

rights issues. Codes of conduct go far beyond operational procedures, since they deal with normative standards of behaviour, and attempt to codify the desired impact of UN human rights field professionals. In this regard, the UN's Joint Inspection Unit has recommended that "a specific code of conduct should be prepared and distributed to all missions; that staff should be well briefed regarding their behaviour and in case of misconduct and abuse disciplinary measures should be promptly taken."²¹⁷

The HRO component of MINUGUA in Guatemala has built upon ad hoc guidelines in other HROs, particularly from MICIVIH, to produce their own code of conduct for MINUGUA staff. There are a number of excellent codes of conduct in related fields²¹⁸ that could be drawn upon to further improve the various ad hoc HRO codes of conduct. Existing ad hoc HRO codes of conduct should be distributed for public discussion with a view to creating a model code of conduct for HRO staff, as well as for HRO field partners such as peace-keepers or CIVPOL, for when they are dealing with human rights issues.

10.3 Lessons Learned Mechanism

While there has been some cross fertilization between HROs, and some precedence setting by previous HROs, this has been extremely ad hoc and decentralized. Work spent on developing HRO procedures and mechanisms has often been duplicated, and many experiences and lessons learned have been lost to the UN as individuals ended their assignments and returned home without having their input or suggestions recorded.

There is a pressing need for a human rights in UN operations lessons learned mechanism. That mechanism should be largely designed and coordinated by a lessons learned unit, logically located in the office of primary responsibility for UN HROs. That lessons learned unit would devise an integrated system for collecting HRO operational data and conducting analysis of that data. It would then recommend ways to improve doctrine, training, organization, and procedures, and would publicise those recommendations. Not only will this provide much needed continuity from operation to operation, but will serve to stimulate public debate on the evolution of HRO procedures and practice.

Such a process must not impose too great a burden on either field staff or those leaving the operation, otherwise they will just not do it. Equally, any UN lessons learned unit will inevitably have scarce resources, so that their lessons learned mechanism must be quite streamlined. One of the keys to data collection will be the design of post operational reports to be completed both by individuals leaving the operation, and by specific key office holders

²¹⁷ p.19, UN Doc. A/48/421, 19 October 1993, Joint Inspection Unit, *Staffing of the United Nations Peace-Keeping and Related Missions (Civilian Component)*

²¹⁸ One excellent model is the *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief*, IFRC, Geneva 1994, pp.13