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INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION TO AVERT NEW FLOWS OF REFUGEES

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	2
II. OBSERVATIONS RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS	2
Canada	2
Colombia	4

* A/38/150.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh sessions, the General Assembly had before it, as requested in its resolutions 35/124 of 11 December 1980 and 36/148 of 16 December 1981, the reports of the Secretary-General on international co-operation to avert new flows of refugees (A/36/582 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and A/37/416 and Add.1), containing the observations received from Governments and from United Nations organs and specialized agencies.
2. In paragraph 7 of resolution 37/121 of 16 December 1982, the General Assembly renewed its call upon Member States that had not yet conveyed to the Secretary-General their comments and suggestions to do so as soon as possible.
3. The present report, submitted pursuant to paragraph 8 of resolution 37/121, contains the substantive parts of the replies received from Governments as at 19 September 1983. 1/

II. OBSERVATIONS RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

CANADA

[Original: English]

[29 July 1983]

1. The Canadian Government welcomed and co-sponsored General Assembly resolutions 35/124, 36/148 and 37/121 on international co-operation to avert new flows of refugees as a means to precipitate serious debate on an international question of grave humanitarian, political and economic dimensions that has become in recent years one of the major concerns of the international community.
2. The current international refugee situation is the result of many unresolved and pressing political and economic problems that have led to there being more than 10 million victims of various movements of populations around the world. The international community's response to that situation must, in the view of the Canadian Government, be comprehensive if it is to be meaningful and adequate in the long term. As such, it must not only deal effectively with the humanitarian consequences of such situations but also address in a parallel but concerted manner the complex and multiple causes that are at the root of movements of population.
3. Over the years, the international community, under the leadership of the United Nations system, has developed an ability through a network of governmental and non-governmental organizations and agencies to respond to the humanitarian challenge posed by movements of population and to fulfil its obligation of international solidarity towards the millions of victims of such movements. Given the changing nature and the increasing magnitude of contemporary movements of population, Canada is of the view that the international community's responsive capacity in the humanitarian field could be further enhanced by the early implementation of the relevant recommendations contained in the study on human

rights and massive exoduses by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/1503). Canada's views in this regard have been communicated to the Secretary-General separately.

4. However, of great concern to Canada in recent years has been the fact that there existed no focal point for discussion and action on the underlying political and economic causes of situations of massive exoduses of people. It has therefore greatly welcomed the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts on International Co-operation to Avert New Flows of Refugees with its present mandate to "undertake ... a comprehensive review of the problem in all its aspects, with a view to developing recommendations on appropriate means of international co-operation in this field" (resolution 36/148, para. 5).

5. Canada believes that the eventual development of a set of general guidelines for the conduct of States to avert new flows of refugees should remain one of the primary objectives of the Group of Governmental Experts. The process of developing such guidelines will provide a forum for deepening international understanding of the seriousness and complexity of the issues at hand and for raising the sensitivity of the international community to the profoundly troubling dimensions of the present refugee situation. In so doing, the Group will be able to examine some of the more technical and legal aspects of the question, to assess the present state of international law with regard to movements of population and to make proposals by which it could be clarified and reinforced.

6. At the same time, the Group of Governmental Experts should focus on the need to find durable solutions to the political and economic problems at the root of contemporary movements of populations in order to prevent their recurrence. In this regard, certain aspects of the study on human rights and massive exoduses (E/CN.4/1503) should be of particular interest to the Group. In the view of Canada, the study represents a broad and imaginative examination of the causes of contemporary movements of population and, as such, constitutes an important first step in the search of concerned nations for solutions. It is essential in our view, to develop a much greater common understanding, among countries of all regions, of all causes of present and future mass exoduses of people in order to develop a common will to resolve the problem in a concerted and comprehensive manner through the appropriate organs of the United Nations system. From that point of view also, Canada believes that the deliberations of the Group should make a useful and timely contribution.

7. In conclusion, Canada would like to stress once again the importance that it attaches to the efforts of the international community, to cope in a comprehensive and systematic manner with the problems raised by the phenomenon of mass movements of population. Canada believes that, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 37/186 on human rights and mass exoduses and resolutions 35/124, 36/148 and 37/121 on international co-operation to avert new flows of refugees, the United Nations system will be in a better position to tackle the problem both from its humanitarian as well as its political and economic dimensions in a parallel but complementary manner.

COLOMBIA

[Original: Spanish]

[28 March 1983]

With regard to resolution 37/121, adopted by the General Assembly on 16 December 1982 and entitled "International co-operation to avert new flows of refugees", the Colombian Government has no comments or objections to make on this subject.

Notes

1/ Pursuant to paragraph 9 of resolution 37/121, the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on International Co-operation to Avert New Flows of Refugees is contained in document A/38/273.
