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OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES:  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CENTRAL AMERICAN REFUGEES

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### Corrigendum

Replace section I, DECLARATION, of the annex with the attached text.

ANNEX

Declaration and Concerted Plan of Action in Favour of Central American Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons

I. DECLARATION

The Governments of the States represented in the International Conference on Central American Refugees, held at Guatemala City from 29 to 31 May 1989,

Bearing in mind the significance of the Procedure for the Establishment of a Firm and Lasting Peace in Central America, a/ signed by the Presidents of the five countries of Central America at Guatemala City on 7 August 1987, and especially the contents of its point 8,

Recalling the San Salvador Communiqué on Central American Refugees of 9 September 1988, b/ resolution 43/118 of the General Assembly of the United Nations of 8 December 1988, entitled "International Conference on Central American Refugees", and the resolution of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States of 19 November 1988 entitled "Central American Refugees and Regional Efforts to Resolve Their Problems", c/

Taking fully into account the Joint Declaration of the Central American Presidents signed in the Department of La Paz, El Salvador, on 14 February 1989, in which they offer their full support for the Conference,

Noting other expressions of support received, in particular from the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Central American States, the Contadora Group and the European Economic Community in the Political Declaration and the Joint Economic Communiqué of the San José Meeting, held at San Pedro Sula, Honduras, on 27 and 28 February 1989,

Recognizing the importance, within the overall United Nations effort for the region, of the Special Plan of Economic Co-operation for Central America, d/ approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 42/231 of 12 May 1988, whose chapter on refugees and displaced persons will have to be complementary to the implementation of the Plan of Action of the Conference,

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a/ A/42/521-S/19085.

b/ A/C.3/43/6, annex.

c/ OAS/Ser.P-AG/doc.2370/88/Rev.1.

d/ A/42/949, annex.

Bearing in mind that the common effort in favour of refugees, returnees and displaced persons requires the support, co-operation and co-ordination of the various affected and interested Governments, and of the various international organizations involved, particularly the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Programme,

Noting that, since the beginning of the conflicts in the region, more than a quarter of a million Central Americans have fled their countries of origin and have received protection and assistance as refugees in neighbouring countries, especially through the meritorious work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,

Noting furthermore that the crisis in Central America not only has brought about the exodus of refugees which have been identified, recognized and assisted as such, but also has resulted in both internal and external displacements of a considerably higher number of persons than that of refugees and which equally need attention,

Concerned by the intense human suffering caused by this massive uprooting of population groups, which in addition has had a negative impact on the populations that receive them and on the public services and natural resources, among others, available in the countries where they transit,

Declare as follows:

1. Express their strong concern with regard to the existence of hundreds of thousands of Central American refugees and displaced persons whose suffering constitutes one of the most distressing consequences of the crisis in the region and a human drama that must be dealt with;
2. Emphasize the praiseworthy humanitarian and non-political attitude of the countries which, with the help of the international community and especially of the co-operating countries, have provided timely protection and assistance to those affected;
3. Reaffirm their commitment to encourage the voluntary return of refugees and other persons displaced by the crisis, under conditions of personal security and dignity that would allow them to resume a normal life;
4. Confirm also that international assistance is provided on the same humanitarian and strictly non-political basis;
5. Reaffirm further the importance for the countries in the region of the 1951 United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees, e/ and its 1967

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e/ United Nations, Treaty Series, No. 2545, vol. 189, p. 137.

Protocol, f/ and, for those countries that are parties to them, the regional instruments on asylum and human rights, in the context of the generous tradition of asylum in Latin America;

6. Reiterate their commitment to respect and promote the basic principles of protection of refugees and other principles which concern the inherent rights of the individual;

7. Reiterate the importance of the principle according to which refugees are obliged to respect and observe the laws of the country of asylum, including lawful measures taken for the maintenance of public order;

8. Confirm the obligation of refugees to avoid any activities which might affect the strictly civilian and humanitarian nature of camps and settlements, as well as any activity that is incompatible with the regional peace process;

9. Take note of the contribution, for the countries of the region, of the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, g/ which amplifies the relevant principles and criteria for the protection of and assistance to refugees in the region and serves as guidance and orientation for those States;

10. Take note also of the importance for the countries of the region of the document on Principles and Criteria for the Protection of and Assistance to Central American Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Latin America, h/ which may constitute a source of information and orientation for all interested States;

11. Note with satisfaction the willingness of the affected States to include in their national development plans, as a matter of priority, proposals for solutions for refugees, returnees and displaced persons submitted to the Conference;

12. Recognize that the inclusion of specific solutions to the problems of refugees, returnees and displaced persons, within the framework of economic and social development strategies, will contribute to the success of the Plan of Action;

13. Confirm that beyond the formal and overriding commitment in respect of refugees and returnees, in conformity with the relevant international instruments and the fundamental principles of international protection, the international community is ready, in accordance with the principles of humanity and solidarity, to contribute to solutions in favour of displaced persons;

14. Emphasize that it is important for the above-mentioned proposals to pay due attention, as a matter of priority, to the special needs of refugee women and children;

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f/ Ibid., No. 8791, vol. 606, p. 267.

g/ OAS/Ser.L/V.II.66, doc. 10, rev. 1, pp. 190-193.

h/ CIREFCA/89/9.

15. Recognize the crucial role played by the tripartite commissions, made up of representatives of the country of asylum, the country of origin and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in facilitating and promoting the voluntary repatriation of refugees;

16. Confirm that it is necessary for the treatment and solutions in favour of refugees, returnees and displaced persons to take place on a strictly humanitarian basis, with the agreement and respect of all parties concerned, as reflected in the formal commitment contained in the San Salvador Communiqué of 9 September 1988;

17. Recognize the positive contribution made by non-governmental organizations in the area of assistance in favour of the affected population groups and, in this regard, encourages them to increase their efforts within the framework established by the relevant Governments;

18. Underline the importance of several projects under way regarding refugees, returnees and displaced persons which are carried out in the countries affected - these include, inter alia: the ongoing efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Programme and the International Committee of the Red Cross, as well as non-governmental organizations; the bilateral assistance programmes of co-operating countries; and, in keeping with the special plan of economic co-operation for Central America and the Programme in Favour of Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees;

19. Express their profound gratitude to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his valuable assistance in the preparation of the Conference;

20. Recognize the important contribution of organizations of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations in the preparation of the Conference;

21. Emphasize the commendable collaboration of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Programme with the Governments of the affected countries in the various stages of the preparation for the Conference and, in particular, in the formulation of proposals for solutions in favour of the affected population groups;

22. Recognize that solutions to the problems of refugees, returnees and displaced persons form an integral part of the efforts for peace, democracy and development taking place in the region;

And, therefore:

23. Approve, in accordance with the principle of international solidarity, the guidelines of the Concerted Plan of Action in Favour of Central American Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons, set forth below, support its principles and objectives, and consider it a promising initial framework for future activities and thus reaffirm their commitment to contribute to the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America;

24. Decide to examine in a favourable spirit the projects presented to the Conference by the affected countries and to explore all possible sources to ensure their financing;

25. Recommend that the international community should give greater attention and support to the problem of displaced persons and that, to that end, the Secretary-General of the United Nations should assign, after consultations with the member States, the corresponding responsibilities;

26. Take note of the decision of the affected countries to disseminate the document on the Principles and Criteria for the Protection of and Assistance to Central American Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Latin America, to be used as a source of information;

27. Note with appreciation the mechanisms for promotion and follow up described in the Plan of Action.

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