. ICMC has undertaken the development of a personnel policy for ICMC–UNHCR deployees that will draw, wherever possible, on the existing ICMC policy but will also address elements not contained in the current organisational policy. Information on criteria to determine wages, benefits, compensation for cost of living at posts, insurance and leave allowances will all be contained in this policy to be included in the *Handbook* for easy access and distribution.

33. Both partners have made the commitment to ensure that deployees receive training on organisational matters as well as preparation for their individual assignment. Moreover, the *Handbook* will provide the tools to improve briefing and orientation once deployees reach their duty station.

34. In general, there is a new level of collaboration, a commitment to improved communication and a stronger sense of partnership in achieving the common objectives of supporting the resettlement work of UNHCR through an effective and well-managed programme.

## **THE UNHCR – NGO RESETTLEMENT DEPLOYMENT SCHEME**

### **Recommendations**

#### **Partnership**

##### **It is recommended that:**

1. UNHCR – Resettlement Section and its implementing partner revise the framework agreement for the NGO Deployment Scheme and that the new agreement include:
  - Enunciation of the foundation principles for the scheme and the purpose of the partnership within the overall scheme;
  - Clear division of roles and responsibilities of the partners;
  - Further, that sub-agreements be negotiated to contain procedural and implementation details and that these sub-agreements will be renegotiable to ensure the flexibility of all partners to be responsive to the changing context of the scheme.
2. UNHCR and its implementing partners commit to undertake the building and maintenance of a strong partnership in keeping with the principles outlined in “Partnership: A Program Management Handbook for UNHCR Partners”. As a first step this will include the commitment of staff at the management level as focal points for the partnership.
3. UNHCR and its implementing partner undertake to develop and implement a management plan for the deployment scheme that will include a communication strategy, effective planning, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and appropriate allocation of staff.
4. UNHCR and its implementing partner establish clear division of roles and responsibilities towards the deployees and that:
  - This is conveyed to the deployees as part of the recruiting process and again during training and orientation;
  - UNHCR make the commitment to treat the deployees in the field in the same manner as UNHCR staff whenever and wherever possible.

#### **Recruitment**

##### **It is recommended that:**

5. UNHCR and its implementing partner jointly develop a promotion strategy on the UNHCR-NGO Resettlement Deployment Scheme that will broaden information distribution, increase access to interested potential candidates and include the goal of increased NGO participation.
6. UNHCR and its implementing partner develop and implement a process to exchange information regularly on expected trends that will guide recruitment strategies for the deployment scheme.

7. UNHCR and its implementing partner develop and implement a recruitment and deployment process that has the capacity to address:

- Non-emergency longer term deployments of three months or more,
- Short term deployments of less than three months, through the use of a two-tier roster that will include a core of deployees maintained at a ‘readiness’ status for unexpected situations within specific timeframes.

8. Selection to the roster and to actual deployments will be defined by applying a set of objective criteria and through a transparent process that includes an interview and reference checks.

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **It is recommended that:**

9. Wherever possible, the receiving office for the deployment, with support from Headquarters; will be responsible for developing the Terms of Reference (“TOR”) for a deployment.

10. The generic template for TOR be expanded and require greater detail and clarity especially on background context, prioritising of multi-task assignments, communication strands and reporting requirements.

11. TOR be used as a recruitment tool and as the basis for performance and program evaluation.

### **Establishing a Wage**

#### **It is recommended that:**

12. In establishing a wage for each deployee:

- The Terms of Reference developed for each deployment should refer to a category/classification for the deployment.
- The classification for each type of deployment will be based on clear criteria and will be applied to a wage grid that provides for a range of experience within each category and includes incremental increases for deployment experience.
- The wage grid should also include applicable adjustments for post allowances, hardship postings, danger postings and R&R packages.
- Initial recruitment information will include information on the classification of the deployment assignment and the applicable wage range.
- Initial recruitment information will include, in writing, a description of the allowances and applicable benefits including post adjustments, leave allowances, as well as policies on travel and Daily Subsistence Allowances.

13. The implementing partner will undertake actively to ensure that the deployees understand their status and identity, as an NGO staff person deployed to UNHCR and this will include thorough orientation to the partner organization and its policies that relate to the deployee.



14. Current contracts that are below the standard on the grid will be rationalized to the appropriate level.

### **Allowances, DSAs and Leaves**

#### **It is recommended that:**

15. Daily Subsistence Allowances and housing allowances, at a minimum, be consistent with the policy of the implementing partner.

16. A cost of living adjustment formula to account for the purchasing power of each post location be added to the base salary of the deployee in addition to the housing allowance.

17. Flexibility must exist to enable provisions for travel and housing consistent with UNHCR staff at the request of UNHCR.

18. Mental Health and Special Leave provisions should be consistent with UNHCR practice for that duty station in recognition that deployees work in the same conditions alongside their UNHCR colleagues.

### **Contract Matters**

#### **It is recommended that:**

19. UNHCR undertakes to ensure timely conclusion to negotiations on sub-agreements with its implementing partner at year end in order to safeguard seamless transition from one contract to the next.

20. The implementing partner will not force the end of deployment contracts contingent on sub-agreements but, instead, make provision in the deployee contract for termination conditional on the failure of the partners to finalize sub-agreements in a timely manner or in the event that funding becomes unavailable.

21. UNHCR undertakes to offer contracts to deployees that are in keeping with the real estimated length of the assignment and the availability of the deployee.

22. UNHCR and its implementing partner use probationary contracts where appropriate, in place of issuing short-term contracts, especially for first time deployees.

23. Consideration be given to developing tripartite agreements for deployments from sending NGOs especially with reference to contract length.

### **Training and Briefing**

#### **It is recommended that:**

24. UNHCR commit to ensuring that training for deployees is provided for all deployees prior to commencement of duties and that at a minimum the basic training will include:

- Organizational training on UNHCR:
  - Information on the structures, policies and protocols of UNHCR.

- Overall information on the Resettlement Program and the use of the Handbook as a key resource.
- Status of the Deployee vis-a-vis UNHCR and the implementing partner:
  - authority, communication, security;
  - contract matters, especially compensation policies.
- Practical Realities of a Deployment:
  - examples of challenges and concerns faced by deployees;
  - case studies.
- Reporting, accountability mechanisms.

25. Wherever possible and appropriate Resettlement Section will utilize existing training resources and will consider the adaptation of the new JPO CD ROM and Orientation and Induction Program as well as elements of the Emergency Roster Training as part of the training package for deployees.

26. A consistent process be implemented for briefing and orientation for deployees and include a security briefing and briefing on the specific assignment as well as orientation to the duty station and to the local context and community. Consideration should be given to implementing the JPO Induction and Orientation Tool Kit as the basis for the deployment orientation.

### **Arrival and Support in the Field**

#### **It is recommended that:**

27. The implementing partner responsible for travel arrangements notifies the responsible staff desk at Resettlement HQ of travel arrangements and requests confirmation on arrangements for reception and so notifies the deployee.

28. The “Note to UNHCR Offices Receiving Resettlement Experts Deployed under Agreement with the International Catholic Migration Commission” (2000) be revised and the revised version is forwarded to the receiving office prior to every deployment.

29. Receiving Offices ensure that the basic tools needed to fulfil the deployment assignment are available for the deployee or that a request is made to HQ well in advance identifying the required resources.

30. UNHCR will ensure that where deployees are living in assigned housing quarters, their accommodation will be comparable to UNHCR staff at a JPO level.

### **The Exit Process**

#### **It is recommended that:**

31. UNHCR develop a consistent format for the exit process for deployees that will include:

- Clear guidelines on written exit reports;
- An oral debriefing of the deployee by a responsible officer not in the duty station where the deployee worked.

32. UNHCR take action at the relevant Office to ensure that refugee casework is passed to responsible staff at the end of a deployment and that continuity on individual file referral does not lapse where a new deployment arrival is not planned for or not yet in place.

33. UNHCR develop a mechanism to ensure that resources developed as products of a deployment and that have relevance outside the specific deployment be shared with relevant resettlement partners.

34. UNHCR develop and implement a performance review mechanism for Resettlement NGO employees as part of the exit process and that this include assessment of the employee's performance but also include an assessment of office and organisational support.

35. NGOs who deploy their staff to the field have the opportunity to give an exit report to the Chief of Resettlement Section.

36. UNHCR develop and implement a process to recognise and acknowledge employees and NGOs who support the scheme.

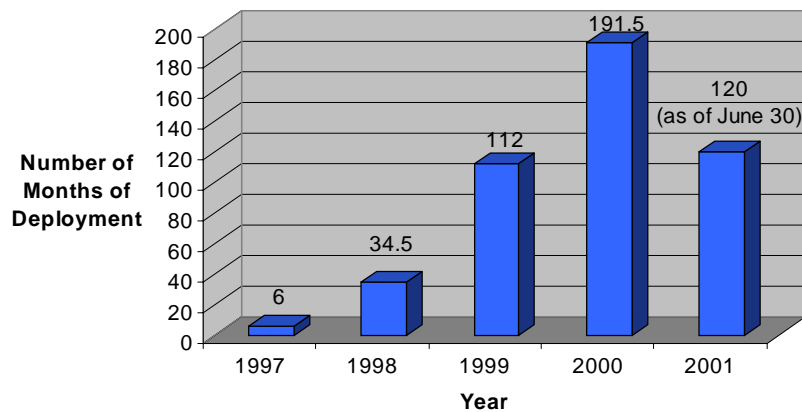
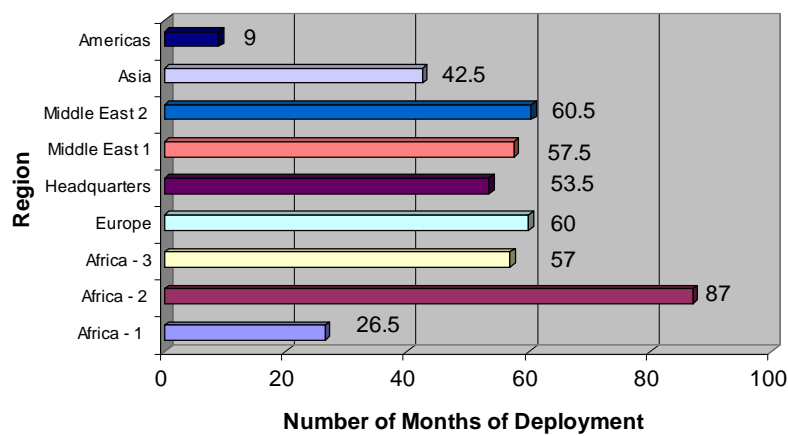
## **Security**

### **It is recommended that:**

37. UNHCR –Resettlement Section consult with the Field Services Security Section to confirm that UNHCR can and will assume ultimate responsibility for the security of the employee and ensure that:

- Each deployee receives a security briefing on arrival at the deployment site;
- Any security action involving ongoing security management or in the event of an evacuation will include the deployees to the same level as UNHCR staff.

38. UNHCR and the implementing partner will collaborate to clarify insurance liabilities to both organisations, especially with respect to the relevant provisions of the existing framework agreement, and in consideration of responsibilities for training, briefing, regional travel, supervision, employment practices and security.

**Table 1: Growth in Deployment Scheme****Table 2 - Deployment by Region****Table 3 -Deployment by Region and by Year**