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Assistance to refugees in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 41/122 of 4 December 1986, the General Assembly reaffirmed the principles and recommendations of the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (A/39/402, annex), held at Geneva in July 1984. It requested the Secretary-General to monitor, in consultation and close co-operation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the follow-up to the Conference and to report to the General Assembly at its forty-second session, through the Economic and Social Council, on the implementation of the resolution.

2. The Declaration of the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa made clear that the task of caring for refugees and finding solutions to their problems is a matter of international concern in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations and other international instruments. The Declaration recognized that the condition of refugees is a global responsibility of the international community and emphasized the need for equitable burden-sharing by all its members, taking into consideration particularly the case of the least developed countries. The Declaration emphasized the need to strengthen international co-operation to avert new flows of refugees and to establish essential conditions to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of refugees. Where voluntary return is not immediately feasible or possible, conditions should be created within the country of asylum for a temporary settlement, or the integration of the refugees into the community and their full participation in its social and economic life.

3. The Programme of Action, adopted by the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, stated that settlement programmes should be development-oriented and on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, wherever possible, linked with existing or planned economic and social development schemes for the area or region. The Programme of Action recognized that many of the African countries that are involved in caring for refugees or in reintegrating returnees into their communities needed to be provided with the required assistance to strengthen their social and economic infrastructure. The Programme pointed out that such assistance should be additional to, and not at the expense of, other development programmes in force in the countries concerned. It described the three levels at which the process of providing assistance should be extended:

- (a) relief, care and maintenance to contribute to the immediate needs of refugees in the face of an emergency;
- (b) long-term solutions, through voluntary repatriation of refugees or their settlement in countries of asylum; and
- (c) technical and capital assistance to countries that offer asylum to refugees and to countries that welcome back returnees.

4. The present report is submitted in compliance with the above-mentioned resolution.

II. MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SITUATION OF REFUGEES
IN AFRICA SINCE JULY 1986

5. The continuing critical economic difficulties confronting many asylum countries, coupled in certain regions with persistent civil strife or destabilization, has hampered efforts to promote the self-sufficiency of refugees and jeopardized the longer-term solutions of repatriation or local settlement.

6. Nonetheless, some of the positive developments in 1985 recorded in the Secretary-General's report (see A/41/572, sect. II) continued through 1986 and the beginning of 1987. The voluntary repatriation of Chadians, Ethiopians and Ugandans has been facilitated and assured by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), while others have returned spontaneously to their homes without formal arrangements.

Eastern Africa

7. Peace has been slowly returning to Uganda. However, a few uncertainties remain in parts of the north of the country. This has interrupted the flow of goods and services targeted for the returnees' programme, but it is hoped that incidents that occurred in the past will cease. The programmes in the south-west of Uganda are mainly the rehabilitation of vital facilities and infrastructure. The flow of materials from Kenya to sites has also been hampered intermittently by the closure of the common border following exchange of accusations of restrictive trade measures and subversion. The situation is likely to improve in the near future as a result of recent talks between the two Governments.

8. Recent expulsions of illegal aliens by both the Kenyan and Tanzanian Governments have created fear and anxiety among the refugees/asylum seekers. In both cases, a number of recognized refugees and genuine asylum-seekers were returned to their countries of origin against their wishes, thus constituting refoulement. Interventions by UNHCR have succeeded in stalling the expulsion of refugees. Mechanisms are being worked out jointly by the Governments concerned and UNHCR to ensure that refugees/asylum-seekers are not affected in the future.

9. By mid-June 1987, the estimated number of Mozambican refugees/asylum-seekers in neighbouring countries was as follows:

Malawi	227 700
United Republic of Tanzania	40 000
Zambia	26 000
Zimbabwe	70 000
Swaziland	6 090
South Africa	150 000

10. A number of Mozambican asylum-seekers in Malawi and Zambia, mostly members of the Jehovah's Witnesses, were repatriated to their home villages in the provinces of Gaza and Maputo with the full support of the Government of Mozambique and UNHCR. By mid-June, some 1,600 temporarily sheltered outside the provincial town of Tete were transferred and reunited with their families.

11. The future of voluntary repatriation and the returnees' programmes in Tete province are seriously jeopardized by the continuing destabilizing civil strife. At the time of reporting, two returnee camps at Benga and Moatize suffered severe rebel attacks which caused deaths and destruction to property.

Sudan

12. The situation in the Sudan showed some encouraging signs, not the least of which was the marked reduction in the numbers of refugees as a result of spontaneous and organized repatriations among each of the three main groups. In southern Sudan, repatriation to Uganda continues at a steady rate, with some 35,000 returning in the first half of 1987. Interest among many of the remaining 70,000 refugees in settlements remains high. There remain large numbers of spontaneously settled refugees in the Sudan.

13. In eastern Sudan, UNHCR continues to assist some 105,000 recent arrivals plus 122,000 of the older established caseload. During 1986, more permanent homes were found for 40,000 of the recent arrivals and work should start later in 1987 on the development of four new rural settlements which should accommodate some 10,000 recent arrivals.

14. The Government of the Sudan has frequently drawn the attention of UNHCR and the international community to the great needs in the refugee-affected areas, in particular those where there are many spontaneously settled refugees. The recommendations made by the United Nations Inter-Agency Mission in March 1986 were endorsed by the Prime Minister during his speech to the General Assembly in October 1986. Within the spirit of those recommendations, agreement has been reached in negotiations with the World Bank and the Sudanese authorities on the inclusion of a refugee component within a planned World Bank agricultural programme in eastern Sudan. The refugee component will require additional resources which UNHCR will help raise. The assistance provided by the European Economic Community (EEC), through provision of funds under article 204 of the Third Lomé Convention, will also have a significant input in eastern Sudan - particularly in strengthening the health and education sectors. In a more modest way, UNHCR has commenced a programme of assistance in the refugee-affected areas in order to provide timely assistance where needed and to bridge the period until major measures of developmental assistance addressing these and wider needs can be implemented by others.

Djibouti

15. As a result of repatriation, by mid-1987, the number of refugees in Djibouti had been reduced to approximately 13,500. The transfer of refugees from Ali-Sabieh to the Dikhil site is now complete and ensures effective delivery of comprehensive assistance to all refugees there. Following discussions with the Government, a census will be conducted later this year in order to identify precisely the remaining refugee population, its various needs and prospects for a lasting solution. During the reporting period, UNHCR has resettled a total of 108 refugees from Djibouti to other countries. In close co-operation with the

Governments of Djibouti and Ethiopia, between December 1986 and mid-1987, UNHCR has facilitated the voluntary repatriation of some 3,200 refugees to Ethiopia where, as returnees, they now receive appropriate UNHCR assistance towards reintegration in their community of origin. This repatriation continues.

Somalia

16. In Somalia, a number of positive steps have been taken over the past year which have helped to give impetus to UNHCR assistance activities. Firstly, in agreement with the Governments concerned, it was possible to organize the voluntary repatriation of a number of refugees residing in the Gedo region of Somalia to their home villages in the Sidamo region in Ethiopia. The first group of 209 refugees returned to Ethiopia on 4 December 1986. At an average of some 500 refugees each month, a total of over 2,750 refugees had returned by mid-1987. The level of the Dawa river temporarily interrupted operations, but it is expected that, from August 1987, the number of returnees will average about 1,000 persons per month. So far, over 7,000 refugees have applied for voluntary repatriation.

17. Secondly, agreement has been reached with the Government of Somalia to carry out a re-enumeration of the refugee population, in two phases: the first, an aerial survey of the various camps, has been completed. It will be followed by a ground survey. Preliminary results should be available later this year. Once this re-enumeration process has been completed, a review of longer-term assistance requirements can be undertaken.

18. Thirdly, agreement has been reached with the World Bank to appraise and implement a local settlement project for some 1,000 refugee families in the Furjano area. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed to this effect on 29 May 1987, which set forth the elements of World Bank/UNHCR collaboration. The World Bank has also agreed to consider collaboration with UNHCR on a second project in Somalia, this time in the Hiran region. A pre-appraisal mission is expected shortly. An agreement has also been reached with a bilateral donor to plan for an area development project in the Qoroley area, where some 40,000 refugees are located.

Ethiopia

19. The influx of Sudanese into Ethiopia has continued in 1987. Itang Settlement now has a recorded population of 133,000 persons. Since June 1986, some 31,000 refugees have been accommodated at a settlement in the Dimma Keffa region. A new influx that began in April 1987 into Assosa, in the Welega region, has now exceeded 19,800 persons. UNHCR has extended emergency assistance to the refugees in both areas. Following a joint Government-UNHCR technical mission, plans are being developed for longer-term settlement. In 1987 special emphasis has been placed on improvement of logistics, roads, water, environmental sanitation, drainage and site improvement or expansion as required for refugee activities leading to material self-reliance. To date, 1,000 families have now settled on the pilot horticultural project in Itang settlement, implemented by the Lutheran World Federation.

20. Appropriate relief and rehabilitation assistance to voluntary returnees to Ethiopia continues, under the auspices of UNHCR, in the Hararge and Sidamo

regions. UNHCR launched an appeal for limited assistance to returnees in Ethiopia in April 1987, valued at \$US 10.5 million. This programme also covers assistance to spontaneous returnees in the Eritrea region.

21. The drought in the Hararge region continued throughout this reporting period and led the Government to issue a further appeal for international humanitarian assistance in April 1987. UNHCR assistance to some 200,000 beneficiaries concentrated on the provision of supplementary food, health care and water to widely dispersed areas of the Ogaden until the end of March 1987. Thereafter, the logistics chain in the area served to deliver other humanitarian assistance. Vital assets and services in the water, health and related logistics sectors are being handed over to the Government by the end of 1987 under a project being implemented by the World University Service of Canada on behalf of UNHCR. UNHCR, jointly with UNDP and in co-operation with UNICEF, is currently working with the Government of Ethiopia to define a long-term rehabilitation and development programme.

Southern Africa

22. Despite the turmoil obtaining in the Republic of South Africa for the last three years, and the imposition of a draconian nation-wide state of emergency, there has been so far no major refugee outflow to neighbouring countries of the scale that followed the Soweto uprising 10 years ago. The few hundreds that have fled into the neighbouring countries of Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique have been evacuated, with UNHCR assistance, to other African countries in central and eastern Africa. A few have been resettled outside the continent and have gone mainly to Australia, North America and the Nordic countries.

23. During the period under review, nearly 1,000 Zimbabwean refugees were voluntarily repatriated by UNHCR from Botswana to their homeland. It is hoped that the great majority of the remaining 2,800 will also opt for voluntary repatriation as the most appropriate durable solution to their situation.

24. Given the troubled state of the subregion and its growing refugee problem, UNHCR has established a Southern Africa Task Force to monitor the situation on a continuous basis and to assist in the preparation of refugee emergency preparedness plans on country and subregional bases.

Other projects and solutions

25. As outlined in the preceding paragraphs, some projects will lead to solutions for at least a portion of the refugee population. Unfortunately, the vast majority continue to rely on UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP) for material assistance and food requirements for the foreseeable future. However, in a number of instances much remains to be done, particularly in establishing satisfactory food rations to overcome nutritional deficiencies that may occur among the more vulnerable refugees who have spent several years in refugee camps, and in encouraging more refugees to become self-sufficient through small-scale agricultural and income-generating projects, whenever possible.

26. Voluntary repatriation remains the most satisfactory of durable solutions. In January 1987 UNHCR established a presence in Chad and began a programme of assistance to a planned caseload of 70,000 returnees, including those who had already arrived after the 1986 planting season. The aim of this nine-month programme, which was the subject of an appeal to the international community in March 1987, is to complement existing immediate recovery programmes and to promote the return of refugees from neighbouring countries. The two largest groupings of Chadian refugees were in the Central African Republic, from which over 17,000 returned in the first six months of 1987, and the Sudan, from which 15,000 returned in the same period.

III. ACTION TAKEN IN FOLLOW-UP TO THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES IN AFRICA

27. In view of the special role of OAU in the follow-up to the Conference and the tasks devolved on UNHCR and UNDP in the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action, the Secretary-General had requested those organizations to continue to assist him, as necessary, in monitoring the various refugee situations in Africa and the response of the international community to the needs of refugees and returnees and of the host countries. This co-operation and support is rendered through the Steering Committee initially set up for the preparatory work for the Conference, which is composed of representatives of the three organizations and the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions as the representative of the Secretary-General.

28. This Committee has met on six occasions, twice since the period covered in the previous report (A/41/572). It has provided a very useful forum by which the organizations concerned can co-ordinate their policies and actions in the implementation of projects and proposals emanating from the Conference.

29. In its work, the Committee has sought to encourage all concerned to translate into reality the integration of refugee assistance into the development process. Emergency aid, care and maintenance are essential and must be continued. But to ensure lasting solutions, it is also necessary to bring the refugees and returnees into full participation in the development process by also building up the physical, social and economic infrastructures of the countries of settlement. It is crucial that all development projects to assist host countries benefit not only refugees and returnees, but also nationals in neighbouring communities.

30. Action continues to be taken by the Secretary-General, UNHCR and UNDP to ensure appropriate arrangements for the fulfilment of these special responsibilities.

A. Status of continuing and additional assistance to refugees and returnees for the implementation of programmes for their relief, rehabilitation and resettlement (activities in response to subparagraph 5 (b) of General Assembly resolution 37/197 of 18 December 1982)

31. As stated in subparagraph 5 (b) of General Assembly resolution 37/197, one of the purposes of the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa was "to consider the continuing need for assistance with a view to providing, as necessary, additional assistance to refugees and returnees in Africa for the implementation of programmes for their relief, rehabilitation and resettlement".

32. The assistance referred to in the above-mentioned subparagraph was regarded as being consistent with the type of assistance provided by UNHCR within the traditional framework of its programmes. The identified additional 10 projects amounting to \$US 10.9 million are for Zaire, the United Republic of Tanzania and Swaziland.

33. Unfortunately, the end of 1984 and the beginning of 1985 saw a major emergency in many parts of Africa because of famine and drought conditions. Those conditions affected refugees as well as native populations. They also created, in a number of instances, new displaced populations desperately in need of assistance and of concern to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Some of these crisis conditions persisted throughout 1985 and 1986 and even 1987. UNHCR was able to assist those needy persons and the countries in which they were living. However this extraordinary assistance resulted in a relative curtailment of its regular programme and a delay in the implementation of the designated projects of the Second International Conference submitted in response to subparagraph 5 (b) of General Assembly resolution 37/197.

B. Status of the assistance programme to strengthen the social and economic infrastructure to enable host countries to bear the burden of dealing with large numbers of refugees and returnees (activities in response to subparagraph 5 (c) of General Assembly resolution 37/197)

34. In accordance with the Conference and General Assembly recommendations, UNDP serves as the focal point of the technical assistance for projects designed to strengthen the social and economic infrastructures of the countries of asylum or, in the case of returnees, the countries of origin. This assistance is also intended to facilitate durable solutions for refugees and/or returnees by promoting their participation in local, regional and national development. It is the responsibility of UNDP to monitor, promote, co-ordinate and, subject to the availability of resources, to fund projects falling into this category. Of primary importance, however, is that host Governments include projects in country programmes that benefit regions and individuals including returnees and refugees.

35. The problems of refugees must be seen in the overall context of the critical economic situation of African countries. Durable solutions for returnees and host countries must be found within the framework of comprehensive recovery, rehabilitation and development programmes. This is reflected in the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, adopted by the General Assembly at its thirteenth special session (Assembly resolution S-13/2, annex, of 1 June 1986). The programme emphasized the need for the speedy implementation of the recommendations of the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, as well as an acceptance by the international community of burden sharing in respect to the care and maintenance of refugees and the cost of finding lasting solutions to the continent's refugee problems. Currently, needs assessment missions have been carried out in Ethiopia, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, organized by UNDP in co-ordination with UNHCR, to establish a pipeline of development projects linked to the presence of refugees as well as to national economic recovery programmes.

36. In the harsh economic climate prevailing in Africa, long-term solutions to refugee situations conceived and implemented outside the framework of the rehabilitation, recovery and development plans of host countries, run the risk of being costly and short-lived. Such solutions need to be linked to national development priorities, plans and capacities to facilitate the mobilization of required resources as well as their rational and optimum utilization.

37. UNDP is fully involved in the implementation and follow-up of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990. Due consideration continues to be given to refugee-related development needs in the rational utilization of resources entrusted to UNDP.

38. United Nations resident co-ordinators in each capital principally assume the responsibility for achieving these goals. By means of their ongoing dialogue with Governments concerned, the donor community, and the relevant agencies of the United Nations system, the resident co-ordinators stimulate interest in the special need to link refugee recovery and solutions to the development process.

39. UNDP will continue to assist in co-ordinating refugee-related development activities. However, the primary responsibility and the initiative rest with the African Governments themselves. In this perspective, closer co-operation with UNHCR is a significant factor. At field level, such consultation and co-ordination constitute an integral part of UNDP actions. Efforts are made to enhance this co-ordination process on the basis of the experience gained in the framework of follow-up activities of the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa. This includes joint UNHCR/UNDP multi-disciplinary missions to prepare programmes benefiting returnees as well as local populations. It is also intended to establish procedures whereby donors would co-ordinate between their humanitarian and development assistance agencies to give priority to the needs of refugee-receiving countries and integration of projects benefiting refugees into national development plans. Recipient countries could integrate these projects into their national development plans in close co-ordination with United Nations system organizations, notably UNHCR and UNDP.

40. UNDP has benefited from the co-operation and the expertise in refugee and grass-roots developmental programmes of the non-governmental organizations, both indigenous to Africa and international, in the identification of projects and their implementation. The recently established Division for non-governmental organizations within UNDP will be instrumental in strengthening its programming capacity in this regard.

C. Response of donors

41. At the close of the Conference, the donor community made known its intention to channel most of its assistance for refugee-related development projects through traditional bilateral aid mechanisms. In the course of their statements, several Governments announced support in cash, in kind or in principle towards the projects presented to the Conference. Contributions amounting to \$US 18.5 million were pledged to help cover UNHCR's programme for Africa, including projects submitted in response to subparagraph 5 (b) of General Assembly resolution 37/197. As regards development-related projects submitted in response to subparagraph 5 (c), statements were made expressing interest in, and commitments towards, about one third of the 128 projects. In addition, some \$US 6.2 million were committed at the Conference without specification as to their allocation between subparagraph 5 (b) and subparagraph 5 (c) programmes. This sum was later transferred to the UNDP Trust Fund for assistance to refugee-related development projects in Africa.

42. It had been hoped that further contributions would be made available for the financing and implementation of the programme of refugee-related developmental projects endorsed by the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa. This Conference offered hope that adequate funds would be raised to meet refugee and returnee needs and to strengthen the capacities of countries of asylum to receive, sustain and shelter them while durable solutions for their future were being sought. Unfortunately, soon after the Conference, drought and famine intervened in many parts of Africa, necessitating the diversion of energies and resources from development-related schemes to the savings of lives in the stricken areas. In many cases, donor resources which would have been used for projects of the Second International Conference were spent on emergency programmes. As a consequence, progress has been slow in mobilizing resources to meet the cost of refugee-related programmes.

43. In addition to this preoccupation of the donors with other emergency situations, some of the affected countries, which have yet to fully recover from the adverse consequences of the drought and famine, have fallen prey to new emergencies arising from civil strife and conflict. Since the period covered in the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/41/572), there has been a significant rise in the number of displaced people and refugees in southern Africa, particularly Angola, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

44. Commitments to fund specific projects bilaterally, made as a follow-up to the Conference, stand confirmed. Furthermore, in reviewing donor response to the needs for developmental assistance in refugee/returnee impacted areas, the Secretary-General is aware of a number of bilaterally-funded activities in priority

sectors such as food and agricultural production, water resources, communications and health which overlap in part or are similar to the projects submitted at the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa. In this category, may also be mentioned some projects implemented by non-governmental organizations extending their assistance beyond emergency relief to rehabilitation activities. To the extent that such programmes aim at the improvement of the economic situation of areas that host refugees and/or returnees and indeed answer needs identified at the Conference, they may de facto be considered an application of the recommendations of the Conference.

45. African Governments have also, in a number of instances, either partially or totally financed and implemented projects submitted at the Conference, when these have corresponded to a national priority and other resources were not available. UNDP estimates that 25 per cent of the projects submitted in 1984 are now either redundant or need substantial revision to be relevant to current needs and priorities.

46. These various facts being taken into account, and although few additional projects have been funded since July 1986, UNDP estimates that the international community has met directly or indirectly, partially or wholly, 45 per cent of the project needs presented at the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa. These projects reflected the needs and priorities of countries of asylum at that time. However, changes in conditions in some countries have led to the modifications or the absorption of initial project proposals into new projects, to take into account changes in priorities and needs. What seems to be needed in some countries now is a review of the refugee programmes so that they conform to current realities.

D. Utilization of resources of the United Nations Development Programme Trust Fund for assistance to refugee-related development projects in Africa

47. Since 1984, UNDP has received a total of \$7.6 million to be used for refugee-related development activities in accordance with the recommendation of the Declaration and Programme of Action of the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa. No substantial contribution to the Trust Fund has been received since 1985.

48. Guided by the Steering Committee for the follow-up to the Conference, these resources have been used, both for the funding and implementation of selected projects and for the review, identification and preparation of projects. To date, a total amount of \$5.6 million has been approved, of which \$600,000 cover project identification and preparation.

49. In the light of the priorities defined in the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 and those retained by the Governments of the countries concerned, the project review, identification and preparation activities have been considerably accelerated in the first six months of 1987. To date, UNDP Trust Fund resources have covered four review

missions in Zambia, Chad, the United Republic of Tanzania and Ethiopia; others are in preparation. As mentioned earlier, a second multi-disciplinary team, organized jointly by UNDP and UNHCR in co-operation with UNICEF and OXFAM, is currently in Ethiopia. It will contribute to the preparation by the Ethiopian Government of a rehabilitation and recovery programme for the Ogaden region in relation to the repatriation of Ethiopian refugees from Djibouti and Somalia.

50. These country-specific "need assessment missions", co-ordinated and planned with UNHCR to ensure linkage and continuity between humanitarian relief and rehabilitative development activities at an early stage, are designed to build up a pipeline of area-specific project proposals which conform to the sectoral priorities and capacities of the Government. At the same time, the long-term, integrated development assistance sought will benefit both refugee, returnee and host populations. To achieve this, UNHCR, as a first step, in any refugee/returnee situation must, identify all priority sectors irrespective of their nature. Negotiations will then be undertaken with the Governments concerned to allocate sectors to the various agencies according to competence.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

51. There is widespread and growing concern that Africa's 5 million refugees and returnees will become a forgotten problem unless special efforts are made to ensure that their plight and needs are kept before the international community. It serves no one's purpose to maintain these refugees in their present condition - homeless, rootless and with little hope for the future. They must be brought back into the mainstream of society - allowing them the opportunity to repair their lives, re-establish relationships and make a contribution not only to their own welfare, but also to that of the community in which they live.

52. Our objective therefore must be the active pursuit of durable solutions. The Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa reaffirmed that the ideal solution for refugees remains voluntary repatriation, and that countries of origin remain responsible for creating the necessary social and political conditions conducive to the return of the refugees. Where such voluntary repatriation is not immediately feasible or possible, the Programme of Action urges that conditions be created within the country of asylum so that the refugees can temporarily settle or integrate into the community.

53. In this regard, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has a major role to play in co-ordinating aid to refugees. Indeed, by his own mandate, the High Commissioner, acting under the authority of the General Assembly, has two main functions: in addition to the protection of refugees, the High Commissioner is to make every effort to seek durable solutions to their problems - through voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement. The Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa has clearly endorsed the pursuit of these efforts by the High Commissioner.

54. However, the promotion of durable solutions requires the willingness of the concerned Governments to adopt not only the necessary political measures, but also

a developmental programme which would be conducive to addressing the refugee problem in its development context. As was accepted at the Second International Conference, technical and capital assistance should be provided to countries that offer asylum to refugees and to countries that welcome back returnees, for the purpose of facilitating their settlement or integration into the community. To this end, settlement programmes should be development-oriented and wherever possible, be linked to existing or planned economic and social development schemes for the area or region. At the Conference, the international community recognized that the condition of refugees is a global responsibility of the international community, and it emphasized the need for equitable burden-sharing by all its members, taking into consideration particularly the case of the least developed countries.

55. In view of UNDP's central co-ordinating role within the United Nations system for development and its close links with donor communities, the Second International Conference entrusted UNDP with a leading part in the co-ordination, implementation and monitoring of refugee-related infrastructural projects of a developmental nature in close association with its partners and other donors.

56. The hopes raised by the Second International Conference were not realized at the time because of the famine and drought emergency which engulfed many parts of Africa. Fortunately, the overall emergency has ended and the countries affected by the crisis, including those hosting refugees, are now actively engaged in the urgent task of recovery and development. The United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 calls for a new era of co-operation between Africa and the international community to ensure self-reliant, sustainable economic development. The Programme explicitly recognizes that the plight of 5 million refugees and returnees, together with the adverse effects which the refugee burden continues to impose on the frail economies of host countries, remain matters of high priority for many African States. It calls for the accelerated implementation of the recommendations of the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa.

57. This will require an increased effort by donor countries and organizations to provide the financial resources required to implement the various projects presented at the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa as well as such new projects as may be formulated in response to changed circumstances. Concrete measures at the national, regional and international levels are needed to help resolve the continent's massive refugee problems. The complementarity between refugee-related aid and development assistance should be reflected in the structures addressing these issues. For this purpose, revitalization of the Conference Programme will be further enhanced by the strengthening and accelerating of co-ordination and co-operation between UNHCR and UNDP, as envisaged in the Programme of Action.

58. Success in some refugee situations demonstrates both the viability of the refugee/development linkage and the enthusiasm of donors to contribute the additional funds required. In countries hosting significant numbers of refugees,

urgent consideration should be given by those concerned to enable UNHCR to become an integral part of the aid co-ordination modalities realized through the Consultative Group and the new Round Table process. Experience has shown that UNHCR programmes generate or bring additional funds to the process, and do not detract from national development resources, as some countries fear.

59. The Secretary-General, in close co-operation with the pertinent offices, agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, will continue to do everything possible to promote durable solutions for refugees and returnees. In this regard, there is need for closer co-operative arrangements, covering returnee and refugee programmes, giving UNDP primary responsibility for assistance to refugee-related development projects while UNHCR continues to assist host countries in Africa with the task of caring for and maintaining refugees. The Secretary-General hopes that donors will favourably consider contributing additional resources, over and above those provided under regular assistance programmes, for refugee-related development projects in Africa.

60. Finally, the Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude to the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity for active participation in the follow-up arrangements to the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa. He also pays tribute to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and to the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme for their continuing co-operation and support in this task.
