UPDATE ON THE SITUATION OF REFUGEES LIVING AT THE OUTSKIRTS OF DAGAHALEY DADAAB, KENYA – 2 December 2010

1. Background
The three refugee camps in Dadaab namely, Ifo, Hagadera and Dagahaley, continue to receive a significant number of new arrivals. As of 26 November 2010, the overall population in the Dadaab camps stood at 294,338 persons. This number is significant given the fact that the three camps were originally established to accommodate 90,000 refugees (30,000 per camp) in the early 1990s.

Since 2008, the camp management agency Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has stopped allocating new arrivals with residential plots of land, due to lack of available space in all the three camps. On arrival, most refugees prefer to settle in a camp where they have relatives, friends, or clan members.

Thus, registered refugees, both old and newly arrived in the Dadaab camps, continue to live in congested and over crowded areas and the camp boundaries in all the three camps continue to expand outside designated camp areas.

Dagahaley, being the third-oldest camp in Dadaab, is home to approximately 94,000 refugees. Currently, the number of refugees living outside the designated camp peripheries in Dagahaley is around 10,000. Refugees living in the flood prone areas are around 3,000 individuals.

2. Needs of refugees
Given the fact that the refugees have not settled within the official area of the camp and subsequently reside on host community land, the provision of all of the normal humanitarian services to

Picture 1: Temporary shelter at the outskirt of Dagahaley, 20 November (credit: UNHCR)
adequate standards has not been possible.

In September, UNHCR conducted an assessment on protection, security, sanitation, education, water, land, and shelter. The findings indicate that the refugees have very limited access to basic services, including water, shelter, and sanitation.

In November, UNHCR was able to provide tents to a good number of new arrivals living in this area. CARE International-Kenya has set up a temporary water tank and MSF Suisse provides treatment to sick and vulnerable refugees through a mobile clinic.

However, the continued stay of new arrivals outside the camp peripheries and also the lack of access to adequate services would expose refugees to the following risks:

- Increase of mortality rate.
- Potential outbreak of epidemic diseases, such as cholera.
- Increase in malnutrition among children and older persons.
- Incidents of Gender Based Violence and separation of family members due to lack of shelter.
- Lack of support structures for persons with disabilities, older refugees, adolescents and other vulnerable persons.

The fact that the area where the refugees are residing is a flood prone area puts the refugees at an even higher risk. At the beginning of November, the first rain fell in Dagahaley, which damaged the temporary shelters and food rations given to the group.

As an immediate action, some refugees were relocated to higher grounds and provided with food rations to compensate them for the loss during the short rains.
3. Relocation to the extension of IFO

As a result of the heightened vulnerability of those living outside the camp designated area, the persons living on the outskirts of Dagahaley, were considered the most vulnerable and were selected as a priority for relocation to the extension of Ifo, which can host 40,000 refugees and which is nearly completed (see IFO extension update). All necessary preparations were made for the relocation from Dagahaley to Ifo extension for 2 November 2010.

A total of 2,070 refugees were verified and assessed for this relocation. The first convoy manifest had been released to the UNHCR field office in Dagahaley and refugees, who had been informed of the relocation, were waiting for final confirmation. In that regard, WFP has provided a one month food ration to all refugees in readiness for the relocation to Ifo extension.

Prior to the envisaged relocation on 2 November 2010, the local authorities stopped the process, due to lack of agreement on the type of shelter in Ifo extension and asked UNHCR not to proceed with the relocation until clearance from higher authorities.

UNHCR is still negotiating with the local, regional and national government on the planned relocation. A field mission to the area in Dagahaley and the proposed relocation site was organised by UNHCR, for the members of the Dadaab Community Development Committee (CDC).

As UNHCR waits for the outcome of the consultations, monitoring of the condition of the refugees is continuing.

At present, the refugees are still living at the outskirts of Dagahaley and remain at risk due to limited access to services. This risk will multiply once the rainy season hits with full force.

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