



General Assembly

Distr.  
GENERAL

A/45/12/Add.1  
25 October 1990  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH AND FRENCH

Forty-fifth session

ADDENDUM TO THE REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER  
FOR REFUGEES\*

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\* The present document is a mimeographed version of the addendum to the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. It will be issued subsequently in final form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 12A (A/45/12/Add.1). It was initially circulated under the symbol A/AC.96/760.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme held its forty-first session at the Palais des Nations at Geneva from 1 to 5 October 1990. The session was opened by the outgoing Chairman, His Excellency Ambassador Fredo Dannenbring of the Federal Republic of Germany.

2. In his introductory statement, Ambassador Dannenbring referred to the recent positive developments in the international political situation, particularly the improvement in East-West relations and the upsurge of democracy in Eastern Europe, all of which had contributed to the optimism that some of the world's long-standing refugee situations would be solved. Referring in that connection to the peaceful and democratic unification of his own country, and to Namibia's independence in March 1990 and the successful return to that country of over 43,000 of its citizens, he expressed the hope that conditions would also soon be attained that would permit the Afghan refugees, a third of the world's total, and the Cambodian refugees, to return to their countries.

3. Turning to the nature of the current world refugee situation, he observed that, despite the above-mentioned climate, there were over 15 million refugees today, with 2.3 million of them in the developed countries as compared with 12.5 million in the less developed world. He placed the problems of current refugee and large-scale population displacements in the wider global economic, environmental, geo-political and migratory framework, and referred to the risks and challenges the problems presented. In his view, the responses to the current movements of refugees and asylum-seekers and broader migratory movements had to come from the United Nations system as a whole. While the High Commissioner provided international protection and assistance to political refugees under his mandate, people displaced for other reasons were in need of humanitarian assistance.

4. The outgoing Chairman then reported on his visits to the refugee programmes in Thailand and Pakistan, which illustrated some of the points he had made. In both cases, a dilemma was presented by the impossibility or difficulties experienced in implementing the best solution of all, repatriation, although he once again expressed the hope that this situation would not last for much longer, in particular, for the Cambodians in Thailand. In the case of Pakistan, a question was now being asked whether the international community will, after 10 years, be prepared to keep up the level of contributions for another decade. In that connection, he had been reassured to see that the special repatriation programme for Afghans was under way and that there was hope of an increasing number of Afghans returning home.

5. He then turned to the work of the fortieth session of the Committee which, he noted, had been concerned mostly with the grave financial problems of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which had necessitated a carry-over into 1990 of up to \$38 million in unliquidated obligations from 1989. He recalled, in that connection, the decisions and actions of the Executive Committee to prevent the recurrence of such a deficit, including limiting obligations in the first six months of 1990 to \$190 million, and the establishment of a temporary Working Group to review thoroughly the content of the UNHCR General Programmes, assistance, budgetary and administrative matters. That Working Group, he said, had carried out an enormous work-load, and developed a spirit of compromise and good co-operation, resulting in the approval by the Executive

Committee of a revised 1990 General Programmes budget of \$378.9 million. He also identified a number of pending questions, the most pertinent being the unpredictability of income to the UNHCR programmes. The outgoing Chairman hoped that these could be resolved by the time of the forty-second session of the Committee in 1991.

6. He then underlined the importance of the Working Group that had been established to consider solutions to the refugee problem and the protection of refugees, which would facilitate consideration of a comprehensive and coherent future refugee policy. In that context, the combined effect of rising numbers of refugees and their geographical distribution in mainly third world countries, as well as the limited willingness and capacities of asylum and resettlement countries to admit more refugees, necessitated that more had to be done through preventive action.

7. When prevention fails, international solidarity was called for in a joint effort to find solutions. International solidarity, he said, encompassed both countries of origin and donors. It required fresh efforts by the United Nations system, i.e., the Governments represented in the United Nations and in the Executive Committee, to create instruments with clearly defined responsibility and the capacity to react quickly. Therefore, his farewell message was that the Executive Committee should continue to fulfil its unique function in the international endeavour to mitigate and ultimately solve refugee situations wherever they occur.

8. Concluding, Ambassador Dannenbring paid tribute to the members of the Executive Committee, the members of his bureau, the High Commissioner and his staff, and his own staff, for all the assistance given to him during his term of office on the Executive Committee bureau. The Committee could count on his continued support.

#### A. Election of officers

9. Under rule 10 of the rules of procedure, the Committee elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman: Mr. M. Emeka Ayo Azikiwe (Nigeria)

Vice-Chairman: Mr. Franz Ceska (Austria)

Rapporteur: Mr. Alberto D'Alotto (Argentina)

#### B. Representation on the Committee

10. The following members of the Committee were represented at the session:

Algeria  
Argentina  
Australia  
Austria  
Belgium  
Brazil  
Canada  
China  
Colombia  
Denmark  
Finland  
France  
Germany  
Greece  
Holy See  
Iran (Islamic Republic of)  
Israel  
Italy  
Japan  
Lebanon  
Lesotho  
Madagascar

Morocco  
Netherlands  
Nicaragua  
Nigeria  
Norway  
Pakistan  
Somalia  
Sudan  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
Thailand  
Tunisia  
Turkey  
Uganda  
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern  
Ireland  
United Republic of Tanzania  
United States of America  
Venezuela  
Yugoslavia  
Zaire

11. The Governments of the following States were present as observers:

Afghanistan  
Angola  
Bahrain  
Bangladesh  
Bolivia  
Botswana  
Bulgaria  
Burundi  
Cameroon  
Chile  
Congo  
Costa Rica  
Côte d'Ivoire  
Cuba  
Cyprus  
Czechoslovakia  
Djibouti  
Egypt  
El Salvador  
Ethiopia  
Ghana  
Haiti  
Honduras  
Hungary  
Iceland  
India  
Indonesia  
Iraq  
Ireland  
Jordan  
Kenya

Kuwait  
Lao People's Democratic Republic  
Liberia  
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya  
Malawi  
Malaysia  
Mexico  
Mozambique  
Myanmar  
New Zealand  
Paraguay  
Peru  
Philippines  
Poland  
Portugal  
Qatar  
Romania  
Republic of Korea  
Rwanda  
Yemen  
Sao Tome and Principe  
Saudi Arabia  
Senegal  
Spain  
Sri Lanka  
Swaziland  
Syrian Arab Republic  
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics  
Uruguay  
Viet Nam  
Zimbabwe

The Sovereign Order of Malta was also represented by an observer.

12. The United Nations system was represented as follows: United Nations Office at Geneva, Co-ordinator for United Nations Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes Relating to Afghanistan (UNOCA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO), International Labour Office (ILO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Volunteers (UNV), World Food Programme (WFP), and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

13. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented by observers: World Bank, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Commission of the European Communities, League of Arab States and Organization of African Unity (OAU).

14. Some 80 non-governmental organizations were represented by observers, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA).

15. The African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) were also represented at the session.

#### C. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

16. The Executive Committee adopted by consensus the following agenda (document A/AC.96/749):

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
4. General debate.
5. (a) Review of UNHCR programmes financed by voluntary funds in 1989-1990 and adoption of the revised 1990 budget and proposed programmes and budget for 1990;  
(b) Status of contributions and overall financial requirements for 1990 and 1991;  
(c) Administration and management.
6. Consideration of the provisional agenda of the forty-second session of the Executive Committee.
7. Any other business.

8. Adoption of the draft report of the forty-first session.

9. Closing of the session.

17. With respect to participation by government observer delegations in the informal meetings of the Executive Committee and its two Sub-Committees during 1991, the Committee decided, in order to make more time available to Governments to apply for participation, to defer consideration of this matter and take it up later under agenda item 7, at which time the Committee considered document A/AC.96/XLI/CRP.6 on participation by government observer delegations in 1991. The list of government observer delegations for whom participation was thus approved by the Committee is reflected in the present report as a decision of the Executive Committee.

D. Opening statement by the Chairman of the Executive Committee

18. Ambassador Azikiwe thanked all those delegations which had made it possible for him to assume the chairmanship of the forty-first session of the Executive Committee. He hoped that, with the co-operation of all delegations, the Committee would be able to achieve its objectives.

## II. GENERAL DEBATE

(Items 4-9)

19. The High Commissioner's opening statement to the Executive Committee is reproduced in the annex to the present report. The full account of the deliberations of the Committee, including the statements or other interventions made by delegations on all the agenda items of the meeting, and the closing statements by the Chairman and High Commissioner, are contained in the summary records of the session (A/AC.96/SR.453-460).



### III. DECISIONS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

#### A. Conclusions and decisions on international protection

##### 1. General conclusion on international protection

#### 20. The Executive Committee

(a) Reaffirms the central and basic character of the High Commissioner's international protection function;

(b) Calls upon States, UNHCR and other concerned parties to take all necessary measures to ensure that refugees are effectively protected and recalls in this regard the fundamental importance of the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 28 July 1951 1/ and the Protocol 2/ relating to the Status of Refugees of 31 January 1967;

(c) Expresses strong concern that refugee protection continues to be seriously jeopardized in many States, including through expulsion, refoulement and other threats to the physical security, dignity and well-being of refugees;

(d) Notes with concern that, in certain instances, specific activities by some refugees have been incompatible with national security interests and, in this context, reconfirmed its Conclusion No. 48 (XXXVIII) on military and armed attacks on refugee camps and settlements and, in particular, its paragraph 4 (a);

(e) Emphasizes the close nexus between international protection, international solidarity, material assistance and the provision of solutions through voluntary repatriation, integration in countries of asylum, or resettlement, and calls upon the High Commissioner to continue his efforts to ensure that protection measures are fully integrated into assistance and durable solutions programmes;

(f) Noting the link between protection and resettlement, underlines the need for States to provide adequate places for refugees in need of resettlement;

(g) Notes that countries of first asylum carry the major burden of refugees, displaced persons and asylum-seekers, and calls upon the international community and the High Commissioner to continue efforts to share the task of providing assistance and solutions and to pursue the search for mechanisms that provide solutions appropriate for the groups involved;

(h) Expresses concern about the lack of adequate international protection for various groups of refugees in different parts of the world, including a large number of Palestinians, and hopes that efforts would continue within the United Nations system to address their protection needs;

(i) Encourages all States parties to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol to respond as soon as possible to the questionnaire on implementation of these instruments circulated by the High Commissioner, so that he can submit a detailed report on their implementation to the Executive Committee at its forty-second session;

(j) Notes with appreciation the accomplishments of the Office in promoting and disseminating refugee law, particularly through the organization of protection training courses, and in maintaining a research capacity, and calls upon the High Commissioner to consider how to pursue these activities within existing resources.

## 2. Conclusion on the note on international protection

### 21. The Executive Committee,

Welcoming the significant progress made over the past 40 years in resolving refugee situations in a number of regions and in guaranteeing protection and assistance to millions of refugees on the basis of accepted legal principles and a spirit of international solidarity and burden-sharing;

Taking into account, however, that despite these positive developments and international co-operation to resolve situations, the refugee and asylum problem in its entirety is bigger, more complex and as persistent as ever;

Convinced that those humanitarian and human rights principles at the base of international concern for, and protection of, refugees are as relevant today as they were in 1951;

Believing, however, that the current size and characteristics of the refugee and asylum problem necessitate appropriate reassessment of international responses to the problem to date, with a view to developing comprehensive approaches to meet present realities;

Stressing that, to succeed, comprehensive approaches must also endeavour to respond to the concerns of all affected States, including first asylum and receiving States;

Appreciating the comprehensive approach taken in the High Commissioner's note on international protection in presenting some considerations for developing refugee strategies;

(a) Takes note of the High Commissioner's emphasis, in his note on international protection, on the following:

- (i) Prevention and early warning of developing situations, and mediation as an effective method to contain problems;
- (ii) The possible human rights dimensions of refugee flows, which can also be a source of national and international instability;
- (iii) The difference between refugees and persons seeking to migrate for economic and related reasons, and the need for any refugee policy to respect fundamental distinctions between the two categories of people, and be fully consonant with the principles particular to, and essential for, the protection of refugees, including first asylum and non-refoulement;

- (iv) The fact that voluntary repatriation, local settlement or resettlement, that is, the traditional solutions for refugees, all remain viable and important responses to refugee situations, even while voluntary repatriation is the pre-eminent solution;
- (v) Development of measures which would underpin and broaden the acceptance of the three traditional durable solutions;
- (vi) The need for countries of origin to assume a significant responsibility in the search for appropriate solutions, including through addressing root causes and facilitating voluntary repatriation and the return of their nationals who are not refugees;
- (vii) More detailed articulation of the concept of State responsibility, particularly as it relates to the responsibilities of the countries of origin;
- (viii) More active and effective utilization by States and UNHCR of United Nations and other qualified expert bodies as appropriate, including human rights bodies, in their relevant areas of competence;
- (ix) Consideration of development aid as a complementary measure to address causes of, prevention of, and solutions to, refugee and refugee-like situations;
- (x) Encouragement to regional bodies or groupings more actively to contribute to positive resolution of problems in their respective regions;
- (xi) Development of measures by States to deal responsibly and effectively with rejected asylum-seekers;
- (xii) Full integration of public information activities into strategies;
- (xiii) Encouragement of full and open debate on new approaches;
- (xiv) Consideration of the relationship between asylum problems and international migration.

(b) Decides to refer those matters for reflection to the Executive Committee Working Group on Solutions and Protection.

### 3. Conclusion on solutions and protection

22. The Executive Committee decides to:

(a) Take note of the establishment of the Working Group on Solutions and Protection;

(b) Request that a further meeting of the Working Group be convened as soon as possible after the forty-first session of the Executive Committee;

(c) Note that, in principle, the participation in Working Group discussions should not be limited only to Executive Committee member countries and that this would be decided upon by the Working Group in the light of the demands of its work;

(d) Note also that the work of the Working Group was urgent and that results were required, so that a tight work schedule would be desirable, although any decision on more precise scheduling of meetings should be left to the Group itself;

(e) Request that a report on the work of the Working Group be made to the forty-second session of the Executive Committee in 1991.

#### 4. Conclusion on refugee women and international protection

23. The Executive Committee,

Noting with serious concern the widespread violations of the rights of refugee women and their specific needs;

Underlining the potential of refugee women and the need to ensure their full participation in analysing their needs and in designing and implementing programmes that make appropriate use of their resources;

Reaffirming its Conclusion No. 39 (XXXVI) on refugee women and international protection;

Stressing that all action taken on behalf of women who are refugees must be guided by the relevant international instruments relating to the status of refugees, as well as other applicable human rights instruments, in particular, for States parties thereto, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

Recognizing that ensuring equal treatment of refugee women and men may require specific action in favour of the former;

Recalling the special relevance of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the obligation of the United Nations system as a whole to give effect to its provisions;

Reiterating the importance of collecting data that allows for the monitoring of progress achieved in meeting the needs of refugee women,

(a) Urges States, relevant United Nations organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations, as appropriate, to ensure that the needs and resources of refugee women are fully understood and integrated, to the extent possible, into their activities and programmes and, to this end, to pursue, among others, the following aims in promoting measures for improving the international protection of refugee women:

(i) Promote energetically the full and active participation of refugee women in the planning, implementation and evaluation/monitoring of all sectors of refugee programmes;

- (ii) Increase the representation of appropriately trained female staff across all levels of all organizations and entities which work in refugee programmes and ensure direct access of refugee women to such staff;
  - (iii) Provide, wherever necessary, skilled female interviewers in procedures for the determination of refugee status and ensure appropriate access by women asylum-seekers to such procedures, even when accompanied by male family members;
  - (iv) Ensure that all refugees and the staff of relevant organizations and authorities are fully aware of, and support, the rights, needs and resources of refugee women and take appropriate specific actions;
  - (v) Integrate considerations specific to the protection of refugee women into assistance activities from their inception, including when planning refugee camps and settlements, in order to be able to deter, detect and redress instances of physical and sexual abuse, as well as other protection concerns at the earliest possible moment;
  - (vi) Extend professional and culturally appropriate gender-based counselling, as well as other related services to refugee women who are victims of abuse;
  - (vii) Identify and prosecute persons who have committed crimes against refugee women and protect the victims of such crimes from reprisals;
  - (viii) Issue individual identification and/or registration documents to all refugee women;
  - (ix) Provide all refugee women and girls with effective and equitable access to basic services, including food, water and relief supplies, health and sanitation, education and skills training, and make wage-earning opportunities available to them;
  - (x) Provide for informed and active consent and participation of refugee women in individual decisions about durable solutions for them;
  - (xi) Ensure that resettlement programmes make special provisions for refugee women at risk.
- (b) Invites UNHCR to develop comprehensive guidelines on the protection of refugee women as a matter of urgency in order to give effect to its policy on refugee women as contained in document A/AC.96/754.

#### B. Decision on the UNHCR policy on refugee women

##### 24. The Executive Committee,

- (a) Approves the policy on refugee women as contained in document A/AC.96/754;
- (b) Urges States, relevant United Nations organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations, to reinforce the implementation of UNHCR of this policy through their own efforts, including in the area of training;

(c) Calls on the High Commissioner to present a progress report on the implementation of this policy in both protection and assistance activities at the forty-second session. This report should also address the development of the comprehensive guidelines on the protection of refugee women and their application within the framework of this policy.

C. Conclusion on the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese Refugees

25. The Executive Committee,

Recalling the decision of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme adopted at the fortieth session, entitled "International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees", in which it expressed deep satisfaction with the holding of the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees and welcomed the adoption of the Declaration and Comprehensive Plan of Action on Indo-Chinese Refugees, 3/ noted the progress achieved and requested the Steering Committee to continue its multilateral co-ordinating and assessment role;

Further recalling resolution 44/138 of 15 December 1989 on the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, which welcomed the successful conclusion of the Conference and the adoption of the Declaration and Comprehensive Plan of Action, and called upon all States concerned and the relevant specialized agencies and regional intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to undertake the various measures required of them within the framework and letter of the Comprehensive Plan of Action and to provide resources for the general and special programme of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to enable it to carry out the tasks prescribed in the Comprehensive Plan of Action,

(a) Recognizes that substantial progress has been achieved in the implementation of some of the elements of the Comprehensive Plan of Action, such as the mass information campaign, refugee status determination, expansion of regular departure programmes, resettlement of pre-cut-off cases and the promotion of voluntary repatriation, and emphasizes the need for the continued effort to ensure full and balanced implementation of all mutually reinforcing elements of the Comprehensive Plan of Action, including temporary asylum and repatriation;

(b) Welcomes the decision of the Secretary-General to designate the High Commissioner as his Special Representative to co-ordinate efforts with all parties concerned to promote the phased and orderly return of non-refugees in a manner that is fully compatible with the humanitarian mandate of his Office and under conditions of safety and dignity; to co-ordinate with other agencies and programmes the monitoring of such returns in the countries of first asylum and to monitor the situation of returnees in Viet Nam to ensure their general safety and well-being; and to co-ordinate with all parties concerned the provision of humanitarian and economic assistance to the areas to which returns take place, the implementation of such programmes remaining the responsibility of the agency concerned;

(c) Commends the untiring efforts of the High Commissioner in attempting to obtain a consensus on the return of non-refugees and in bridging differences between States on the subject, and welcomes recent positive steps towards increasing the number of returnees, despite the inability of the Steering Committee

to reach full consensus on implementation of this element of the Comprehensive Plan of Action;

(d) Requests the High Commissioner and the Steering Committee to continue their multilateral co-ordinating role to ensure the full implementation of the Comprehensive Plan of Action;

(e) Urges strongly that, on the basis of the various efforts made by States and international organizations, a consensus be reached in the near future enabling the full implementation of the Comprehensive Plan of Action.

#### D. Conclusion on repatriation to Cambodia

26. The Executive Committee,

Taking note of Security Council resolution 668 (1990), adopted on 21 September 1990, endorsing the framework for a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodia conflict and, inter alia, encouraging the Secretary-General to continue, within the context of preparations for reconvening the Paris International Conference on Cambodia, preparatory studies to assess the resources, implications, timing and other considerations relevant to the United Nations role;

Recalling that the Secretary-General has designated the Office of the High Commissioner as the lead United Nations agency for the voluntary repatriation of Cambodian refugees and return of displaced persons;

Noting with satisfaction that the framework agreement refers, as part of "a settlement process", inter alia, to a document elaborated by the Paris International Conference on Cambodia (30 July-30 August 1989) on repatriation;

Noting with appreciation that the Office of the High Commissioner led an inter-agency mission to Cambodia in May and June 1990 to lay the groundwork for this repatriation operation;

Recognizing that extensive preliminary preparations must be made as soon as conditions of security permit in order to reduce the grave hazards that such a vast return movement could entail,

(a) Calls upon the High Commissioner to work with the Secretary-General to ensure that the financial and other requirements for the repatriation and reintegration programmes are adequately and urgently addressed in the United Nations overall planning, and appeals for a comprehensive settlement in Cambodia, and then calls upon Governments and other donors to respond rapidly;

(b) Calls upon all Governments and parties concerned to contribute to the creation of a climate of security and confidence, so that measures for safe repatriation and reintegration of returnees could be undertaken with international monitoring.

E. Conclusion on the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA)

27. The Executive Committee,

Noting with appreciation the valuable role played by the countries of the region, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, UNHCR and UNDP, and, in particular, non-governmental organizations and the international community at large in pursuing the objectives of the Declaration and Concerted Plan of Action in favour of Central American Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons, 4/ adopted in Guatemala City in May 1989;

Recalling with appreciation the declarations of support to the CIREFCA process contained in the communiqués issued by the Central American Presidents in their meetings, held at Montelimar, Nicaragua, on 3 April 1990 and Antigua, Guatemala, on 17 June 1990, in General Assembly resolution 44/139 of 15 December 1989, and in the communiqué of the San José IV meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the European Community and Central American countries, held at Dublin on 9 and 10 April 1990;

Welcoming with appreciation the Declaration of the First International Meeting of the CIREFCA Follow-up Committee, held in New York from 27 to 28 June 1990,

(a) Reaffirms that, as stated in the Concerted Plan of Action, solutions to the problems of refugees, returnees and displaced persons form an integral part of the efforts to achieve peace, democracy and development in the Central American region;

(b) Requests the Governments in the region to strengthen the functioning of the various mechanisms established in the Concerted Plan of Action, at both the national and international levels, in order that the process initiated by CIREFCA may maintain its momentum as a concerted means of addressing the needs of affected populations in the region;

(c) Requests, also, the High Commissioner to reinforce his efforts to continue providing full support, through the CIREFCA Joint Support Unit, to the Governments of the region, and the concerned non-governmental organizations, with a view to ensuring effective implementation of CIREFCA projects, and to reinforce his collaboration with UNDP, as well as the collaboration of all parties members of the national support groups, in accordance with the CIREFCA integrated approach;

(d) Appeals to the Governments of Central America, Belize and Mexico, as well as to the international community and to the intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to increase their efforts towards the full implementation of the Concerted Plan of Action, thereby achieving durable solutions for the benefit of refugees, returnees and displaced persons.

F. Conclusion on the situation of refugees in Africa

28. The Executive Committee,

Realizing that the problem of refugees in Africa has assumed alarming proportions;



Aware that African countries continue to suffer serious economic set-backs owing to man-made and natural disasters;

Noting with concern that the imbalance between resources available to UNHCR and increasing needs negatively affects the well-being of refugees and countries of asylum in Africa;

Underlining the fact that African countries continue to host and provide assistance to millions of refugees despite their dwindling national resources;

Appreciating the support of the international community to the High Commissioner and his staff in responding promptly to the critical refugee situation in Africa;

Noting the "Khartoum Declaration" on Africa's refugee crisis issued by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Commission of Fifteen on Refugees, on 24 September 1990;

(a) Encourages the follow-up action contained in the Khartoum Declaration, which calls on member States of the OAU to undertake to enhance the capacity for management and conflict resolution to help eradicate the root causes of refugee flows and realize durable solutions for refugees in Africa;

(b) Calls on the international community to consider providing adequate resources based on rigorous needs assessment and programme design, to enable the High Commissioner, in co-operation with other relevant organizations, to discharge fully his mandate;

(c) Invites the host countries to continue to pursue measures that promote the provision of protection, assistance and durable solutions in the most cost-effective manner;

(d) Underlines the necessity of following-up and translating the recommendations of the first and second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa and the Plan of Action on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa 5/ into concrete actions to address the needs of refugees, returnees and displaced persons.

#### G. Decisions on administrative and financial matters

29. The Executive Committee,

##### A

Having reviewed the information contained in UNHCR activities financed by voluntary funds: report for 1989-1990 and proposed programmes and budget for 1991 (A/AC.96/751, Parts I-V and Part I/Add.1); the Overview of UNHCR activities for 1989-1990 (A/AC.96/753 and Add.1); and the Up-date of UNHCR programme, funding and staffing projections (A/AC.96/764) 6/ and the Information note on UNHCR evaluation activities (A/AC.96/757);

Having taken note of the Voluntary Funds Accounts for the Year 1989, the audit opinion and the report of the United Nations Board of Auditors thereon (A/AC.96/755);

Welcoming the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/AC.96/756);

Taking into consideration the detailed reports on action taken by UNHCR on the recommendations of the Temporary Executive Committee Working Group on Programme, Budgetary, Administrative and Organizational Matters (A/AC.96/761), 7/ on co-operation with other organizations (A/AC.96/762) 8/ and on funding matters (A/AC.96/763), 9/

(a) Endorses, within the context of its conclusions and decisions on assistance activities as contained in chapter III/I - Part A of document A/AC.96/737, the country and area programmes and overall allocations contained in document A/AC.96/751 (parts I to V), and summarized in column 7 of table II of document A/AC.96/753, which correspond with the approval by the extraordinary session of the Executive Committee in May 1990 of the revised 1990 General Programmes target amounting to \$340,855,900 (including \$10 million Emergency Fund) and which, together with the carry-over for 1989 of \$38,030,000, amounts to \$378,885,900;

(b) Approves the country and area programmes and the overall allocations for the 1991 General Programmes amounting to \$345,555,500 (including \$10.0 million Emergency Fund), as contained in document A/AC.96/751 (parts I to V), summarized in column 10 of table II, document A/AC.96/753 and amended in document A/AC.96/751 (part I)/Add.1 and document A/AC.96/753/Add.1;

(c) Authorizes the High Commissioner to effect such adjustments in projects, country or area programmes and overall allocations as may be required by changes affecting the refugee programmes for which they were planned, using the General Programmes Reserve where necessary, and to report such adjustments to the Executive Committee at its next session;

(d) Approves the transfer in 1991 of up to \$300,000 from the General Programmes Reserve to the Fund for Field Staff Housing and Basic Amenities;

(e) Notes the progress made by UNHCR to-date in regards to the implementation of the recommendations of the Temporary Executive Committee Working Group contained in the reports referred to above, and urges the Office to pursue outstanding issues related to the recommendations, and report on these to future meetings of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters;

(f) Calls upon the High Commissioner to sustain his efforts in assuring greater inter-agency co-operation in responding to the needs of refugees, and, in particular, in seeking to complement the Office's humanitarian endeavours with development initiatives from specialized agencies so as to attain, in an effective and efficient manner, further and more concrete results towards achieving durable solutions, and calls also upon the member Governments to support these efforts in the governing bodies of these agencies;

(g) Takes note that the costs of the staff retrenchment exercise are currently estimated to amount to between \$2.9 million to \$3.5 million, and authorizes the High Commissioner to meet the costs relating to General Programmes (estimated to be between \$2.5 million to \$2.9 million) from the 1990-1991 Programme Reserve, on the understanding that every effort will be made to absorb such costs when they occur within the approved allocations for support costs;

(h) Notes with appreciation the continued strong donor support to UNHCR in 1990, and calls upon donors to consider urgently additional contributions to ensure timely and full funding of activities programmed for 1990, earmarked in the broadest possible way in order to allow UNHCR the flexibility to allocate funds according to the most pressing needs;

(i) Urges early announcement of 1991 contributions, particularly at the Pledging Conference, so as to enable the High Commissioner to plan and proceed with the implementation of programmes approved for 1991;

(j) Calls upon those Governments which do not contribute to UNHCR to provide financial support in a spirit of international burden-sharing, to offset the shortfall in funds in relation to assessed needs;

(k) Reiterates its encouragements to UNHCR to secure additional income from non-traditional sources, and calls upon Governments to consider providing the financial resources necessary for the initial investment that will enable UNHCR to pursue new ways of broadening its income base;

(l) Requests the High Commissioner to continue his negotiations for an increase of the United Nations Regular Budget participation in the administrative costs of UNHCR in the United Nations programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, and requests members and observers of the Executive Committee to bring the matter to the attention of their delegations to all appropriate subsidiary organs of the General Assembly, particularly the Fifth Committee, to support these efforts appropriately;

(m) Notes the progress made to-date in relation to evaluation activities and requests that the High Commissioner report to the next session of the Executive Committee on developments that further enhance the evaluation activities of the office;

## B

Recalling the request of the Temporary Executive Committee Working Group for UNHCR to examine and report to the Executive Committee on the need for a contingency fund for the purpose of enabling the High Commissioner to initiate implementation of vital programmes/projects for refugees pending receipt of contributions;

Taking note of the High Commissioner's proposal to establish a special contingency account as contained in paragraphs 47 to 51 in the report on action taken by UNHCR on the recommendations of the Temporary Executive Committee Working Group on Programme, Budgetary, Administrative and Organizational Matters (A/AC.96/761);

Recognizing the need of the High Commissioner for a higher degree of flexibility to ensure funding of ongoing needs under approved General Programmes and of initial emergency needs under Special Programmes pending the receipt of contributions pledged;

Requests the High Commissioner to seek the advice of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on proposals for an appropriate mechanism that will address this need, as well as on the level and criteria appropriate for

its functioning and to submit to the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters a proposal for discussion and, once the mechanism has been agreed upon, for endorsement on behalf of the Committee.

#### H. Conclusion on staffing matters

30. The Executive Committee,

Takes note of the working paper submitted by the Chairman of the UNHCR Staff Council to the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters and invites the Chairman of the Staff Council to submit a report on these and other issues of concern to staff for consideration at the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters prior to the forty-second session of the Executive Committee.

#### I. Provisional agenda of the forty-second session of the Executive Committee

31. The Committee adopted by consensus the following provisional agenda for the meeting of the forty-second session of the Executive Committee (A/AC.96/XLI/CRP.8):

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of Officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
4. General debate.
5. (a) Review of UNHCR programmes financed by Voluntary Funds in 1990-1991 and adoption of the revised 1991 budget and proposed programmes and budget for 1992;  
(b) Status of contributions and overall financial requirements for 1991 and 1992;  
(c) Administration and management.
6. Consideration of the provisional agenda for the forty-third session of the Executive Committee.
7. Any other business.
8. Adoption of the draft report of the forty-second session.
9. Closing of the session.

J. Government observer participation in 1991

32. The Executive Committee considered and approved applications by the following government observer delegations for participation in the Sub-Committees of the Whole on International Protection and on Administrative and Financial Matters, as well as in the informal sessions of the Executive Committee during 1991: Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Cuba, Chile, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Liberia, Malawi, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Senegal, Spain, Sri Lanka, Uruguay, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

K. Interpretative declarations or reservations relating to the conclusions and decisions of the Committee

1. General conclusion on international protection

33. The delegation of Israel objected to the inclusion of the words "including a large number of Palestinians" in sub-paragraph (h) of the general conclusion on international protection (see para. 20 above).

Notes

1/ United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 189, No. 2545.

2/ Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

3/ See A/44/523, annex.

4/ See A/44/527 and Corr.1 and 2, annex.

5/ See A/43/717 and Corr.1 and Add.1.

6/ This document was issued for, and considered by, the forty-first session of the Executive Committee as a conference room paper under the symbol A/AC.96/XLI/CRP.4.

7/ This document was issued for, and considered by, the forty-first session of the Executive Committee as a conference room paper under the symbol A/AC.96/XLI/CRP.1.

8/ This document was issued for, and considered by, the forty-first session of the Executive Committee as a conference room paper under the symbol A/AC.96/XLI/CRP.2.

9/ This document was issued for, and considered by, the forty-first session of the Executive Committee as a conference room paper under the symbol A/AC.96/XLI/CRP.3.

## ANNEX

### Opening statement of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to the forty-first session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme

1. Since our last formal meeting in May, there have been a number of dramatic developments. Recent events in the Middle East have cast a cold shadow on the optimistic view that 1990 would mark the beginning of a new era in international affairs. The situation is serious. We should not, however, forget that the end of the cold war, the replacement or radical transformation of many authoritarian régimes, and the new central role of the United Nations have, nevertheless, provided us with unprecedented opportunities for multilateral co-operation. Let me today say a few words about how I see the role of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in seizing these opportunities and thereby contributing to the construction of the edifice of peace.

#### New challenges, new roles

2. The crisis in the Middle East has, among other things, triggered a wave of destitute and dispossessed people across international boundaries. The great majority of them are foreign workers desperately trying to get back home. In the minds of the public and the media, in many government circles, among many non-governmental organizations, those on the move are considered to be "refugees". Many of us in UNHCR have indeed spent quite a lot of time responding to questions on this matter. Bureaucratically, this situation may have posed a dilemma. Those in need are, overwhelmingly, migrant workers who can and want to go back to their own country. They are not refugees in need of international protection. Yet, for a High Commissioner for Refugees whose mandate is humanitarian, whose policy is based on human rights and who seeks to protect and assist human victims, there can be no dilemma in such a situation. You do not ask a dying person who caused the accident. You try to generate, mobilize and provide help and support to the victim.

3. That is the reason why, from the early stages of the crisis, I undertook personal contacts with representatives of Governments in the region and offered the support and expertise of UNHCR. We also met with relevant organizations in an attempt, on an informal basis, to establish what was being - or should be - done and by whom. Throughout these initiatives, I remained in close contact with the Secretary-General's Office. I am concerned that at a time when the United Nations political machinery may finally live up to its original designs, the parallel humanitarian system may prove itself inadequate. There is clearly an urgent need to take a fresh look at the capacity of the United Nations and the international community to respond to the humanitarian emergencies of today, with swiftness and in a coherent way. UNHCR intends to take an active part in such efforts.

4. The conflict in Liberia is another recent event, in which, from the early days of the crisis, UNHCR was in contact with Governments and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in an attempt to contribute to containing the crisis, but unfortunately without success. The conflict in Liberia has continued to worsen, provoking one of the largest and fastest refugee exoduses witnessed anywhere in recent years. More than 500,000 Liberians have now sought asylum in the neighbouring countries of the Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone, while many more may have been displaced within their homeland. After several appeals, UNHCR

has now received adequate funds for the coming months. A major humanitarian catastrophe has been, if not averted, at least diminished thanks to the generosity of the host countries and the local population, the hard work of some non-governmental organizations and the intervention - regrettably limited at the beginning by funding constraints - by UNHCR and other United Nations agencies. Developments of a political and military nature and some recent contributions of funds may prevent a further deterioration in the situation.

#### The administrative and funding situation

5. Such are the realities and challenges of the present. In order to respond meaningfully and effectively to them, the Office has spent a good part of the first nine months of this year reassessing and redesigning the necessary structures, procedures and funding basis of our programmes.

6. At the May meeting of the Executive Committee, I referred to the better use of our resources as one of the six pillars of our funding strategy. I believe that some major steps have been taken in this direction. We have a new structure at UNHCR headquarters, notably leaner at the top, and we have the capacity through the Senior Management Committee to take policy decisions and follow through. We are now in the process of retrenchment, through reducing posts by 15 per cent, and are currently implementing decisions to bring to 19 the number of UNHCR offices closed or to be closed in various parts of the world. While these measures will in the longer run lead to significant economies, their implementation within a very tight time frame will require additional resources in termination indemnity to separated staff. I know that I can count on the understanding and support of the Executive Committee in this regard.

7. In the middle of these changes, more than 130 UNHCR staff members have been reassigned at short notice and have been, or are, on the move. Although such reassignments have undoubtedly had a disruptive effect both on the individuals and their families, as well as on the overall functioning of the Office, they were necessitated by deferral of such decisions for sometime in the past. Throughout this, at times both painful and very difficult period, UNHCR staff - and their elected representatives, the Staff Council - have shown a sense of co-operation and understanding that I consider to be exemplary.

8. Other pillars of the strategy have been further developed and I will come back to two of those pillars later, that is the political tool of early warning initiatives and the efforts to promote voluntary repatriation. I should mention that initiatives to promote new government and private donor support require further efforts and - I should add - also investment in time and resources which we do not have at present. Nevertheless, the limited results that have been achieved indicate the importance of continuing efforts in this area with vigour and conviction.

9. Support from traditional donors has once again proven to be a reliable pillar and one of which I am deeply appreciative. Mainly thanks to this group of donors, we have so far received \$406 million, of which \$286.7 million are for General Programmes and \$119.3 million for Special Programmes. This income, covering the three quarters of the year, corresponds to slightly less than three quarters of our projected income for 1990 of \$550 million. However, I am concerned that, after taking into account anticipated secondary income, we still require some \$60 million

to fund our General Programmes, and that the donors' response to a number of important Special Programmes remains very disappointing.

10. In general, the impact on refugees of the financial problems of UNHCR, particularly in Africa, has been severe. Operations which are inherently difficult and where achievements are hard to consolidate are particularly vulnerable without the resources for contingency reserves and buffer stocks. In such circumstances, reaching even basic minimum standards requires not only proper planning but also that things should happen as planned. When they do not, problems can escalate quickly if additional resources are not immediately at hand.

11. The timely provision of sufficient amounts of the right kind of food has proved a particular problem, but the effect of inadequate resources has also been felt keenly in missed opportunities for solutions, for example for organized repatriation from Malawi to Mozambique and local integration in Somalia. Of no less concern is the impact of the funding situation on protection and asylum policies, an issue which has been covered in the note on international protection presented to the current session of the Executive Committee.

12. Educational opportunities for refugees have also had to be cut back. For example, construction of schools in western Ethiopia has been postponed, it has not been possible to meet the full demand in Malawi, and a slow response to the appeals for Liberian refugees has limited assistance to date to the provision of only the most basic teaching materials. Over 200,000 primary school-age refugees have been affected as a result in these programmes alone. The full effect of the financial problems, however, is not yet apparent. While, for example, the impact of reductions in the transport sector for maintenance, spare parts, vehicle replacement and access-road maintenance is starting to be felt, this will become increasingly severe and costly with time.

13. I cannot conclude my remarks on the financial situation of UNHCR without expressing my deep concern over the crippling effect of the unstable and unpredictable nature of funding our activities. Living almost on a month-to-month, sometimes week-to-week basis is not only uneconomic - and may I say not very dignified - but it also makes UNHCR a much less responsive and effective organization. The simple truth is that the Office does not have the flexibility today to respond immediately and effectively to new emergencies nor the capacity to plan ahead. I hope that during this session we can reflect further on this matter.

## Priorities

### Access and security

14. When deciding on how best to use limited resources, one is constantly obliged to set priorities. I want to take this opportunity to emphasize that two fundamentally important elements in setting priorities must be the access of UNHCR to the refugees and conditions of security for refugees and agency personnel. It is impossible for UNHCR to ascertain that our protection mandate is respected and that limited resources are well spent if UNHCR does not have free and regular access to the refugees. Similarly, I cannot justify maintaining for a long time a refugee assistance programme in a country where the authorities show themselves incapable or unwilling to provide basic security conditions. Situations where minimum modalities ensuring access and security are not existing will inevitably be given low funding priority.



### Refugee women

15. Speaking of priorities, you will note that the subject of refugee women is addressed at both sub-committees of the Executive Committee in 1990. It reflects the importance of emphasizing the "human" aspects of our activities, focusing as it does on those persons who, with their dependent children, represent the largest number of beneficiaries of our programmes. Ensuring that the issue of refugee women is addressed throughout our programmes requires adaptation of existing procedures, and a climate of understanding and support of the importance of this factor among Governments, implementing partners and UNHCR staff. Progress has been made over the past year in reinforcing the foundations of this support through training and in the formulation of a policy on refugee women. However, I expect that the coming year will put even greater emphasis on practical implementation, and will provide concrete examples throughout our programmes of this policy in action.

### Early warning

16. Early warning of developing refugee situations and their mediation is one of the most effective methods to contain problems. I believe UNHCR has a duty to play a role in wider international efforts in this regard. I have for the same reason initiated a number of activities within the Office in order to enhance our ability to respond to a problem, preferably before, but at the least when, it occurs. The borderline between being seen to speculate in the emergence of a new refugee situation, on one hand and, on the other hand, taking all necessary precautions to be prepared - both in terms of addressing the underlying causes and building up the necessary capacity to respond - is a fine one and requires a sense of responsibility. Not to attempt to prevent a situation from developing, or not to be prepared for it would however be irresponsible.

### International protection and human rights

17. In our efforts to pick up early warning signals - which indeed must be the first step in primary protection function of UNHCR - the link between protection and respect for human rights must be stressed. Indeed, the human rights dimension remains the constant factor at the core of the refugee issue. The challenge presently confronting us is how to adjust our thinking and approaches to the realities of today's movements of refugees and asylum-seekers, while at the same time ensuring that the human values underlying international concern retain their central place and that international protection is guaranteed for those who need it - now and in the future. I shall not elaborate further on these thoughts, but simply refer to the note on international protection, which provides the thoughts of UNHCR on the future directions for refugee policy that the States of the international community might develop together.

### Some of today's immediate concerns

#### Protection of refugees and return of rejected cases

18. Attempting to plan ahead while at the same time grappling with the immediate problems of protection and assistance is the daily reality for many of us. In South-East Asia, we have for months been confronted with the immediate and operational protection problem of ensuring that all asylum-seekers arriving in boats have access to first asylum. The problem is immediate in the sense that the

very survival of individual asylum-seekers is often at stake. At the same time, it has been clear for a long time that the main characteristics of the outflow are no longer solely that of a refugee phenomenon.

19. To perpetuate such a situation could jeopardize the core of my mandate, namely, to protect refugees through ensuring the grant of first asylum. It is against this background that, on the basis of the Comprehensive Plan of Action, UNHCR has made itself available to the Governments concerned to help seek a consensus on the contentious issue of the return of those found not to be refugees. I am hopeful that humanitarian solutions are emerging that will secure continued protection for those in need of it whilst, at the same time, providing for the return, in safety and dignity, of those found not to be refugees. The combination of efforts to reduce the non-refugee elements of the outflow through extensive information campaigns and economic assistance to communities from which people leave and to which they return, as well as of measures upholding fundamental protection principles are being increasingly successful in resolving a difficult and long-standing problem in that region.

20. In Europe, too, we are increasingly witnessing migratory movements of which refugee flows are but only one aspect. The problem facing European Governments is often not so much that relating to refugees whose status and rights are clearly recognized in international conventions and resolutions, rather, it is of how to handle in a rapid, efficient but safe and dignified manner those not meeting the refugee criteria. We are noting an increasing understanding among Governments that these matters cannot be solved through stringent border procedures but rather by way of international co-operation, combining asylum and resettlement with economic aid to countries or regions of origin and the early return, in conditions of safety and dignity, of those not meeting the refugee definition.

#### An integrated approach

21. Nowhere has the interrelationship between causes and solutions, refugee aid and development aid, national and international efforts been better demonstrated than in Central America where the conclusion on the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA) process stands out as a model of solutions to the problems of uprootedness. The impressive response of the international community at the CIREFCA follow-up meeting held last June in New York provided tangible evidence of the support for CIREFCA, which links the Office's own limited assistance efforts with the much longer and more durable process of development in the region. In this respect, it not only serves as a contribution to solutions in the Central American region, but could also act as a guide and model for other parts of the world. With respect to international protection, Belize's welcome accession to the 1951 Convention, legislative moves in Mexico to reinforce the status of refugees in that country, and the favourable changes in attitudes to and actual movements of voluntary repatriation have also been inspired by CIREFCA. The institutionalized and well-functioning co-operation between UNDP and UNHCR to further the CIREFCA process is yet another example which, hopefully, will be emulated in other parts of the world.

22. Unfortunately, the example of CIREFCA stands out in stark contrast to some situations in other parts of the world where the outlook is less optimistic. I began my statement by referring to the Gulf crisis, which threatens international peace and security, but there remain other situations that are of comparable

gravity and yet they fail to command the same attention and interest. A few weeks ago, I addressed the Conference of the Least Developed Countries in Paris. I was then once again reminded that, while we rejoice in a new political climate that is ushering in a period of reconciliation and reconstruction in some parts of the world, the situation in others remains one of social and economic depression. It is evident that lack of development and underdevelopment are major factors causing instability and mass movements of people. It is equally obvious that adequate development aid can itself contribute to the prevention, and eventual solution, of refugee problems. The large majority of today's refugees are moving from the world's poorest nations to the world's poorest nations. If we do not address the plight of the developing countries, we will not only condemn present and future generations, we will inhibit the possibilities to seek solutions and bear the responsibility for a further deterioration in the world refugee problem.

23. The situation in the Horn of Africa illustrates my point. Continued conflicts, perennial problems of drought and famine, poverty and underdevelopment and little international readiness to come to the aid of the destitute peoples of these countries, continue to render the situation almost hopeless for refugees. I say "almost" because there are indeed possibilities for the voluntary return of refugees, which would not only provide the best solution for those individuals, but could also help to spark off other positive movements in the region and break the cycle of desperation. Unfortunately, not only has UNHCR been unable to seize fully these possibilities because of a lack of adequate funds, but I must express my deep concern on early-warning signals suggesting the recurrence of famine in the region. UNHCR has established an internal Task Force and has contacted other bodies of the United Nations system, Governments and non-governmental organizations in order to set up the necessary contingency plans.

#### Future perspectives

24. Where are we then after the first nine months of the year, and two months before the commencement of the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of UNHCR? And where do we go from here?

25. One of my aims has been to strengthen the credibility and moral authority of the Office; another aim has been to sustain the morale of the staff. I hasten to add that these are not aims in themselves but necessary tools to place UNHCR on the international map as the effective focal point for the efforts of the international community in favour of 15 million individual refugees, children, women and men.

26. I am encouraged by the response we have had so far. UNHCR is being increasingly solicited. The staff is responding with traditional devotion to duty and, may I say, enthusiasm. I believe we are now equipped to embark on the next phase, that is, in concrete and practical terms to seize the many opportunities that the new international climate has, despite set-backs, created. I have three major ambitions for the forthcoming months.

#### Promoting voluntary repatriation

27. My first ambition is that UNHCR should be prepared to seize all the possibilities for voluntary repatriation, which is the best solution for refugees, the most productive use of resources, and a concrete contribution to peace and stability. The recent completion of the return home of over 43,000 Namibians, and

more than 30,000 Central Americans show that it is possible. Favourable conditions have also led to an increased momentum in the voluntary return of Chileans. Despite all obstacles, a fragile but promising start has been made with the return of more than 50,000 Afghans under the voluntary repatriation pilot project launched earlier this year. We hope such movements will be the springboard for much larger returns. I should add that around another 125,000 Afghans have also returned home spontaneously from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. Political developments surrounding Western Sahara and Cambodia are now moving at such a pace that UNHCR must - and indeed is eager to - prepare itself for a major role in the overall settlement plans under the auspices of the United Nations. In both situations, the return of refugees is of necessity one of the first priorities.

28. In the case of Cambodia, in the light of the framework agreement now accepted by all parties and endorsed by the Security Council, accelerated steps are being taken to prepare the ground for the safe return of the refugees and displaced population. To embark on such preparations, significant "up-front" funds would be required. Repatriation, being a part of a multi-faceted peace-making effort by the United Nations, must be funded through regular United Nations financing mechanisms; however, the lead responsibilities accorded to my Office cannot be discharged unless we are given the means to do so. That is why I have been in contact with the Secretary-General with a view to addressing this urgent problem.

29. We also follow developments in southern Africa with a deep interest and are prepared - as indeed the parties are aware - to contribute to the voluntary return of both South Africans and Mozambicans when the conditions therefore are attained. I will remain constantly alert to other possibilities and seek and expect the political and financial support of the international community whenever we believe voluntary repatriation to be possible.

#### Securing asylum

30. The policy we pursue today will be decisive for future refugee flows, and so my second ambition is to conduct a policy that is geared to securing asylum for refugees also in the future. This requires unwavering commitment to fundamental principles of protection against return or refoulement of a refugee to situations endangering life or freedom. However, in order to secure admission and asylum for those in need of protection, we have to be prepared to address the much larger issue of migratory flows. Persecution and oppression have to be met by asylum, migratory flows by preventive economic and development aid. To blur the distinction may be detrimental to the specific interest of individual refugees, but to ignore the links would be unrealistic and demeaning to the aspirations of all human beings seeking a future with dignity and safety. Unless the issue of migration is dealt with forcefully, through economic and development policies that go well beyond the traditional patterns of humanitarian assistance to people in need, Governments of both developed and developing countries may find it even more difficult in the years ahead to rationally and successfully cope with mass exoduses. At the same time, my Office may find it impossible to continue effectively to identify, protect and assist persons falling within its competence.

#### Placing the issues on the international agenda

31. My third ambition is to have these issues placed on the international agenda. It is, in my view, increasingly evident that the issue of refugees and migration at large is bound to be one of the threats to the broad concept of international,

regional and national security in the decade ahead of us. I shall miss no opportunity to raise these issues with world leaders, competent organizations, the public and the media. The increasingly interdependent world obliges all of us to lift our thinking and actions beyond parochial bureaucratic interests.

32. If the causes of refugee movements go unchecked, if the poor are forced to move in ever-increasing numbers towards the more prosperous regions, then the threat to our common future security is a real and immediate one. But let me be quite clear. It is not individual refugees or migrants who pose this threat. They themselves are victims of injustice and inequality. They are our conscience too, an insistent reminder of the need to combat the various forms of political and economic oppression that so gravely afflict our world. The threat of which I speak lies, rather, in the root causes of refugee movements and uncontrolled migration. It lies in the inequalities and injustices that we have created or condoned. The solution is not to put up barriers or to deprive refugees of the protection they deserve. Nor is it to condemn the poor to live with their deprivation. What is needed, on the contrary, is a clear policy of asylum for refugees and a firm commitment to development aid for the impoverished of the world. If the international community can move on these two fronts, I am convinced we will be laying the foundations for a more secure and peaceful future for generations to come. To follow any other road would be to miss the opportunity offered to us by the new climate of reconciliation. More importantly, it would be to jeopardize whatever opportunity we may have of creating a safer world.

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