

General Overview

OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE OFFICE OF
THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR REFUGEES



INTRODUCTORY NOTE

BY THE OFFICE OF THE
UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES



GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 428 (V) OF DECEMBER 1950

AND ANNEX:

THE STATUTE

OF THE OFFICE OF THE
UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES



OVERVIEW OF RELEVANT GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS,
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONCLUSIONS
AND ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS



SELECTION OF RESOLUTIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND DECISIONS
RELEVANT TO UNHCR

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

BY THE OFFICE OF THE
UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES
(UNHCR)

THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR) was established by the General Assembly in December 1950 and began its activities on 1 January 1951. Since then, the nature of refugee crises has continually changed. As a result, UNHCR has adapted and evolved to address a variety of refugee situations more effectively.

The root of UNHCR's mandate is its Statute, adopted by the General Assembly under Resolution 428 (V). In addition, for more than 50 years the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and UNHCR's Executive Committee have helped shape UNHCR's Resolutions and activities. Other pivotal tools are the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. These have been complemented by regional instruments such as the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention, the 1984 Cartagena Declaration and the 1994 San José Declaration.

This general overview provides a thematic look at the current scope of UNHCR's functions through a summary of different sources, notably General Assembly resolutions and Executive Committee conclusions and decisions.

Geneva, November 2002

GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 428 (V) of 14 December 1950

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

In view of its resolution 319 A (IV) of 3 December 1949,

- 1.** Adopts the annex to the present resolution, being the Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;
- 2.** Calls upon Governments to co-operate with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the performance of his functions concerning refugees falling under the competence of his Office, especially by:
 - (a)** Becoming parties to international conventions providing for the protection of refugees, and taking the necessary steps of implementation under such conventions;
 - (b)** Entering into special agreements with the High Commissioner for the execution of measures calculated to improve the situation of refugees and to reduce the number requiring protection;
 - (c)** Admitting refugees to their territories, not excluding those in the most destitute categories;
 - (d)** Assisting the High Commissioner in his efforts to promote the voluntary repatriation of refugees;
 - (e)** Promoting the assimilation of refugees, especially by facilitating their naturalization;
 - (f)** Providing refugees with travel and other documents such as would normally be provided to other aliens by their national authorities, especially documents which would facilitate their resettlement;
 - (g)** Permitting refugees to transfer their assets and especially those necessary for their resettlement;
 - (h)** Providing the High Commissioner with information concerning the number and condition of refugees, and laws and regulations concerning them.
- 3.** Requests the Secretary-General to transmit the present resolution, together with the annex attached thereto, also to States non-members of the United Nations, with a view to obtaining their co-operation in its implementation.

STATUTE OF THE OFFICE OF THE UNHCR

CHAPTER I General provisions

1. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, acting under the authority of the General Assembly, shall assume the function of providing international protection, under the auspices of the United Nations, to refugees who fall within the scope of the present Statute and of seeking permanent solutions for the problem of refugees by assisting Governments and, subject to the approval of the Governments concerned, private organizations to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of such refugees, or their assimilation within new national communities.

In the exercise of his functions, more particularly when difficulties arise, and for instance with regard to any controversy concerning the international status of these persons, the High Commissioner shall request the opinion of the advisory committee on refugees if it is created.

2. The work of the High Commissioner shall be of an entirely non-political character; it shall be humanitarian and social and shall relate, as a rule, to groups and categories of refugees.

3. The High Commissioner shall follow policy directives given him by the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council.

4. The Economic and Social Council may decide, after hearing the views of the High Commissioner on the subject, to establish an advisory committee⁽¹⁻²⁾ on refugees, which shall consist of representatives of States Members and States non-members of the United Nations, to be selected by the Council on the basis of their demonstrated interest in and devotion to the solution of the refugee problem.

(1) (...) reconstitute the United Nations High Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Refugees as an Executive Committee, to be known as the United Nations Refugee Fund (...).
[E/RES/565, 1955 and A/RES/832, 1954]

(2) (...) establish an Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to take the place of the Executive Committee of the United Nations Refugee Fund (...).
[E/RES/672, 1958 and A/RES/1166, 1957]

5. The General Assembly shall review, not later than at its eighth regular session, the arrangements for the Office of the High Commissioner with a view to determining whether the Office should be continued beyond 31 December 1953⁽³⁾.

CHAPTER II Functions of the High Commissioner

6. The competence of the High Commissioner shall extend to:

A. (i) Any person who has been considered a refugee under the Arrangements of 12 May 1926 and of 30 June 1928 or under the Conventions of 28 October 1933 and 10 February 1938, the Protocol of 14 September 1939 or the Constitution of the International Refugee Organization.

(ii) Any person who, as a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear or for reasons other than personal convenience, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear or for reasons other than personal convenience, is unwilling to return to it.

Decisions as to eligibility taken by the International Refugee Organization during the period of its activities shall not prevent the status of refugee being accorded to persons who fulfil the conditions of the present paragraph;

The competence of the High Commissioner shall cease to apply to any person defined in section A above if:

(a) He has voluntarily re-availed himself of the protection of the country of his nationality; or

(3) (...) the Office of the High Commissioner should be continued for a further period of five years (...).
[E/RES/500, 1953 and A/RES/727, 1953]

- (b) Having lost his nationality, he has voluntarily reacquired it; or
- (c) He has acquired a new nationality, and enjoys the protection of the country of his new nationality; or
- (d) He has voluntarily re-established himself in the country which he left or outside which he remained owing to fear of persecution; or
- (e) He can no longer, because the circumstances in connexion with which he has been recognized as a refugee have ceased to exist, claim grounds other than those of personal convenience for continuing to refuse to avail himself of the protection of the country of his nationality. Reasons of a purely economic character may not be invoked; or
- (f) Being a person who has no nationality, he can no longer, because the circumstances in connexion with which he has been recognized as a refugee have ceased to exist and he is able to return to the country of his former habitual residence, claim grounds other than those of personal convenience for continuing to refuse to return to that country;

B. Any other person who is outside the country of his nationality, or if he has no nationality, the country of his former habitual residence, because he has or had well-founded fear of persecution by reason of his race, religion, nationality or political opinion and is unable or, because of such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of the government of the country of his nationality, or, if he has no nationality, to return to the country of his former habitual residence.

7. Provided that the competence of the High Commissioner as defined in paragraph 6 above shall not extend to a person:

- (a) Who is a national of more than one country unless he satisfies the provisions of the preceding paragraph in relation to each of the countries of which he is a national; or
- (b) Who is recognized by the competent authorities of the country in which

he has taken residence as having the rights and obligations which are attached to the possession of the nationality of that country; or

- (c) Who continues to receive from other organs or agencies of the United Nations protection or assistance; or
- (d) In respect of whom there are serious reasons for considering that he has committed a crime covered by the provisions of treaties of extradition or a crime mentioned in article VI of the London Charter of the International Military Tribunal or by the provisions of article 14, paragraph 2, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*

8. The High Commissioner shall provide for the protection of refugees falling under the competence of his Office by:

- (a) Promoting the conclusion and ratification of international conventions for the protection of refugees, supervising their application and proposing amendments thereto;
- (b) Promoting through special agreements with Governments the execution of any measures calculated to improve the situation of refugees and to reduce the number requiring protection;
- (c) Assisting governmental and private efforts to promote voluntary repatriation or assimilation within new national communities;
- (d) Promoting the admission of refugees, not excluding those in the most destitute categories, to the territories of States;
- (e) Endeavouring to obtain permission for refugees to transfer their assets and especially those necessary for their resettlement;
- (f) Obtaining from Governments information concerning the number and conditions of refugees in their territories and the laws and regulations concerning them;

* See UN General Assembly Resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948.

- (g) Keeping in close touch with the Governments and intergovernmental organizations concerned;
- (h) Establishing contact in such manner as he may think best with private organizations dealing with refugee questions;
- (i) Facilitating the co-ordination of the efforts of private organizations concerned with the welfare of refugees.

9. The High Commissioner shall engage in such additional activities, including repatriation and resettlement, as the General Assembly may determine, within the limits of the resources placed at his disposal.

10. The High Commissioner shall administer any funds, public or private, which he receives for assistance to refugees, and shall distribute them among the private and, as appropriate, public agencies which he deems best qualified to administer such assistance.

The High Commissioner may reject any offers which he does not consider appropriate or which cannot be utilized.

The High Commissioner shall not appeal to Governments for funds or make a general appeal, without the prior approval of the General Assembly.

The High Commissioner shall include in his annual report a statement of his activities in this field.

11. The High Commissioner shall be entitled to present his views before the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies.

The High Commissioner shall report annually to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council; his report shall be considered as a separate item or the agenda of the General Assembly.

12. The High Commissioner may invite the co-operation of the various specialized agencies.

CHAPTER III Organization and finances

13. The High Commissioner shall be elected by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Secretary-General. The terms of appointment of the High Commissioner shall be proposed by the Secretary-General and approved by the General Assembly. The High Commissioner shall be elected for a term of three years, from 1 January 1951⁽¹⁾.

14. The High Commissioner shall appoint, for the same term, a Deputy High Commissioner of a nationality other than his own.

15. (a) Within the limits of the budgetary appropriations provided, the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner shall be appointed by the High Commissioner and shall be responsible to him in the exercise of their functions.

(b) Such staff shall be chosen from persons devoted to the purposes of the Office of the High Commissioner.

(c) Their conditions of employment shall be those provided under the staff regulations adopted by the General Assembly and the rules promulgated thereunder by the Secretary-General.

(d) Provision may also be made to permit the employment of personnel without compensation.

16. The High Commissioner shall consult the Government of the countries of residence of refugees as to the need for appointing representatives therein. In any country recognizing such need, there may be appointed a representative approved by the Government of that country. Subject to the foregoing, the same representative may serve in more than one country.

17. The High Commissioner and the Secretary-General shall make appropriate arrangements for liaison and consultation on matters of mutual interest.

(1) (...) the High Commissioner shall be elected for a period of five years (...). [A/RES/727, 1953]

18. The Secretary-General shall provide the High Commissioner with all necessary facilities within budgetary limitations.

19. The Office of the High Commissioner shall be located in Geneva, Switzerland.

20. The Office of the High Commissioner shall be financed under the budget of the United Nations. Unless the General Assembly subsequently decides otherwise, no expenditure other than administrative expenditures relating to the functioning of the Office of the High Commissioner shall be borne on the budget of the United Nations and all other expenditures relating to the activities of the High Commissioner shall be financed by voluntary contributions.

21. The administration of the Office of the High Commissioner shall be subject to the Financial Regulations of the United Nations and to the financial rules promulgated thereunder by the Secretary-General.

22. Transactions relating to the High Commissioner's funds shall be subject to audit by the United Nations Board of Auditors, provided that the Board may accept audited accounts from the agencies to which funds have been allocated. Administrative arrangements for the custody of such funds and their allocation shall be agreed between the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the United Nations and rules promulgated thereunder by the Secretary-General.

COOPERATION BETWEEN UNHCR AND STATES

Article 35 of the 1951 Convention and Article II of the 1967 Protocol provide an explicit link between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the implementation of these international refugee instruments. Contracting States undertake to cooperate with UNHCR in carrying out its functions, including its supervisory role.

CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES

The Contracting States undertake to co-operate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, or any other agency of the United Nations which may succeed it, in the exercise of its functions, and shall in particular facilitate its duty of supervising the application of the provisions of this Convention.

[Article 35]

REFUGEES • Definition

UNHCR's scope of competence with respect to refugees is stated in Chapter II 6 of the Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as in subsequent General Assembly resolutions.

STATUTE OF THE OFFICE OF UNHCR

Any ... person who is outside the country of his nationality, or if he has no nationality, the country of his former habitual residence, because he has or had well-founded fear of persecution by reason of his race, religion, nationality or political opinion and is unable or, because of such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of the government of the country of his nationality, or, if he has no nationality, to return to the country of his former habitual residence.

[Chapter II 6]

REFUGEES

• Women

Beginning in 1979, refugee women as a specific category have been regularly discussed by the General Assembly. Refugee women have special needs and are often in a vulnerable situation and the Office has been asked to enhance the protection and quality of services extended to them. In recent resolutions, particular

emphasis has been put on their special needs and aspects of gender-related persecution. Furthermore, UNHCR has been called upon to promote refugee women's active participation in leadership and other aspects of the refugee communities where they live. The Executive Committee has urged UNHCR to promote

skills training, education and reproductive health awareness for refugee women.

• Children

Refugee children constitute another group for which the General Assembly has requested the Office to provide special assistance and protection. Emphasis has been placed on the importance of family unity in trying to reunite children with their families. UNHCR has been called upon in particular to provide adequate

protection and assistance (material, education, health and psychological) to unaccompanied refugee minors. Much weight has been given to education, in collaboration with other actors.

• Special Groups

UNHCR has paid attention to particularly vulnerable refugees since the 1950s, as stressed by the General Assembly. Moreover, the developments of guidelines on the care of elderly refugees have been welcomed by the Assembly.

The General Assembly,

Encourages the Office of the High Commissioner to continue and strengthen its efforts for the protection of women having a well-founded fear of persecution....
• A/RES/51/75 (1997)

Welcoming the continuing efforts of the High Commissioner to meet the protection and assistance needs of refugee women and children, who constitute the majority of the world's refugee population and who are often exposed to serious threats to their safety and well-being.
• A/RES/49/169 (1995)

Encourages the High Commissioner to continue to undertake initiatives for refugee women in the areas of leadership and skills training, legal awareness and education and, in particular, in the area of reproductive health, with full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of the refugees, in conformity with universally recognized human rights.
• A/RES/49/169 (1995)

The Executive Committee,

Urges the High Commissioner to undertake initiatives for refugee women in the areas of leadership and skills training, legal awareness and education, and in particular in the area of reproductive health, with full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of the refugees, in conformity with universally recognized international human rights and the UNHCR Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women.
• A/RES/49/169 (1995)

The Executive Committee,

Calls upon States, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other relevant actors to give particular attention to the needs of unaccompanied refugee children pending their reunification with their families; and affirms, in this regard, that adoption of refugee children should be considered when all feasible steps for family tracing and reunification have been exhausted, and then only in the best interests of the child and in conformity with international standards.
• A/54/12/ADD.1 (1999)

Calls upon UNHCR to continue to integrate fully the rights of the child into its policies and programmes; improve its operational methods for assessing the needs of child and adolescent refugees; train its staff and implementing partners accordingly; formulate preventive strategies....
• A/52/12/ADD.1 (1997)

The General Assembly,

Calls upon the Secretary-General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Children's Fund... to mobilize adequate assistance to unaccompanied refugee minors in the areas of relief, education, health and psychological rehabilitation.
• A/RES/56/136 (2002)

The General Assembly,

Underlines the particular role of elderly refugees within the refugee family, welcomes the development by the Office of the High Commissioner of guidelines to address their special needs, and calls upon States and the Office of the High Commissioner to make renewed efforts to ensure that the rights, needs and dignity of elderly and disabled refugees are fully respected and that programmes are designed bearing in mind their special vulnerabilities.
• A/RES/55/74 (2001)

PERSONS OF CONCERN TO UNHCR

• Stateless Persons

UNHCR has been designated by the General Assembly, pursuant to Articles II and 20 of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, as the body to which a person may apply for assistance to resolve his or her situation of statelessness. In support of this role, UNHCR is engaged in a number of

activities on behalf of stateless persons and promotes accession to international statelessness instruments. The Office provides technical and advisory services pertaining to the preparation and implementation of nationality legislation with regard to addressing the problem of statelessness.

1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness

A contracting State shall grant its nationality to a person born in its territory who would otherwise be stateless. Such nationality shall be granted:

- (a) At birth, by operation of law, or
- (b) Upon an application being lodged with the appropriate authorities, by or on behalf of the person concerned, in the manner prescribed by the national authority. Subject to the provisions of paragraph 2 of this article, no such application may be rejected. A Contracting State which provides for the grant of its nationality in accordance with subparagraph (b) of this paragraph may also provide for the grant of its nationality by operation of law at such age and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by the national law.

The General Assembly,

Encourages the High Commissioner to continue her activities on behalf of stateless persons, as part of her statutory function of providing international protection and of seeking preventive action, as well as her responsibilities under General Assembly resolution 3274 (XXIX) of 10 December 1974 and 31/36 of 30 November 1976...

• A/RES/51/75 (1997)

Requests the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees provisionally to undertake the functions foreseen under the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness in accordance with its article II after the Convention has come into force.⁽¹⁾

• A/RES/3274 (1974)

(1) Entry into force 13 December 1975, in accordance with article 18 of the Convention.

The Executive Committee,

Further requests UNHCR actively to promote the prevention and reduction of statelessness through the dissemination of information and the training of staff and government officials....

• A/50/12/ADD.1 (1995)

The General Assembly,

Notes the relevance of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, reaffirms its support for the role of the Office of the High Commissioner in providing humanitarian assistance and protection to internally displaced persons, on the basis of specific requests from the Secretary-General or the competent organs of the United Nations and with the consent of the State concerned, taking into account the complementarities of the mandates and expertise of other relevant organizations, and emphasizes that activities on behalf of internally displaced persons must not undermine the institution of asylum.

• A/RES/53/125 (1999)

Welcomes, in this context, efforts by the High Commissioner, on the basis of specific requests from the Secretary-General or the competent principal organs of the United Nations and with the consent of the concerned State, to undertake activities in favour of internally displaced persons, taking into account the complementarities of the mandates and expertise of other relevant organizations.

• A/RES/47/105 (1992)

The Executive Committee,

Encourages the High Commissioner to continue the efforts of her Office to put into action its internal criteria and guidelines for UNHCR involvement in situations of internal displacement, as an important contribution towards a more concerted response by the international community to the needs of the internally displaced.

• A/49/12/ADD.1 (1994)

Requests the High Commissioner, in pursuance of the need for the international community to explore methods and means to address better within the United Nations system the protection and assistance needs of internally displaced persons....

• A/48/12/ADD.1 (1993)

• Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

In 1992, the General Assembly laid down specific criteria for UNHCR's involvement with internally displaced persons. These criteria are spelled out in the Assembly's resolution and have been further developed over time.

PERSONS OF CONCERN TO UNHCR

• Returnees

The Executive Committee has endorsed UNHCR's activities to provide protection and assistance to returning refugees. UNHCR cares for "returnees" by monitoring their return and providing them with protection and assistance in their country of origin. This has been clearly recognized by the General Assembly, as well as in special agreements with Governments on voluntary repatriation.

The General Assembly,

Reiterates the right of all persons to return to their country, and emphasizes in this regard the prime responsibility of countries of origin for establishing conditions that allow voluntary repatriation of refugees in safety and dignity, and, in recognition of the obligation of all States to accept the return of their nationals, calls upon all States to facilitate the return of their nationals who have sought asylum but have been determined not to be refugees.

• A/RES/51/75 (1997)

The Executive Committee,

Notes that voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement are the traditional durable solutions for refugees; affirms that voluntary repatriation of refugees is the most preferred solution, when feasible; and calls upon countries of origin, countries of asylum, UNHCR and the international community to take all necessary measures to enable refugees to exercise freely their right to return to their homes in safety and dignity.

• A/52/12/Add.1 (1997)

The High Commissioner should be recognized as having a legitimate concern for the consequences of

return, particularly where such return has been brought about as a result of an amnesty or other form of guarantee. The High Commissioner must be regarded as entitled to insist on his legitimate concern over the outcome of any return that he has assisted. Within the framework of close consultations with the State concerned, he should be given direct and unhindered access to returnees so that he is in a position to monitor fulfillment of the amnesties, guarantees or assurances on the basis of which the refugees have returned. This should be considered as inherent in his mandate.

• A/40/12/ADD.1 (1985)

MAIN FUNCTIONS OF UNHCR

• International Protection

The General Assembly and Executive Committee have over the years consistently reiterated that international protection is the main function of UNHCR. The General Assembly has also reaffirmed the humanitarian, non-political character of the Office and has encouraged States and other partners to cooperate fully with the Office in carrying out this function.

The General Assembly,

Reiterates that international protection is a dynamic and action-oriented function, carried out in cooperation with States and other partners, inter alia, to promote and facilitate the admission, reception and treatment of refugees and to ensure durable, protection-oriented solutions, bearing in mind the particular needs of vulnerable groups.

• A/RES/56/137 (2002)

Welcomes the various initiatives undertaken by the High Commissioner in regard to the promotion and dissemination of the principles of refugee law and protection and calls upon his Office, in cooperation with Governments, to intensify its activities in this area, bearing in mind the need, in particular, to develop practical applications of refugee law and principles and to continue to organize training courses for governmental and other officials involved in refugee activities.

• A/RES/43/117 (1988)

The Executive Committee,

Noting UNHCR's initiative to launch Global Consultations on International Protection and encouraging UNHCR, in parallel with these Consultations, to continue to seek practical responses, in cooperation with States and other relevant actors, to address current and future protection challenges.

• A/55/12/ADD.1 (2000)

Recalling its encouragement to the High Commissioner to engage in consultations on possibilities and initiatives in specific areas with complex problems of coerced population movements as well as on achieving the objective of providing international protection to all who need it [...]

Noting that the prevention of and response to such situations may be beyond UNHCR's mandate and capacity.

• A/51/12/ADD.1 (1996)

MAIN FUNCTIONS OF UNHCR

• Durable Solutions

Promoting durable solutions for refugees goes hand-in-hand with providing international protection. Seeking permanent solutions is explicitly referred to in UNHCR's Statute and has been reaffirmed by the General Assembly as an important aspect of the Office's work. Promoting durable solutions has also been an ongoing area of focus in discussions of the Executive Committee.

The General Assembly,

Strongly reaffirms the fundamental importance and the purely humanitarian and non-political character of the function of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees of providing international protection to refugees and seeking permanent solutions to the problem of refugees.

• A/RES/53/125 (1999)

Requests the High Commissioner to continue to discharge his basic functions of protection, assistance and the promotion of durable solutions in accordance with the statute of the Office and the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

• A/RES/37/196 (1982)

The Executive Committee,

Notes that the search for solutions to refugee problems is an integral part of the High Commissioner's mandate for international protection....

• A/50/12/ADD.1 (1995)

Recognizes the close link between protection, assistance and solutions and supports the High Commissioner's efforts to pursue wherever possible opportunities to promote conditions conducive to the preferred solution of voluntary repatriation, noting with

appreciation the Office's development of operational guidelines to further these efforts.

• A/48/12/ADD.1 (1993)

The General Assembly,

Welcomes the initiatives taken by the High Commissioner to enhance the capacity of the Office to respond to emergencies and, taking into account current deliberations on a United Nations system-wide response, encourages the High Commissioner to continue to work closely with other United Nations agencies, as well as other organizations, whether governmental, intergovernmental or non-governmental, to assure a coordinated and effective response to emergency humanitarian situations of

a complex and protracted nature, and calls upon Governments to assist in implementing these initiatives.

• A/RES/46/106 (1991)

Requests the High Commissioner, while carrying out his responsibilities, to co-ordinate and co-operate closely with other organizations within and outside the United Nations system for greatest efficiency of relief in the case of major emergencies.

• A/RES/36/125 (1981)

• Assistance

UNHCR has been called upon by the General Assembly to become the principal organization in coordinating assistance to refugees and other persons of concern. The Office has been encouraged to carry out this role in cooperation with a number of other relevant actors.

TOOLS OF UNHCR AND ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES TO WHICH IT CONTRIBUTES

• Partnership

No single General Assembly resolution accurately captures the extent to which UNHCR cooperates with other actors in fulfilling its functions. The concept of inter-agency cooperation and partnership has evolved over time and the Office has been asked to cooperate with a widening range of actors on an ongoing basis.

The Executive Committee has also reaffirmed that partnerships and relationships with different actors is an important aspect of the work of UNHCR. Different actors are often urged to cooperate with the Office on a multitude of activities.

• Coordination

According to UNHCR's Statute, the Office has a role in coordinating with States and "private organizations concerned with the welfare of refugees". Over time UNHCR's role as a coordinator has changed and come to involve more than just organizations who have a direct concern for refugees. The Office has been asked to coordinate with a multitude of different actors that can help achieve the goals of the Office. The General Assembly has also stressed that States need to coordinate with UNHCR.

The Executive Committee has welcomed, for instance, the Partnership in Action (PARinAC) process in order to improve the coordination efforts between the Office and NGOs.

• Capacity-Building

The issue of capacity-building has been discussed in connection with efforts to promote conditions conducive to the return of refugees as well as in the context of strengthening protection capacity in host countries. UNHCR has particularly been asked to promote legal and judicial capacity-building as well as development-oriented assistance.

The Executive Committee,

Encourages UNHCR to strengthen further its collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and with relevant human rights bodies and mechanisms and non-governmental organizations, with a view to strengthening refugee protection, keeping in mind the need to improve coordination, promote complementarity, avoid duplication of efforts and to preserve the distinct character of the respective mandates.

• A/53/12/ADD.1 (1998)

Encourages UNHCR and non-governmental organizations to continue to pursue activities in the field and at headquarters, to enhance their partnership in protection and assistance.

• A/50/12/ADD.1 (1995)

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 upon the member Governments to support these efforts in the governing bodies of these agencies.

• A/45/12/ADD.1 (1990)

The General Assembly,

Requests the Office of the High Commissioner, with that sustained support, to continue to fulfil the mandate conferred upon it by its Statute and by subsequent General Assembly resolutions regarding refugees and other persons of concern, in close cooperation with its relevant partners.

• A/RES/56/137 (2002)

The General Assembly,

Welcomes the progress made by the High Commissioner in her efforts to enhance the capacity of her Office to respond to emergencies, and encourages her to continue to work closely with the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, as well as with United Nations organizations and governmental, intergovernmental or non-governmental bodies, to assure a coordinated and effective response to complex, humanitarian emergency situations.

• A/RES/47/105 (1992)

The Executive Committee,

Welcomes the establishment of UNHCR and NGO focal points to facilitate communication and coordination.

• A/50/12/Add.1 (1995)

Encourages NGOs, Governments and UNHCR to identify areas of the Plan of Action where they can cooperate to implement particular recommendations.

• A/49/12/Add.1 (1994)

The General Assembly,

... urges the Office of the High Commissioner, within its mandate and at the request of the Government concerned and in view of the relationship between safeguarding human rights and preventing conditions that give rise to refugee outflows, to strengthen its support of national efforts at legal and judicial capacity-building, where necessary, in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and, in view of creating conditions furthering reconciliation and long-term development in countries of return...

• A/RES/52/103 (1998)

TOOLS OF UNHCR AND ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES TO WHICH IT CONTRIBUTES

• Development

As a humanitarian organization, UNHCR is not specifically tasked to engage in development activities. However, because UNHCR has been given a primary role in promoting durable solutions for refugees, the Office has been asked to be a catalyst in promoting development, predominantly in areas to which refugees return. The Office is urged to involve development agencies in promoting lasting solutions for refugees. The Executive Committee has also welcomed UNHCR's initiative to promote development-oriented assistance to refugees.

The General Assembly,

Urges the High Commissioner to continue her efforts to involve international, national and intergovernmental development agencies, as well as non-governmental agencies, in the planning phases for voluntary repatriation, so as to ensure that basic reintegration assistance is complemented by broader development initiatives focused on the areas of return.

• A/RES/47/105 (1992)

The Executive Committee,

Commended the High Commissioner for initiatives taken in developing the concept of development-oriented assistance to refugees...

• A/39/12/ADD.1 (1984)

• Preventive Action

The General Assembly has viewed preventive action as an important part of the work undertaken by UNHCR. This is largely in recognition of the broad humanitarian experience and expertise of the organization, particularly in the area of voluntary repatriation, as well as activities on behalf of internally displaced persons and stateless persons.

The General Assembly,

Encourages the High Commissioner, on the basis of her broad humanitarian experience and expertise, to continue to explore and to undertake protection and assistance activities aimed at preventing conditions that give rise to refugee outflows, bearing in mind fundamental protection principles, in close coordination with the Governments concerned, and within an inter-agency, intergovernmental and non-governmental framework, as appropriate.

• A/RES/48/116 (1993)

Stresses the overriding importance of attaining durable solutions to refugee problems and, in particular, the need to address in this process the root causes of refugee movements, and calls upon the High Commissioner actively to explore new options for preventive strategies that are consistent with protection principles, as well as ways in which State responsibility and burden-sharing mechanisms might be strengthened.

• A/RES/46/106 (1991)

• Safety

The issue of safety is one which has been part of UNHCR's operations for decades. With the increased concern about the safety of both refugees and staff members, the General Assembly has again focused on cooperation between UNHCR and other United Nations bodies in creating a safe and secure environment. In recent years the Executive Committee has also been explicit about the importance of safety and security.

The General Assembly,

Encourages the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, in cooperation with host countries and in coordination with other relevant UN bodies, further to develop and integrate security arrangements in

its operations, and to allocate adequate resources for the safety and security of its staff and the persons under its mandate.

• A/RES/55/74 (2001)

The Executive Committee,

Encourages UNHCR to further develop and integrate appropriate security arrangements in its operations and to allocate adequate resources for the safety and security of its staff and the populations under its care.

• A/55/12/ADD.1 (2000)

Supports the High Commissioner's activities to monitor the personal security of refugees and asylum-seekers and to take appropriate action to prevent or redress violations thereof, including the expansion of training programmes aimed at enhancing the understanding of refugee protection among law enforcement officials, other concerned Government personnel, and non-governmental organizations.

• A/48/12/ADD.1 (1993)

• Good Offices

Situation-specific resolutions of the General Assembly have sometimes called upon UNHCR to provide assistance through its "good offices". This function is inherent in the overall mandate of UNHCR.

SELECTION OF RESOLUTIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND

General Assembly

A/RES/56/166	2002	A/RES/50/149	1996	A/RES/44/151	1989	A/RES/40/134	1985	A/RES/35/181	1980
A/RES/56/164	2002	A/RES/50/6	1995	A/RES/44/150	1989	A/RES/40/132	1985	A/RES/35/180	1980
A/RES/56/137	2002	A/RES/49/174	1995	A/RES/44/149	1989	A/RES/40/119	1985	A/RES/35/135	1980
A/RES/56/136	2002	A/RES/49/173	1995	A/RES/44/139	1989	A/RES/40/118	1985	A/RES/35/124	1980
A/RES/56/135	2002	A/RES/49/172	1995	A/RES/44/138	1989	A/RES/40/117	1985	A/RES/35/42	1980
A/RES/56/134	2002	A/RES/49/169	1995	A/RES/44/137	1989	A/RES/39/140	1984	A/RES/35/41	1980
A/RES/56/133	2002	A/RES/49/24	1994	A/RES/44/136	1989	A/RES/39/139	1984	A/RES/34/174	1979
A/RES/56/578	2001	A/RES/49/7	1994	A/RES/43/149	1988	A/RES/39/109	1984	A/RES/34/161	1979
A/RES/55/77	2001	A/RES/48/118	1993	A/RES/43/148	1988	A/RES/39/108	1984	A/RES/34/62	1979
A/RES/55/76	2001	A/RES/48/117	1993	A/RES/43/147	1988	A/RES/39/107	1984	A/RES/34/61	1979
A/RES/55/75	2001	A/RES/48/116	1993	A/RES/43/144	1988	A/RES/39/104	1984	A/RES/34/60	1979
A/RES/55/74	2001	A/RES/48/115	1993	A/RES/43/142	1988	A/RES/39/100	1984	A/RES/33/164	1978
A/RES/55/72	2001	A/RES/48/114	1993	A/RES/43/141	1988	A/RES/38/121	1983	A/RES/33/26	1978
A/RES/54/147	2000	A/RES/48/113	1993	A/RES/43/138	1985	A/RES/38/120	1983	A/RES/33/25	1978
A/RES/54/146	2000	A/RES/47/107	1992	A/RES/43/119	1988	A/RES/38/95	1983	A/RES/32/70	1977
A/RES/54/144	2000	A/RES/47/105	1992	A/RES/43/118	1988	A/RES/38/90	1983	A/RES/32/69	1977
A/RES/54/143	2000	A/RES/47/104	1992	A/RES/43/117	1988	A/RES/38/89	1983	A/RES/32/68	1977
A/RES/53/126	1999	A/RES/47/103	1992	A/RES/43/116	1988	A/RES/38/88	1983	A/RES/32/67	1977
A/RES/53/125	1999	A/RES/42/138	1987	A/RES/43/109	1988	A/RES/38/84	1983	A/RES/32/119	1977
A/RES/53/123	1999	A/RES/42/132	1987	A/RES/42/138	1987	A/RES/37/238	1982	A/RES/31/126	1976
A/RES/53/122	1999	A/RES/42/130	1987	A/RES/46/108	1991	A/RES/37/197	1982	A/RES/31/35	1976
A/RES/53/121	1999	A/RES/42/129	1987	A/RES/46/107	1991	A/RES/37/196	1982	A/RES/3454	1975
A/RES/52/105	1998	A/RES/42/110	1987	A/RES/46/106	1991	A/RES/37/195	1982	A/RES/3271	1974
A/RES/52/104	1998	A/RES/42/109	1987	A/RES/46/105	1991	A/RES/37/177	1982	A/RES/3143	1973
A/RES/52/103	1998	A/RES/42/108	1987	A/RES/45/171	1991	A/RES/37/176	1982	A/RES/2958	1972
A/RES/52/102	1998	A/RES/42/107	1987	A/RES/45/161	1990	A/RES/37/174	1982	A/RES/2957	1972
A/RES/52/101	1998	A/RES/42/106	1987	A/RES/45/160	1990	A/RES/37/173	1982	A/RES/2956	1972
A/RES/51/75	1997	A/RES/41/139	1986	A/RES/45/159	1990	A/RES/37/172	1982	A/RES/2790	1971
A/RES/51/73	1997	A/RES/41/138	1986	A/RES/45/157	1990	A/RES/37/171	1982	A/RES/2789	1971
A/RES/51/72	1997	A/RES/41/137	1986	A/RES/45/154	1990	A/RES/36/158	1981	A/RES/2650	1970
A/RES/51/71	1997	A/RES/41/136	1986	A/RES/45/141	1990	A/RES/36/153	1981	A/RES/2594	1969
A/RES/51/70	1997	A/RES/41/134	1986	A/RES/45/140	1990	A/RES/36/148	1981	A/RES/2399	1968
A/RES/50/228	1996	A/RES/41/124	1986	A/RES/45/139	1990	A/RES/36/125	1981	A/RES/2294	1967
A/RES/50/152	1996	A/RES/41/123	1986	A/RES/45/138	1990	A/RES/36/124	1981	A/RES/2198	1966
A/RES/50/151	1996	A/RES/41/122	1986	A/RES/45/137	1990	A/RES/35/187	1980	A/RES/2197	1966
A/RES/50/150	1996	A/RES/41/70	1986	A/RES/44/157	1989	A/RES/35/184	1980	A/RES/2041	1965
		A/RES/44/154	1989	A/RES/44/152	1989	A/RES/40/166	1985		
		A/RES/44/151	1989	A/RES/40/166	1985	A/RES/40/135	1985		
		A/RES/40/166	1985	A/RES/40/135	1985	A/RES/35/182	1980		

