

Annex III

ACC STATEMENT ON STAFF SECURITY

1. The organizations of the United Nations system are now working closer to the front lines of conflict or even inside conflict zones, as well as in volatile and politically complex situations. This is reflected in the casualties that the United Nations system has suffered in the last year.

2. Under these circumstances, there is an urgent need for the United Nations system and the international community to consider at what point an area or a situation has become so dangerous that United Nations system staff must be withdrawn.

3. The Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Security Meeting held in Rome on 6 and 8 May 1997 discussed and made recommendations on a wide range of issues relating to the security and safety of staff (see ACC/1997/10). ACC fully supports the recommendations of the Meeting, and wishes to highlight a number of issues which are of immediate concern to the safety and security of staff in crisis situation and which need to be jointly addressed by the United Nations system under the auspices of the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator, as follows:

(a) Security of national staff: in conflict areas in which United Nations system staff are called upon to operate, it is frequently the national staff that bear the brunt of any resentment or hostility towards the United Nations. Accordingly, the national staff, citizens of the country, are frequently the first victims of retaliation; this is even more true if an evacuation of international staff is being considered, or has occurred;

(b) Urgent action is required to ensure that all appropriate measures are taken to assist these staff;

(c) Coordination with peacekeeping and other field missions: frequently United Nations system staff find themselves working alongside United Nations military and other field missions. The United Nations system needs to enhance formal mechanisms whereby all the agencies, programmes and funds can cooperate to pursue their respective objectives and mandates in coordination with each other;

(d) Training: the training package currently in use in the system has been successfully field tested over the past several years. It is under

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continuous review. This training package needs to be disseminated with all possible speed, in particular to managers in the field, and the necessary funds for this need to be made readily available;

(e) Stress: as a result of the functions entrusted to them, United Nations staff are subjected to increasing levels of stress. The United Nations system needs a comprehensive programme of stress relief, including training, counselling and debriefing. It is imperative that the associated administrative and financial resources be made available to implement this programme;

(f) Recognizing that the implementation of security measures will entail additional resources, ACC members will continue to give priority attention to the financing of all necessary measures to enhance staff security;

(g) ACC welcomes recent statements made by legislative bodies, including the presidential statement of 21 May 1997 of the Security Council, especially as these referred to:

- (i) The planned establishment of an international criminal court, in which the Council reminds all States and others concerned of the need to bring to justice those who violate international humanitarian law;
- (ii) The Convention on the Safety of the United Nations and Associated Personnel, in which the Council calls upon all parties concerned to ensure the safety and security of these personnel, as well as personnel of humanitarian organizations.

4. ACC intends to follow with keen interest the implementation of the statements mentioned in paragraph 3 (g) above.