



## General Assembly

Distr.  
GENERAL

A/43/591  
8 September 1988

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-third session  
Item 102 (c) of the provisional agenda\*

### OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES; ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS OF CENTRAL AMERICA

#### Report of the Secretary-General

1. The plight of Central American refugees, returnees and displaced persons has continued to draw the attention of the international community and in particular of the Governments of Central America, Mexico and Belize. In fulfilment of UNHCR's mandate and within the framework of General Assembly resolution 42/110, UNHCR has continued the search for durable solutions for Central American refugees and returnees. UNHCR's assistance programme continues to benefit refugees, returnees and displaced persons living in the same region.
2. In the search for solutions to the problem of Central American refugees, special attention has been given to facilitating voluntary repatriation. A Costa Rica/Nicaragua/UNHCR Tripartite Commission was established during the period under review. Tripartite commissions have met regularly to organize and co-ordinate repatriation and free choice of place of reintegration in the country of origin. An increase in the number of persons repatriating voluntarily has been observed during the period under review as a result of the activities of the tripartite commissions and voluntary repatriation programmes. During the first semester of 1988, 7,390 Miskitos repatriated from Honduras to the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, 866 Salvadorans returned to their homeland from other Central American countries, and 1,653 Guatemalans repatriated from camps and settlements in Mexico.
3. UNHCR worked closely with UNDP in the elaboration of those parts of the special plan of economic co-operation for Central America related to refugees, returnees and displaced persons, prepared by the United Nations pursuant to

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\* A/43/150.

resolution 42/204. Subsequently, UNHCR has also made joint efforts with UNDP to assist the Government of Belize in alleviating the burden of the presence of Central American refugees and displaced persons in that country.

4. The organization of the International Conference on Central American Refugees continues, pursuant to the decision taken by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Central American countries, on 7 April 1988 in Guatemala, to convene the Conference. The UNHCR Advisory Group of Experts of Central American countries and Mexico held its third meeting in Guatemala in April 1988, approving guidelines for the technical aspects of the preparation of the Conference, including the elaboration of national profiles and programmes of solutions. UNHCR is providing support to the Governments of the region for the preparation of such national profiles and programmes. The Governments of the region have established a Steering Committee responsible for the overall organization of the Conference whose first meeting will take place shortly with the support of UNHCR.

5. It is the intention of the High Commissioner to continue UNHCR's activities in the region and to further support the preparatory work for the Conference being undertaken by the Governments concerned, since the Conference is considered the most appropriate forum to comply with the terms of General Assembly resolution 42/110.

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