

Chapter XV

Refugees and displaced persons

During 1993, the world's refugee population, including internally displaced persons, increased from 18.9 million to 23 million, severely taxing the capacity of the international community to respond.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) continued to deal with complex and protracted refugee crises through assistance and protection while pursuing a strategy aimed at prevention, preparedness and voluntary repatriation. Although heavily burdened by new refugee populations, UNHCR assisted some 1.8 million refugees to return home voluntarily in 1993, at a total cost of \$191 million. It endeavoured to secure asylum for those compelled to flee and to respond rapidly to their emergency needs, complementing these efforts with prevention and solution-oriented activities in their countries of origin.

Some 469,000 Afghan refugees were repatriated from Iran and Pakistan during 1993, with UNHCR assistance, and an additional 400,000 returned spontaneously. Approximately 155,000 persons returned to Cambodia during the year, completing the repatriation operation there. For some 250,000 refugees from Myanmar in Bangladesh, the signing of two Memoranda of Understanding paved the way for large-scale voluntary repatriation. UNHCR commenced the complex operation of repatriating some 1.5 million refugees to Mozambique from six neighbouring countries. It provided protection and assistance to internally displaced populations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Caucasus and parts of Africa and Central Asia. In the former Yugoslavia, UNHCR addressed the largest single group of persons in need of international protection.

In October, the UNHCR Executive Committee considered the international protection of refugees, the question of internally displaced persons, the implementation of its Policy on Refugee Women, refugee situations in Afghanistan and the former Yugoslavia, the follow-up to the 1989 International Conference on Central American Refugees, the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese Refugees, and increased coordination between UNHCR and non-governmental organizations.

The General Assembly expressed its deep concern at serious threats to the security of refugees and called on States to ensure respect for the principles of refugee protection as well as the humane

treatment of asylum-seekers, to uphold asylum as an indispensable instrument for the international protection of refugees, and to respect scrupulously the fundamental principle of non-refoulement (resolution 48/116).

Programme and finances of UNHCR

Programme policy

Executive Committee action. At its forty-fourth session (Geneva, 4-8 October 1993),⁽¹⁾ the Executive Committee of the UNHCR Programme expressed concern at the inadequacy of international protection for various groups of refugees. It noted the size and complexity of the refugee problem, the risk of new refugee situations developing and challenges to refugee protection, including the denial of UNHCR access to people in need of assistance, expulsion, refoulement and unjustified detention. The Committee called on States to uphold asylum as an indispensable instrument for international refugee protection and to respect the fundamental principle of non-refoulement. It stressed the importance of international burden-sharing and supported further exploration by the High Commissioner and States of various asylum strategies, including temporary protection for persons compelled to flee their countries in large numbers and who were in need of international protection.

The Executive Committee expressed concern at the alarming frequency of incidents in which refugees and asylum-seekers, including women and children, were subjected to violence and mistreatment, including killing, torture, military or armed attacks, rape, beatings, intimidation, forced military recruitment and arbitrary or inhumane conditions of detention. It deplored all violations of the right of refugees and asylum-seekers to personal security and condemned persecution through sexual violence. The Committee called on the High Commissioner to pursue the protection of refugee women and girls and supported refugee status for persons whose claim was based on a well-founded fear of persecution, through sexual violence, for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or

political opinion. It called on the High Commissioner to make every effort to ensure that the needs of refugee children, particularly unaccompanied minors, were covered by UNHCR's activities in cooperation with Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and intergovernmental organizations, and with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in particular. It asked the High Commissioner for a concerted effort to implement UNHCR's Policy on Refugee Women and to reinforce the role of the Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women.

The Committee welcomed increased consultation between UNHCR and NGOs through the Partnership in Action (PARINAC) process, which was jointly launched by the High Commissioner and the International Council on Voluntary Agencies, with a view to establishing a common agenda for field activities.

In her opening statement to the Committee, the High Commissioner stated that humanitarian assistance could make an important contribution to the peace-keeping and peacemaking efforts of the United Nations. However, the situation in the former Yugoslavia had clearly demonstrated that humanitarian endeavours were not a substitute for peace settlements or political negotiations.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 30 July, by **decision 1993/333**, the Economic and Social Council took note of the High Commissioner's report for 1992/93.⁽²⁾

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 20 December, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) Committee, adopted **resolution 48/116** without vote.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the activities of her Office, as well as the report of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the High Commissioner on the work of its forty-fourth session, and taking note of the statement made by the High Commissioner on 4 November 1993,

Recalling its resolution 47/105 of 16 December 1992,

Reaffirming the purely humanitarian and non-political character of the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner, as well as the crucial importance of the High Commissioner's functions of providing international protection to refugees and seeking solutions to refugee problems,

Welcoming the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights, particularly as it reaffirms the right to seek and enjoy asylum and the right to return to one's country,

Commending the High Commissioner and her staff for the dedicated manner in which they discharge their responsibilities, and paying special tribute to those staff members who have lost their lives in the course of their duties,

Noting with satisfaction that one hundred and twenty-three States are now parties to the 1951 Convention and/or the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees,

Also noting with satisfaction the participation of the High Commissioner in the commemoration of the anniversaries of the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees of 1984 and the Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, concluded at Addis Ababa on 10 September 1969,

Welcoming the continuing strong commitment of States to provide protection and assistance to refugees and the valuable support extended by Governments to the High Commissioner in carrying out her humanitarian tasks,

Commending those States, particularly the least developed and those serving as host to millions of refugees, that, despite severe economic and development challenges of their own, continue to admit large numbers of refugees into their territories, and emphasizing the need to share the burden of those States to the maximum extent possible through international assistance, including development-oriented assistance,

Noting with concern that the number of refugees and other persons to whom the Office of the High Commissioner is called upon to provide assistance and protection has continued to increase and that their protection continues to be seriously jeopardized in many situations as a result of denial of admission, unlawful expulsion, refoulement, unjustified detention, other threats to their physical security, dignity and well-being and failure to respect and ensure their fundamental freedoms and human rights,

Recognizing that, in certain regions, the misuse by individuals of asylum procedures jeopardizes the institution of asylum and adversely affects the prompt and effective protection of refugees,

Emphasizing the need for States to assist the High Commissioner in seeking durable and timely solutions to the problems of refugees, as well as to take part in efforts to prevent conditions that might give rise to the flight of refugees, and to address the root causes of refugee outflows, and underlining, in this connection, State responsibility, particularly as it relates to countries of origin,

Welcoming the continuing efforts of the High Commissioner to meet the protection and assistance needs of refugee women and refugee 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,

Recognizing the increased demands faced by the Office of the High Commissioner worldwide and the need for all available resources to be fully and effectively mobilized to meet those demands,

1. Strongly reaffirms the fundamental importance of the function of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees of providing international protection to refugees and the need for States to cooperate fully with her Office in order to facilitate the effective exercise of this function;

2. Calls upon all States that have not yet done so, including Governments of newly independent States, to accede to or to declare succession to and to implement fully the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees and relevant regional instruments for the protection of refugees;

3. Calls upon all States to uphold asylum as an indispensable instrument for the international protection of refugees and to respect scrupulously the fundamental principle of non-refoulement;

4. Urges States to ensure access, consistent with relevant international and regional instruments, for all asylum-seekers to fair and efficient procedures for the determination of refugee status and the granting of asylum to eligible persons;

5. Expresses deep concern regarding serious threats to the security or the well-being of refugees, including incidents of refoulement, unlawful expulsion, physical attacks and detention under unacceptable conditions, and calls upon States to take all measures necessary to ensure respect for the principles of refugee protection as well as the humane treatment of asylum-seekers in accordance with internationally recognized human rights norms;

6. Endorses, in this connection, the conclusions on the personal security of refugees and on refugee protection and sexual violence adopted by the Executive Committee of the Programme of the High Commissioner at its forty-fourth session;

7. Welcomes the High Commissioner's policy on refugee children and the activities undertaken to ensure its implementation, aimed at ensuring that the specific needs of refugee children, including in particular unaccompanied minors, are fully met within the overall protection and assistance activities of the Office, in cooperation with Governments and other relevant organizations;

8. Acknowledges with appreciation the further progress made in the implementation of measures within the framework of the High Commissioner's programme to ensure the protection and to meet the assistance needs of refugee women and girls, in accordance with the High Commissioner's policy on refugee women;

9. Stresses the importance of international solidarity and burden-sharing in reinforcing the international protection of refugees, and urges all States, as well as non-governmental organizations, in conjunction with the Office of the High Commissioner, to cooperate in efforts to lighten the burden borne by States that have received large numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees;

10. Urges all States and relevant organizations to support the High Commissioner's search for durable solutions to refugee problems, including voluntary repatriation, integration in the country of asylum and resettlement in a third country, as appropriate, and welcomes in particular the ongoing efforts of her Office to pursue wherever possible opportunities to promote conditions conducive to the preferred solution of voluntary repatriation;

11. 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;

12. Reaffirms its support for the High Commissioner's efforts, 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, and taking into account the complementarities of the mandates and expertise of other relevant organizations, to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to persons displaced within their own country in specific situations calling for the particular expertise of the Office, especially where such efforts could contribute to the prevention or solution of refugee problems;

13. Reaffirms the importance of incorporating environmental considerations into the programmes of the Office of the High Commissioner, especially in the least developed countries, in view of the impact on the environment of the large numbers of refugees and displaced persons of concern to the High Commissioner;

14. Recognizes the need for the international community to explore methods and means better to address within the United Nations system the protection and assistance needs of internally displaced persons, and calls upon the High Commissioner to engage actively in further consultations on this priority issue with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and the representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons, and with other appropriate international organizations and bodies, including the International Committee of the Red Cross;

15. Also recognizes the value of addressing prevention, protection and solutions on a comprehensive regional basis, and encourages the High Commissioner to consult with States, other relevant United Nations bodies and governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, concerning possibilities for additional measures and initiatives in areas affected by complex humanitarian problems involving coerced population movements;

16. Reaffirms the importance of promoting and disseminating refugee law and principles for the protection of refugees as well as of facilitating the prevention of and solutions to refugee problems, and encourages the High Commissioner to continue to strengthen the promotion and training activities of her Office, *inter alia*, through increased cooperation with bodies and organizations concerned with human rights and humanitarian law;

17. Urges States, the Office of the High Commissioner and non-governmental organizations to pursue their efforts to foster greater public understanding and acceptance of people of different backgrounds and cultures, with a view to dispelling hostile, racist or xenophobic attitudes and other forms of intolerance towards foreigners, including refugees and asylum-seekers, displaced people and persons belonging to minorities;

18. Notes the relationship between safeguarding human rights and preventing refugee problems, and reiterates its support for the High Commissioner's efforts to increase cooperation between her Office and the Commission on Human Rights, the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat and other relevant international bodies and organizations;

19. Welcomes the further progress made by the High Commissioner in enhancing the capacity of her Office to respond to humanitarian emergencies, and encourages her to provide full support to the coordination role of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, especially in major and complex emergencies;

20. Encourages the High Commissioner to continue to cooperate fully, including within the framework of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, with United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, in order to ensure an effective response to complex emergency situations;

21. Welcomes the establishment by the High Commissioner of the Partnership in Action Process in conjunction with the International Council of Voluntary Agencies as a means of strengthening and improving collaboration between the Office of the High Commissioner and non-governmental organizations in meeting greatly increased demands, expresses its support for the process of consultations through regional preparatory meetings as well as for the global conference at Oslo in June 1994 and invites Governments to provide financial support to this important initiative;

22. Expresses deep concern at conditions in a number of countries and regions that seriously endanger the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the security of the staff of the High Commissioner and other relief workers, deplors the recent loss of lives among personnel involved in humanitarian operations, urges support for initiatives taken by the High Commissioner and within the General Assembly and the Security Council concerning the safety of United Nations and associated personnel, in particular the consideration of new measures to enhance the safety of such personnel, and calls upon States and all parties to conflicts to take all necessary measures to ensure safe and timely access for humanitarian assistance and the security of international and local staff undertaking humanitarian work in the countries concerned;

23. Calls upon all Governments and other donors to contribute to the programmes of the High Commissioner and, taking into account the need to achieve greater burden-sharing among donors, to assist the High Commissioner in securing additional and timely income from traditional governmental sources, other Governments and the private sector in order to ensure that the needs of refugees, returnees and displaced persons of concern to the Office of the High Commissioner are met.

General Assembly resolution 48/116

20 December 1993 Meeting 85 Adopted without vote

Approved by Third Committee (A/48/631) without vote, 19 November (meeting 38); 80-nation draft (A/C.3/48/L.26), orally revised; agenda item 113.

Sponsors: Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Senegal, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic

of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen.
Meeting numbers. GA 48th session: 3rd Committee 23-28, 33, 34, 38; plenary 85.

Programme policy evaluation

The Secretary-General, in March,⁽³⁾ submitted to the Committee on Programme and Coordination (CPC) an in-depth evaluation of the UNHCR programme on international protection of and assistance to refugees. The report presented findings and recommendations on: protection, durable solutions, assistance, early warning, contingency planning, training, dissemination, publicity, finance, management and human resources, with the aim of strengthening protection and the search for durable solutions and further delegating operational responsibility for assistance.

In May,⁽⁴⁾ CPC endorsed the evaluation and its recommendations and decided that the evaluation, along with the section of CPC's report containing observations by delegations on it, should be transmitted to the UNHCR Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee, in October,⁽⁵⁾ requested the High Commissioner to keep the Subcommittee of the Whole on International Protection informed of progress and constraints in implementing the evaluation's protection-related recommendations. It asked UNHCR to present to the Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters its views on the evaluation's recommendations and CPC's comments, paying particular attention to the definition of a proper accountability framework for UNHCR, strategic planning and result-based management.

In April, the High Commissioner established the Working Group on Programme Management and Operational Capacity, which met during May and June and analysed UNHCR's programme management system and procedures, identified problems and suggested ways to improve programme delivery by simplifying procedures, delegating authority to the field and ensuring accountability for activities undertaken by programme managers. The High Commissioner endorsed the Working Group's recommendations in July, and a follow-up group composed of Headquarters staff was charged with their implementation.

UNHCR's evaluation activities during 1992/93 were outlined in a July report⁽⁶⁾ to its Executive Committee. UNHCR initiated a number of studies relating to durable solutions to refugee problems, including reviews of the repatriation and reintegration programmes for Cambodian and Nicaraguan refugees and studies on the follow-up to the 1989 International Conference on Central American Refugees and UNHCR's role in

formulating and implementing returnee aid and development programmes. In addition, UNHCR commenced a review of its operations in the former Yugoslavia in order to identify the principal lessons learned and examine the broader impact of the emergency on UNHCR activities. Other evaluations covered UNHCR's policy on refugee women, its role in protecting and assisting internally displaced persons, and its policy and practice with regard to refugee enumeration and statistics.

The evaluation strategy introduced at the beginning of 1993 consisted of four principal elements: contracting a greater amount of work to professional evaluation consultants; developing working relationships with research and policy institutes; identifying and training UNHCR staff members with demonstrated aptitude in the evaluation function; and establishing arrangements for seconding experienced staff from governmental evaluation agencies.

Enlargement of UNHCR Executive Committee

By a 3 June note verbale,⁽⁶⁾ Spain, noting the growing wave of refugees and displaced persons, particularly in Africa and Europe, and Spain's growing participation in UNHCR's operations and programmes, expressed the view that it should be included in the Executive Committee. It requested the Economic and Social Council to consider the question.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 29 July, the Economic and Social Council by **decision 1993/315**, took note of Spain's request⁽⁶⁾ and recommended that the General Assembly take a decision at its forty-eighth (1993) session on the question of increasing the membership of the Committee from 46 to 47 States.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On the recommendation of the Third Committee, the General Assembly on 20 December adopted **resolution 48/115** without vote.

Enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The General Assembly,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council decision 1993/315 of 29 July 1993 concerning the enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,

Taking note also of the note verbale dated 3 June 1993 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General relating to the enlargement of the Executive Committee,

1. Decides to increase the number of members of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United

Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from forty-six to forty-seven States;

2. Requests the Economic and Social Council to elect an additional member at its resumed organizational session in 1994.

General Assembly resolution 48/115

20 December 1993 Meeting 85 Adopted without vote

Approved by Third Committee (A/48/631) without vote, 19 November (meeting 38); 6-nation draft (A/C.3/48/L.24); agenda item 113.

Sponsors: Argentina, Belgium, Hungary, Japan, Philippines, Tunisia. Meeting numbers. GA 48th session: 3rd Committee 23-28, 33, 34, 38; plenary 85.

Financial and administrative questions

Contributions to UNHCR declined slightly in 1993 as funding needs swelled to unprecedented levels. Donors provided \$1.13 billion in cash and kind, compared with \$1.18 billion in 1992.⁽⁷⁾ The United Nations regular budget contribution to UNHCR was also down slightly from \$21.2 million in 1992⁽⁸⁾ to \$20.5 million.

UNHCR struggled during the year to meet a target of \$413 million for General Programmes, which represented core activities for refugees and provided flexibility to deal with emergencies and voluntary repatriations. At 31 December, the Office had received \$311 million for General Programmes compared with \$354 million the previous year. The shortfall was partially offset, however, by a carry-over of \$55 million from secondary income in the form of cancelled obligations from previous years, interest earnings and various transfers.

UNHCR's expenditures for 1993 amounted to \$1.3 billion; disbursements under the General Programme totalled \$392 million and those under Special Programmes \$915 million. Regional apportionments were as follows: Europe, \$585 million; Africa, \$325 million; Asia and Oceania, \$144 million; South-West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East, \$115 million; and the Americas and Caribbean, \$38 million.

Special operations accounted for almost two thirds of UNHCR's activities in 1993. Appeals were launched in conjunction with the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) for operations in the former Yugoslavia, the Afghan and Liberian repatriation programmes, and programmes in the Horn of Africa and the republics of the former USSR (for DHA activities, see PART THREE, Chapter III). The humanitarian relief operation in the former Yugoslavia accounted for some 40 per cent (\$533 million) of UNHCR's total assistance budget.

UNHCR issued its own appeals for Central America, the Mozambican repatriation, the Myanmar repatriation from Bangladesh (in conjunction with WFP), and a number of other emergency operations. By the end of 1993, the refugee crisis in Burundi had stretched the Office's emergency capacities to

the limit. UNHCR was able to mobilize a \$13 million three-country emergency response for life-saving operations in Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zaire in a matter of days, and in the course of the year it mobilized more than \$800 million for special operations, repatriations and emergencies, in addition to sums raised under General Programmes.

In October,⁽¹⁾ the Executive Committee approved country and area programmes and overall allocations for 1994 General Programmes amounting to \$418.5 million (including \$25 million for the Emergency Fund and \$20 million for the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation). It recognized that overall estimated financial requirements for Special Programme activities during 1994, subject to the availability of funds, would amount to some \$1.2 billion. It requested the Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters to review the financial and programmatic implications of current UNHCR activities, including information related to internally displaced persons.

A General Programmes budget target of \$418.5 million was set for 1994, with Special Programmes requirements conservatively estimated at \$780 million—a figure that covered only six-months of requirements for the former Yugoslavia.⁽⁷⁾

Accounts

1992 accounts

The audited financial statements on funds administered by UNHCR for the year ended 31 December 1992 showed total expenditures of \$1,072 million and total income of \$1,158 million, with a reserve balance of \$299,283.⁽⁹⁾

(For the Board of Auditors' recommendations, see PART FIVE, Chapter I.)

In **resolution 48/216 D** of 23 December, the General Assembly accepted the financial report of the Board of Auditors on UNHCR and a summary of its principal findings, conclusions and recommendations for remedial action,⁽¹⁰⁾ and approved the Board's recommendations and conclusions. It requested the Office of UNHCR to implement better financial management systems that would permit an effective and economic delivery of its programme and reduce a persistent over-obligation of funds.

Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters

The Executive Committee's Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters (Geneva, 1 October)⁽¹¹⁾ considered a broad range of issues,

including an update on UNHCR programmes and funding; voluntary repatriation; specific programme-related issues, including the summary report of the Working Group on Programme Management and Operational Capacity, UNHCR's emergency response capacity; the environmental management of refugee sites; UNHCR/World Food Programme (WFP) cooperation; evaluation activities; financial and management questions, including a proposal to create a position of Inspector of Operational Activities; and matters related to human resources.

REFERENCES

(1)A/48/12/Add.1. (2)A/48/12. (3)E/AC.51/1993/2. (4)A/48/16. (5)A/AC.96/809. (6)E/1993/88. (7)E/1994/41. (8)YUN 1992, p. 895. (9)A/48/5/Add.5. (10)A/48/230. (11)A/AC.96/820.

Refugee assistance and protection

Proposed conference on refugees

On 20 December, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third Committee, adopted **resolution 48/113** without vote.

Convening of a United Nations conference for the comprehensive consideration and review of the problems of refugees, returnees, displaced persons and migrants

The General Assembly,

Recalling the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees,

Taking into consideration the complexity and urgency of the global refugee crisis and the need for the international community to adopt a comprehensive approach for the coordination of action with regard to refugees, returnees, displaced persons and migrants,

Noting that the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held at Cairo from 5 to 13 September 1994, will address matters related to refugees, displaced persons and migrants,

Welcoming the continued work of the representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons,

Recognizing the need to develop innovative strategies, mechanisms and decisions in this field,

1. Takes note of the proposal to convene a United Nations conference for the comprehensive consideration and review of the problems of refugees, returnees, displaced persons and migrants;

2. Invites all Member States, the specialized agencies, other international organizations, concerned United Nations bodies, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations concerned to undertake reviews and submit recommendations to the Secretary-General with regard to the appropriateness of convening such a conference, taking into consideration, *inter alia*, the deliberations of the Cairo Conference, as well as the work of the representative of the Secretary-General;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session a report on the recommendations received pursuant to paragraph 2 above.

General Assembly resolution 48/113

20 December 1993 Meeting 85 Adopted without vote

Approved by Third Committee (A/48/631) without vote, 22 November (meeting 39); 7-nation draft (A/C.3/48/L.21/Rev.1); agenda item 113.

Sponsors: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Chile, Guyana, Philippines, Russian Federation, Tajikistan.

Meeting numbers. GA 48th session: 3rd Committee 23-28, 33, 34, 38, 39; plenary 85.

Assistance

During 1993, UNHCR's pursuit of a preventive and solution-oriented strategy resulted in its direct engagement in acute crisis or open conflict situations, with attendant risks to its staff and implementing partners. The sheer magnitude of these operations also stretched the capacity of the High Commissioner's Office to the limit, said a report to the General Assembly covering UNHCR activities in 1992/93.⁽¹⁾ It was noted that the ultimate success of the High Commissioner's three-pronged strategy of prevention, preparedness and solutions to refugee problems would depend on the United Nations' ability to develop comprehensive and integrated responses that linked humanitarian action and the protection of human rights with peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace building through governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partnerships.

While responding to refugee situations in countries of asylum during the year, UNHCR also focused on activities in countries of origin, seeking to prevent and contain refugee movements.

UNHCR began to provide assistance not only to refugees, returnees and displaced persons, but also, in the case of the former Yugoslavia, to people under direct threat of expulsion or persecution in the form of "ethnic cleansing". The Office addressed the needs of entire communities rather than focusing on individuals. Invoking the human right to remain in one's country of origin, it sought to ensure that people were not forced to flee in the first place.

A major lesson learned during this period of activity was the importance of political initiatives to resolve the causes of refugee problems and the link between refugees and international peace and stability. It was noted that humanitarian assistance could make an important contribution to reducing tensions and promoting reconciliation, but could not be a substitute for political solutions.

UNHCR's activities comprised emergency assistance, care and maintenance, voluntary repatriation, local settlement and resettlement.

The Office's emergency measures facilitated a timely response to an unprecedented number of new, and often concurrent, refugee emergencies around the globe. Emergency activities were financed from UNHCR's Emergency Fund and by special appeals. During 1993, expenditures under the Emergency Fund amounted to \$24.9 million, and Special Appeals were issued to cover emergency situations in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Benin, Burundi, Ghana and Tajikistan. In certain instances, UNHCR initially made recourse to the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF), administered by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs on behalf of the Secretary-General, in anticipation of funding from its own Special Appeals. Recourse was made to CERF for \$5 million to cover initial expenditures for the emergency in Tajikistan, \$2 million for Georgia and \$5 million for the Burundi emergency.

Following the emergency phase of an operation, the basic needs of refugees were met through care and maintenance assistance. Expenditures on such assistance in 1993 amounted to \$850.5 million, of which \$215.7 million came from General Programmes and \$634.9 million from Special Programmes. Large-scale care and maintenance programmes were administered in the former Yugoslavia and neighbouring countries (\$551 million); Ethiopia (\$12.4 million); Guinea (\$16.4 million); Kenya (\$54.7 million); and Malawi (\$26.3 million). In South-East Asia, a major programme for refugees from Myanmar was implemented in Bangladesh (\$17.8 million). Other care and maintenance programmes continued for Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong (\$14.7 million) and for refugees from the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar in Thailand (\$13 million). Expenditures for a programme established in 1993 for Afghan refugees in Pakistan totalled \$18.5 million.

UNHCR continued its efforts to provide durable solutions for refugees through voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement. In 1993, \$190.6 million was spent on voluntary repatriation, with more than 800,000 persons returning to their countries of origin under UNHCR-assisted programmes, most notably to Afghanistan, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Myanmar and Somalia. Repatriations included 747,600 persons returning to Afghanistan from India, Iran and Pakistan (479,600 of them assisted by UNHCR), 431,600 persons from Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania and other countries of asylum to Mozambique (18,000 assisted) and 239,800 persons from Iran and Turkey to Iraq (1,800 assisted). Expenditures on voluntary repatriation under both General and Special Programmes totalled \$190.6 million.

The Office supported the local settlement of refugees within host countries, either with a view to promoting local integration or self-sufficiency pending eventual repatriation. Some \$97.7 million was obligated for these purposes under General and Special Programmes combined. Organized settlements were supported in Benin, the Central African Republic, China, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, Senegal, Swaziland, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zaire and Zambia. Assistance included the promotion of agricultural activities, small-enterprise development, employment in public works projects, legal advice, counselling, education, vocational training and job placement.

More than 43,700 persons were registered by UNHCR for resettlement in third countries during the year. The main focus of resettlement activity was South-East Asia, where more than 19,000 people, mainly Vietnamese and Lao, were resettled under the Comprehensive Plan of Action, in Australia, Canada and the United States in particular. A number of refugees from the Middle East/South-West Asia (9,734) and Africa (9,406) were also resettled in third countries. A total of 13,375 citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina departed for resettlement or temporary protection. The United States received the highest number (21,137) of resettlement cases, followed by Canada (6,271) and Australia (3,648). Global expenditures on resettlement were estimated at \$11.5 million.

To address the environmental dimensions of refugee programmes in a systematic manner, the High Commissioner appointed a Senior Environmental Coordinator in 1993.

The High Commissioner was a member of the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee, established to ensure greater coordination of humanitarian assistance in the face of complex and protracted emergencies, as well as a stronger link between emergency relief, rehabilitation and development (see PART THREE, Chapter III).

Refugee/returnee aid and development

In 1993, UNHCR endeavoured to increase its cooperation with multilateral and bilateral development agencies and financial institutions. The High Commissioner observed⁽²⁾ that UNHCR's activities in support of local settlement and reintegration in particular, could only achieve sustainable results if they were integrated with, or complementary to, development activities.

A joint UNHCR/African Development Bank (AfDB) project, resulting from project identification missions in Mozambique in 1992,⁽³⁾ was expected to commence in 1995, and UNHCR continued to support the AfDB-financed South East Rangeland Rehabilitation Project in Ethiopia, for Ethiopian returnees from Somalia. The joint

UNHCR/International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) South Khorasan Rangeland Rehabilitation and Refugee Income-generating Project in Iran was in its final year and the third phase of the UNHCR/World Bank Income-generating Project for Refugee Areas in Pakistan continued to emphasize training relevant to repatriation.

A significant aspect of UNHCR's attempt to link its assistance to longer-term development activities was its use of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) to consolidate voluntary repatriation in returnee-impacted areas. They were also used to support the local integration of refugees in asylum countries when possible, to prevent or ease tensions between refugees and the local population. In 1993, QIPs were implemented in Belize, Cambodia, Ethiopia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Somalia and Sri Lanka.

Refugee women

An external evaluation of UNHCR's Policy on Refugee Women confirmed that progress had been made in different field offices. The evaluation stressed the importance of additional resources for refugee women, the integration of refugee women's issues into emergency response procedures, the development of a gender-based needs assessment, an increased focus on physical protection and expanded gender training.

A gender training course, "People Oriented Planning", was offered to UNHCR staff and implementing partners in various countries. NGO staff trained by UNHCR conducted their own training, thereby increasing course coverage. Some 500 people attended 22 training sessions during the year and a new programme handbook was made available to help staff use the gender analytic framework in their daily duties.

An extensive network was developed among Headquarters and field personnel to coordinate preparations for the 1995 World Conference on Women. Staff were asked to contribute information on refugee women for national reports and to ensure that relevant issues were raised in the preparatory conferences and in discussion of the Platform for Action.

Refugee children

Since about half the world's refugees were children in 1993, UNHCR was concerned that their special needs were met through appropriate protection and assistance. The importance of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child⁽⁴⁾ was stressed as a framework for protecting their best interests. In all actions concerning refugee children, UNHCR continued to give primary consideration to the preservation or restoration of family unity. The approach

had three elements: direct services to the child; help for the child through help for the family; and community services for families and children. The UNHCR Guidelines on Refugee Children, introduced in 1988,⁽⁵⁾ were reviewed in 1993 and a new version was scheduled for distribution in 1994.

Two areas of particular concern to UNHCR remained the nutritional well-being of refugee children and their access to education. A new Memorandum of Understanding between UNHCR and WFP aimed to improve their health and nutritional status and UNHCR's education budget for the year stood at \$45 million, including \$12 million funded through Special Appeals and the Emergency Fund. UNHCR collaborated with UNICEF, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and other organizations in support of primary and secondary schooling for displaced and refugee children in the former Yugoslavia. Teaching materials developed for UNESCO's Education for Peace initiative were used for Somali refugees in countries of asylum, as well as in UNHCR's cross border operations. UNHCR had established special stand-by arrangements with the NGO Radda Barnen whereby, with the assistance of trained community service workers, the needs of refugee children, especially the unaccompanied, were being addressed. In 1993, community workers participated in emergencies in Liberia, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

Regional assistance

Africa

During 1993, successive emergencies affected millions of drought victims, refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons in the Horn of Africa, Angola, Benin and Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and the Sudan. According to a report on UNHCR activities in Africa, submitted by the High Commissioner in August,⁽⁶⁾ the vast majority of refugees being protected and assisted by UNHCR were, as in previous years, destitute women and children, mainly of rural background. Among the reasons for increasing numbers of refugees in Africa were human rights violations, internal conflict and ethnic strife, extreme poverty caused by political and economic instability, famine, drought and environmental degradation.

The refugee situation in sub-Saharan Africa was characterized by conflict-induced displacements, many of which were exacerbated by adverse environmental conditions. As at 31 December, some 5.9 million Africans were refugees and another 15 million were internally displaced. Principal countries of asylum included the Sudan, which hosted some 745,200 refugees, mainly from Ethiopia and

Eritrea; Malawi, with some 713,600, mainly Mozambican, refugees; Guinea, with 656,700, mainly Liberian, refugees; and the United Republic of Tanzania, which had refugees from Burundi, Mozambique, Rwanda and Zaire.

Upheavals in Burundi provoked the most dramatic exodus of the year, with some 580,000 people driven to seek refuge in Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zaire. UNHCR administered refugee assistance programmes in all three countries, as well as in Burundi for a limited number of returnees from the United Republic of Tanzania and Rwanda. Elsewhere in eastern Africa, Sudanese continued to flow into Uganda, while Ethiopians and Somalis repatriated from Kenya. Some 3,000 new Sudanese refugees entered northern Uganda during the first quarter of 1993, and 18,000 Chadian refugees fled to the Central African Republic. There was however, encouraging progress as some 50,000 refugees were repatriated from Kenya to Ethiopia in the first quarter of the year, and a tripartite agreement was signed in February concerning the voluntary repatriation of Ethiopian refugees from the Sudan. Preparations for the voluntary repatriation of some 10,000 Ethiopians from camps in Djibouti were completed in December, but the repatriation of Ethiopians and Eritreans from the Sudan met with limited success and only 15,000 out of 50,000 Ethiopians returned.

The political crisis that affected Togo in 1992 resulted in the flight of some 250,000 refugees to Benin and Ghana during 1993 and, in May, UNHCR launched an appeal for \$9.9 million for an emergency relief programme. In the Upper Lofa area of Liberia where UNHCR operated an assistance programme for some 175,000 Sierra Leonean refugees and internally displaced persons, all activities were suspended in mid-December 1993 after a major assault by rebel forces. However, the Peace Agreement between the warring Liberian factions (Cotonou, Benin, 25 July⁽⁷⁾) improved prospects for the eventual return of 700,000 refugees (see PART TWO, Chapter I). Although conditions in Liberia and Sierra Leone were not yet conducive to the promotion of a large-scale voluntary repatriation exercise, UNHCR assisted in the repatriation of 6,413 Sierra Leoneans and 19,098 Liberians between October 1992 and January 1993 and provided emergency relief assistance to Sierra Leoneans in the country's interior.

Spontaneous, as well as organized, repatriation to Mozambique continued. At the end of 1993, some 500,000 Mozambicans had returned home following the General Peace Agreement of October 1992.⁽⁸⁾ Most returned from Malawi. A basic agreement with South Africa permitted UNHCR assistance to Mozambicans and the repatriation operation was expected to be completed in 1995.

In May, UNHCR launched a \$203.4 million appeal for the repatriation and reintegration of Mozambican refugees, of which \$55 million was needed for 1993.

In Angola, where continuing insecurity be-
 devilled efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance, UNHCR managed to assist 112,000 returnees and internally displaced persons. United Nations agencies were granted access for assistance purposes throughout Angola as of September, following efforts by the Secretary-General's Special Envoy. The UNHCR South African Repatriation Operation was concluded successfully in 1993, with more than 17,000 people having returned with UNHCR assistance.

Total 1993 expenditures in Africa amounted to \$325.1 million, of which \$188.5 million was spent under General Programmes and \$136.6 million under Special Programmes.

Report of the Secretary-General. In response to a 1992 General Assembly request,⁽⁹⁾ the Secretary-General presented an October report⁽¹⁰⁾ describing assistance by six bodies of the United Nations system—the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, WFP, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), UNHCR, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and IFAD—for African refugees, returnees and displaced persons.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 20 December, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third Committee, adopted **resolution 48/118** without vote.

Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 47/107 of 16 December 1992, Having considered the report of the Secretary-General and that of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,

Bearing in mind that most of the affected countries are least developed countries,

Convinced of the necessity of strengthening the capacity within the United Nations system for the implementation and overall coordination of relief programmes for refugees, returnees and displaced persons,

Welcoming the prospects for voluntary repatriation and durable solutions across the continent,

Recognizing the need for States to create conditions conducive to the prevention of flows of refugees and displaced persons and to voluntary repatriation,

Bearing in mind that the majority of refugees and displaced persons are women and children,

Noting with appreciation the commitment of the countries concerned to do their utmost to facilitate the provision of assistance to the affected populations and to take the necessary measures in this regard,

Realizing the importance of assisting the host countries, in particular those countries that have been hosting refugees for a long time, in remedying environmental de-

terioration and the negative impact on public services and the development process,

Recognizing the mandate of the High Commissioner to protect and assist refugees and returnees and the catalytic role she plays, together with the international community and development agencies, in addressing the broader issues of development relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons,

Bearing in mind the necessity of facilitating the work of humanitarian organizations, in particular the supply of food, medicine and health care to refugees, returnees and displaced persons, deploring acts of aggression against personnel of humanitarian organizations, particularly those acts that have led to the loss of life, and stressing the need to guarantee the safety of the personnel of those organizations,

Deeply concerned about the continuing critical humanitarian situation in African countries, in particular in the Horn of Africa, caused by persistent drought, conflict and population movements,

Conscious of the situation of the refugees, returnees and displaced persons in East and Central Africa,

Welcoming regional efforts, such as the mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at its twenty-ninth ordinary session, held at Cairo from 28 to 30 June 1993,

Taking into account resolution CM/Res.1448(LVIII) on refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa, adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its fifty-eighth ordinary session, held at Cairo from 21 to 26 June 1993,

Deeply concerned by the massive presence of refugees and externally displaced persons in Djibouti, which represents 25 per cent of the total population of the country, and by their uninterrupted influx due to the tragic situation in Somalia,

Deeply concerned also by the serious consequences of the presence of refugees and externally displaced persons for the already difficult economic and social situation in Djibouti, which is suffering from prolonged drought and the negative impact of the critical situation in the Horn of Africa,

Recognizing that more than half of the refugees and externally displaced persons in Djibouti are located in Djibouti City in most serious difficulties and without direct international assistance, exerting intolerable pressure on the limited resources of the country and the social infrastructure and causing, in particular, serious problems of security,

Also recognizing the need for cooperation between the Government of Djibouti and the High Commissioner and relevant organizations to find alternative solutions for the problem of refugees in Djibouti City and to be able to mobilize the necessary external assistance to meet their specific needs,

Aware that the refugee population in the refugee camps throughout Djibouti is in a precarious situation, facing the threat of famine, malnutrition and disease, and that it needs adequate external assistance for the provision of foodstuff, medical assistance and the necessary infrastructure for shelter,

Aware also that Eritrea has been devastated by a thirty-year war, which ended in May 1991, and repeated droughts over the years, that its economy and resources have been destroyed and that it is starting anew,

Recognizing the massive task facing Eritrea of repatriating over half a million refugees, particularly from the Sudan, through its Programme for Refugee Reintegration and Rehabilitation of Resettlement Areas in Eritrea, and resettling voluntary returnees already in the country, internally displaced persons and demobilized former combatants, and the enormous burden that this has placed on the Government of Eritrea,

Recognizing also the need for cooperation between the Government of Eritrea and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and relevant organizations to enable the mobilization of the necessary international assistance to put the programmes of human resettlement into action in Eritrea,

Deeply concerned about the massive presence of refugees, voluntary returnees, displaced persons and demobilized soldiers in Ethiopia and the enormous burden that this has placed on the country's infrastructure and meagre resources of the country,

Deeply concerned also about the grave consequences this has entailed for Ethiopia's capability to grapple with the effects of the prolonged drought and rebuild the country's economy,

Aware of the heavy burden placed on the Government of Ethiopia and of the need for immediate and adequate assistance to refugees, voluntary returnees, displaced persons, demobilized soldiers and victims of natural disasters,

Deeply concerned about the burden that has been placed on the Government and people of Kenya because of the influx of refugees fleeing the strife and famine that have stricken neighbouring countries and the infiltration of armed bandits and highly dangerous and illegal weapons from the situation obtaining in Somalia,

Aware of the need to improve the security situation in the region, particularly in the border areas, for the safety of the refugees, local community and personnel involved in humanitarian activities,

Recognizing the great contribution and sacrifices that the Government of Kenya has made and continues to make in dealing with this situation, while facing deteriorating conditions caused by the impact of the persistent drought that has affected and continues to affect its own population,

Emphasizing the importance and necessity of continuing assistance to the refugees and displaced persons in Kenya, until such time as this situation has changed,

Deeply concerned about the tragic impact that the civil war in Somalia continues to have on the lives of its people, affecting four to five million people who are either refugees in neighbouring countries or internally displaced and are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance,

Aware that the voluntary repatriation of large numbers of Somali refugees in neighbouring countries and elsewhere, as well as the return of internally displaced persons to their original homes, will still require a planned and integrated international assistance programme designed to cover their basic needs, ensure adequate reception arrangements and facilitate their smooth integration into their respective communities,

Convinced that it is necessary that humanitarian assistance to Somali refugees, returnees and displaced persons be mobilized urgently and delivered without delay in view of the deteriorating situation of the displaced

persons and returnees and the mounting pressure the refugees continue to place on the host countries,

Appealing to the Somalis to implement the Addis Ababa Agreement concerning national reconciliation which the Somali leaders signed on 27 March 1993 in order to create an environment conducive to the repatriation of Somali refugees from the neighbouring countries,

Recognizing that the Sudan has been hosting large numbers of refugees over an extended period of time,

Aware of the economic difficulties facing the Government of the Sudan and the need for adequate assistance for the refugees and displaced persons in the Sudan and the rehabilitation of the areas in which they are located,

Commending the Government of the Sudan and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the efforts they have undertaken for the voluntary repatriation of the large numbers of refugees to their homelands,

Deeply concerned about the plight of Sudanese refugee children, particularly the problem of unaccompanied minors, and emphasizing the need for their protection, well-being and reunification with their families,

Considering that the repatriation and reintegration of returnees and the relocation of displaced persons are aggravated by natural disasters and that the process poses serious humanitarian, social and economic problems for the Government of Chad,

Cognizant of the appeal to Member States and inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations to continue to provide the necessary assistance to the Government of Chad to alleviate its problems and improve its abilities to implement the programme of repatriation, reintegration and relocation of voluntary returnees and displaced persons,

Noting with appreciation the continuing efforts of the Economic Community of West African States and the Organization of African Unity to restore peace, security and stability in Liberia, and the signing at Cotonou, Benin, on 25 July 1993, of the peace agreement between the Interim Government of National Unity of Liberia, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia and the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy, as well as the establishment of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia, aimed at bringing an end to the conflict,

Deeply concerned about the influx of internally displaced persons, returnees and refugees to Monrovia and the enormous burden this has placed on the infrastructure and fragile economy of the country,

Also deeply concerned that, despite the efforts made to provide the necessary material and financial assistance for the refugees, returnees and displaced persons, the situation remains unsettled and has serious implications for the long-term national development of Liberia, as well as for those West African countries hosting Liberian refugees,

Bearing in mind the continuing need to provide emergency humanitarian assistance to Liberian refugees, returnees and displaced persons, since the security situation is not yet propitious for the conduct of large-scale voluntary repatriation and reintegration,

Recognizing the heavy burden placed on the people and Government of Malawi and the sacrifices they are making in caring for refugees, given the country's limited social services and infrastructure, and the need for

adequate international assistance to Malawi to enable it to continue its efforts to provide assistance to the refugees.

Gravely concerned about the continuing serious social, economic and environmental impact of the massive presence of refugees in Malawi, as well as its far-reaching consequences for the long-term development process and environmental effects,

Bearing in mind the findings and recommendations of the 1991 inter-agency mission to Malawi, particularly on the need to strengthen the country's socio-economic infrastructure in order to enable it to provide for the immediate humanitarian relief requirements of the refugees as well as on the long-term national development needs of the country,

Convinced that, because of the serious economic situation and, in particular, because of the effect of devastating drought in southern Africa, there is continued need for the international community to extend maximum and concerted assistance to southern African countries sheltering refugees, returnees and displaced persons,

Welcoming with appreciation the ongoing activities of the High Commissioner for the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of South African returnees, and hoping that the obstacles to the return of all refugees and exiles in conditions of safety and dignity will be removed without delay,

Recognizing the need to integrate refugee-related development projects in local and national development plans,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General and that of the High Commissioner for Refugees;

2. Commends the Governments concerned for their sacrifices, for providing assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and for their efforts to promote voluntary repatriation and other measures taken in order to find appropriate and lasting solutions;

3. Expresses deep concern at the serious and far-reaching consequences of the presence of large numbers of refugees and displaced persons in the countries concerned and the implications for the security environment and their long-term socio-economic development;

4. Expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner, the specialized agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, donor countries and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for their assistance in mitigating the plight of the large number of refugees, returnees and displaced persons;

5. Expresses the hope that additional resources will be made available for general refugee programmes to keep pace with refugee needs;

6. Appeals to Member States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to provide adequate and sufficient financial, material and technical assistance for relief and rehabilitation programmes for the large number of refugees, voluntary returnees and displaced persons and victims of natural disasters and to the affected countries;

7. Requests all Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to pay particular attention to the protection of special needs of refugee women and children;

8. Calls upon the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and United Nations humanitarian agen-

cies to continue their efforts to mobilize humanitarian assistance for the relief, repatriation, rehabilitation and resettlement of refugees, returnees and displaced persons, including those refugees in urban areas;

9. Requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to mobilize adequate financial and material assistance for the full implementation of ongoing projects in rural and urban areas affected by the presence of refugees, returnees and displaced persons;

10. Requests the High Commissioner to continue her efforts with the appropriate United Nations agencies, the Organization of African Unity and intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to consolidate and increase essential services to refugees, returnees and displaced persons;

11. Also requests the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive and consolidated report on the situation of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, under the item entitled "Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons, and humanitarian questions", and an oral report to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1994.

General Assembly resolution 48/118

20 December 1993 Meeting 85 Adopted without vote

Approved by Third Committee (A/48/631) without vote, 19 November (meeting 38); draft by Algeria on behalf of the African States (A/C.3/48/L.28), orally revised; agenda item 113.

Meeting numbers. GA 48th session: 3rd Committee 23-28, 33, 34, 38; plenary 85.

The Americas and the Caribbean

The High Commissioner reported⁽¹⁾ continued improvements in the refugee situation in the Americas during 1993, due to the success of regional peace initiatives and the follow-up process to the 1989 International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA). The consolidation of durable solutions for Central American refugees included the first organized return of several thousand Guatemalan refugees from Mexico; a decline in the number of Haitian refugee-seekers; and steady progress with the voluntary repatriation of Chilean and Surinamese refugees. UNHCR was, however, increasingly concerned at the arrival of asylum-seekers from outside the region, particularly from Africa and China.

In Canada, the introduction of a Bill in February 1993 laid the foundation for significant changes in refugee determination procedures, while in the United States, intense efforts were made to amend the Asylum Act, including measures to expedite exclusion procedures.

UNHCR expanded its activities in Brazil following an accelerated influx of asylum-seekers from Africa, mainly from Angola and Zaire. Democratic reforms in Chile continued to inspire the repatriation of refugees. UNHCR assisted the return of some 1,945 Chileans in 1993.

Despite ongoing problems, UNHCR assisted in the repatriation of 1,796 Haitians from the

Bahamas and Cuba. In February, 208 Haitians repatriated with the assistance of the Cuban Red Cross. Cuban authorities provided asylum to all Haitians who opted to remain in the country and a local integration programme for 46 Haitians in Isla de la Juventud was implemented by the Government. In the same period, 177 Chileans and 281 Salvadorians repatriated from Cuba. Also in February, the United States began in-country processing in Haiti for those who considered that their life or liberty was jeopardized by the country's political situation, but UNHCR did not consider this to be an alternative to the right to seek asylum and was monitoring the situation closely.

In Central America, UNHCR implemented QIP's in Belize, El Salvador and Guatemala and the first collective repatriation of 2,466 Guatemalan refugees was accomplished in January. UNHCR also supported the revision of CIREFCA projects to enhance their impact on refugee, returnee and displaced women in Central America and the implementation of an executive decree by Costa Rica that allowed 10,200 refugees to obtain residence status in the country. UNHCR's direct involvement in a \$12 million QIP programme in Nicaragua ended on 30 June.

Arrangements for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to assume the lead-agency role in CIREFCA on 1 July were confirmed at a high-level meeting between UNHCR, UNDP and the Office of the Secretary-General. UNHCR's component of the overall CIREFCA package for 1993/1994 was budgeted at some \$40 million.

In 1993, total UNHCR expenditure in the Americas and the Caribbean amounted to \$38.1 million, of which \$21.1 million was under General Programmes and \$16.9 million under Special Programmes.

Follow-up to the International Conference on Central American Refugees

In response to a 1992 General Assembly request,⁽¹²⁾ the Secretary-General submitted a September report on the CIREFCA follow-up process.⁽¹³⁾ He stated that, as a result of the Central American peace agreements and the CIREFCA process, almost 100,000 persons had been repatriated to El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua and the number of Central American refugees receiving international assistance had decreased by 50 per cent since 1989 to some 75,000.

Through CIREFCA programmes in the first quarter of 1993, UNHCR supported the local integration of Nicaraguans and Salvadorians in their countries of asylum (Belize and Costa Rica) as well as reintegration programmes in their countries of origin. The largest of those programmes was a \$12 million QIP which was concluded in Nicaragua in June. It directly benefited 70,000 returnees, demobilized combatants and local populations.

Since the QIP's inception in 1991, a total of 350 micro-projects had been implemented.

The Ninth Ministerial Conference between the European Community (EC) and Central American States (San Salvador, El Salvador, 22 and 23 February), issued a final communique that voiced support for CIREFCA by calling for increased resources for refugee and sustainable development programmes in the region.

A total of 153 projects, with total external funding requirements of \$335.7 million, had been recorded in seven countries since CIREFCA's inception in 1989. As at January 1993, \$240.1 million had been mobilized, of which 38 per cent was contributed through NGOs, 32 per cent through Governments of the region, 24 per cent through UNHCR and 6 per cent through other channels.

In October,⁽¹⁴⁾ the UNHCR Executive Committee reaffirmed its support for the efforts of Belize and Mexico in favour of uprooted populations, especially in the area of human rights. It urged the international community to develop innovative approaches that emphasized social programmes to combat extreme poverty in the transition from repatriation assistance to development cooperation. It reiterated its support for UNDP's lead-agency role, since July, and emphasized the importance of incorporating the needs of refugees, returnees and displaced populations into UNDP's post-CIREFCA strategy. It requested UNHCR and UNDP to convene jointly an informal technical meeting with this objective.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 20 December, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third Committee, adopted **resolution 48/117** without vote.

International Conference on Central American Refugees

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 42/1 of 7 October 1987, 42/110 of 7 December 1987, 42/204 of 11 December 1987, 42/231 of 12 May 1988, 43/118 of 8 December 1988, 44/139 of 15 December 1989, 45/141 of 14 December 1990, 46/107 of 16 December 1991 and 47/103 of 16 December 1992,

Bearing in mind that the International Conference on Central American Refugees is related to the initiative of the Central American Presidents expressed in the procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America, signed at the Esquipulas II summit meeting on 7 August 1987,

Also bearing in mind that the Central American Presidents, at the fourteenth summit meeting, held at Guatemala City from 27 to 29 October 1993, expressing the need to continue the transition from humanitarian assistance to development cooperation, decided to call upon the international community, especially the International Conference on Central American Refugees, which has carried out valuable work in that area, to continue its support for humanitarian and development programmes benefiting uprooted populations,

Recognizing the importance and validity of the Declaration and the Concerted Plan of Action in favour of Central American Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons, adopted at the International Conference on Central American Refugees held at Guatemala City in May 1989, and the Declarations of the First and Second International Meetings of the Follow-Up Committee of the Conference,

Recalling of the outcome of the meetings of the Follow-Up Committee of the International Conference on Central American Refugees, held at San Jose in April 1991, at San Pedro Sula, Honduras, in June 1991, at Tegucigalpa in August 1991, at Managua in October 1991, at San Salvador in April 1992 and at Managua in September and October 1992,

Taking note of the report of the Follow-Up Committee of the Conference, submitted to the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees at its forty-fourth session, concerning the implementation of the Concerted Plan of Action,

Noting with satisfaction the efforts being made by the Central American countries, Belize and Mexico to find lasting solutions to the problems of the refugees, returnees and displaced persons in implementing the aims and objectives of the Concerted Plan of Action as an integral part of efforts to achieve a firm and lasting peace and democratization of the region,

Welcoming with satisfaction the progress made in El Salvador in achieving the consolidation of peace in that country, in accordance with the peace agreements and the National Reconstruction Plan, the efforts to achieve peace and reconciliation in Guatemala and the efforts made in Nicaragua to achieve the objectives of national reconciliation and to assist the uprooted populations, all of which continue to encourage movements of voluntary repatriation and settlement of internally displaced persons,

Bearing in mind the joint political and economic communique adopted at the ninth Ministerial Conference by the States members of the European Community and Central America, the San Jose IX Summit held at San Salvador on 22 and 23 February 1993, and the joint declaration of the fourteenth summit meeting of Central American Presidents, held at Guatemala City from 27 to 29 October 1993, in which the need for international support for the programmes carried out within the framework of the International Conference on Central American Refugees was reaffirmed,

Recognizing the substantial support that, *inter alia*, the Secretary-General, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Programme, the donor community and national and international non-governmental organizations have given the Conference since its inception,

Also recognizing that the extension of the duration of the Concerted Plan of Action until May 1994 has enabled substantial progress to be made in the efforts to achieve the proposed objectives and aims,

Taking note of the transfer, on 10 July 1993, of the lead-agency role from the Office of the High Commissioner to the United Nations Development Programme in order to strengthen the Concerted Plan of Action,

Convinced that peace, development and democracy are essential in order to solve the problems of uprooted populations in the region,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General and that of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;

2. Notes with satisfaction the progress achieved in the implementation of programmes and projects within the framework of the International Conference on Central American Refugees, and expresses its appreciation to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Programme for their substantial support to the process, and for the invaluable contribution of non-governmental organizations;

3. Urges the Central American countries, Belize and Mexico to continue to implement and follow up the programmes benefiting refugees, returnees and displaced persons in accordance with their national development plans;

4. Reaffirms its conviction that the voluntary repatriation of refugees and the return of displaced persons to their countries or communities of origin continue to be a positive sign of the progress of peace in the region;

5. Also reaffirms its conviction that the processes of return to and reintegration in the countries and communities of origin should continue to take place in conditions of dignity and security and with the necessary guarantees to ensure that the affected populations are included in the respective national development plans;

6. Supports the special attention that the Central American countries, Belize and Mexico are giving to the particular needs of refugee, repatriated and displaced women and children and to the measures being adopted to protect and improve the environment and to preserve ethnic and cultural values;

7. Requests the Secretary-General, the Office of the High Commissioner, the United Nations Development Programme and other organs of the United Nations system to continue their support for and involvement in the follow-up, implementation and evaluation of the humanitarian programmes developed within the framework of the Conference process;

8. Emphasizes the importance of ensuring, upon the conclusion of the Conference process in May 1994, that the needs of refugees, returnees and displaced persons are specifically reflected in a comprehensive and sustained concept of human development and that the United Nations Development Programme, with the collaboration of the High Commissioner, continues to support this approach in the post-Conference strategy;

9. Expresses its conviction that the work carried out through the integrated Conference process could serve as a valuable lesson to be applied in other regions of the world;

10. Calls upon the international community, particularly the donor countries, to continue to strengthen their generous support for the Conference so as to consolidate the aims and objectives set at the Conference, and to continue to provide their valuable cooperation in the financing and implementation of the social and humanitarian programmes proposed for the period of transition to development, their own development programmes and those programmes relating to environmental protection which are designed to meet the needs of the uprooted populations;

11. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session a report on

the process of the International Conference on Central American Refugees, including an analysis of achievements, obstacles and pending tasks.

General Assembly resolution 48/117

20 December 1993 Meeting 85 Adopted without vote

Approved by Third Committee (A/48/631) without vote, 19 November (meeting 38); 30-nation draft (A/C.3/48/L.27); agenda item 113.

Sponsors: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Finland, France, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Peru, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Uruguay, Venezuela.

Meeting numbers. GA 48th session: 3rd Committee 23-28, 33, 34, 38; plenary 85.

East and South Asia and Oceania

Significant progress was made in repatriating refugees in the Asian subregions during 1993.

In South Asia, the signing of two Memoranda of Understanding between Bangladesh and Myanmar, at Dhaka on 12 May and at Yangon on 5 November, paved the way for the voluntary repatriation of some 250,000 refugees from Myanmar who had sought refuge in Bangladesh in 1991-1992. More than 50,000 had already returned spontaneously and preparations for a large-scale organized return movement of the remainder were at an advanced stage. The unsettled situation in northern Sri Lanka prevented UNHCR from actively promoting repatriation from India; however, it facilitated the return of those refugees who expressed a desire to go back and a total of 6,927 Sri Lankan refugees were repatriated during the year. The influx into Nepal of ethnic Nepalese from Bhutan had risen to 82,219 asylum-seekers in six camps in the south-eastern part of the country by 20 March, but scant progress was made towards a solution.

In South-East Asia, 132,000 Cambodians repatriated between January and April, bringing the number who had returned from Thailand and other countries since the start of the operation in March 1992 to some 387,000. Another 1,000 were repatriated from Indonesia. The reintegration effort was generally successful although problems were encountered with land-mines, the acquisition of land, and the attainment of self-sufficiency. As a result of renewed conflict between the Government and Khmer Rouge forces, thousands of Cambodian nationals were displaced within the country. Some 35,000 ethnic Vietnamese Cambodians escaping ethnic persecution were granted refuge in Viet Nam in early 1993, but some 6,000 persons remained stranded along the Cambodian/Vietnamese border despite negotiations to resolve the issue.

The implementation of the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese Refugees (CPA) continued with considerable success. Under CPA resettlement operations for Vietnamese and Lao refugees, 5,691 persons resettled during the first quarter of 1993. An understanding was reached

on 2 October between Indonesia, Viet Nam and UNHCR regarding the return, without the use of force, of all Vietnamese non-refugees from Indonesia. Following the successful completion of refugee status determinations for some 20,000 UNHCR-assisted Lao refugees in Thailand in October, efforts to voluntarily repatriate and resettle the remaining caseload were promoted vigorously. The Sixth Tripartite Meeting between the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand and UNHCR (Savannakhet, Lao People's Democratic Republic, July) reviewed progress and obstacles towards repatriation, including a shortage of suitable rural sites to absorb repatriation volunteers. According to information provided by the High Commissioner in August,⁽¹⁵⁾ all CPA parties agreed during the first half of 1993 to the repatriation of unaccompanied minors from Indonesia and Hong Kong to Viet Nam. The first of these children left Indonesia and Hong Kong under this family reunion operation in April and June, respectively.

In October,⁽¹⁴⁾ the Executive Committee expressed support for the continued voluntary repatriation programme to Viet Nam and urged all the parties concerned to reinforce their efforts for the return and reintegration of Lao refugees and asylum-seekers from Thailand and neighbouring countries. It called on the international community to continue to contribute generously to CPA until all its objectives had been achieved.

During 1993, total expenditures in Asia and Oceania amounted to \$144.4 million, of which \$58.4 million came under General Programmes and \$85.9 million under Special Programmes.

Europe

In Western Europe, the number of new asylum-seekers declined for the first time since 1987. The estimated number of new requests in 1993 was close to 550,000, compared with 680,000 in 1992. Refugee status was granted to some 50,000 asylum-seekers, while more than 400,000 applicants were rejected. Some 60,000 individual claimants were allowed to stay on humanitarian grounds. Member States of the European Union (formerly EC) persevered in their efforts to harmonize their asylum laws and policies. UNHCR continued to provide advice on the implementation of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees⁽¹⁶⁾ and its 1967 Protocol,⁽¹⁷⁾ and expressed concern whenever new legislative and administrative measures inclined towards a departure from Western Europe's liberal asylum traditions. While States increasingly relied on measures such as stricter border controls, visa obligations, air carrier sanctions and safe country of origin and first asylum concepts, UNHCR emphasized that such measures did not offer solutions

to the refugee problem, but made it increasingly difficult for persons in need of international protection to gain admission to safety and access to asylum procedures.

By April, seminars to promote refugee law and institution-building had been held in 11 countries for officials of the Ministries of Justice, Interior, Labour and Social Affairs, as well as for NGO representatives. The seminars were organized in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration and included representatives of the United Nations Human Rights Centre, the Council of Europe, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, as well as national experts from Western European refugee and immigration offices.

In Central and Eastern Europe, UNHCR continued to focus its activities on protection, the promotion of refugee law and institution-building, and the operation of limited assistance programmes. National Officer posts were created in cooperation with concerned Governments to pursue in-country legal and training activities, to counter xenophobic trends and to encourage a more positive approach to refugees. Meanwhile, Governments of the region sought to control migratory flows in transit through their territories. Most were seriously affected by events in the former Yugoslavia and provided temporary protection to substantial numbers of persons fleeing conflict areas.

UNHCR extended life-sustaining assistance in Armenia to some 140,000 ethnic Armenians fleeing Nagorny Karabakh, Sumgait and Baku. In Azerbaijan, more than 900,000 persons were displaced by the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. UNHCR's target population in Azerbaijan increased in less than a year from 53,000 to 300,000, including 185,000 Azeri refugees from Armenia. In Georgia, with a displaced population of some 300,000, UNHCR provided limited care and assistance programmes to internally displaced persons from Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as well as to a small number of returnees from North to South Ossetia.

According to an August report of the High Commissioner,⁽¹⁸⁾ the total affected population in the former Yugoslavia was more than 3.6 million at the end of June. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNHCR provided assistance to 2.74 million people, about 65 per cent of the total population. During 1993, 11 staff and staff associated with UNHCR lost their lives assisting victims of the conflict. The scope and magnitude of the emergency operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina reached unprecedented levels during the year. UNHCR launched appeals on 9 March for \$767.1 million to benefit an estimated 3.8 million people, and on 8 October for \$696.5 million to benefit 4.3 mil-

lion people. Airlifts to Gorazde, Maglaj, Sarajevo, Srebrenica and Zepa delivered thousands of metric tonnes of humanitarian relief supplies, food and medicine, and the medical evacuation programme from Sarajevo was a lifeline for serious cases. UNHCR's financial obligations for the Special Operation in the former Yugoslavia totalled \$284.6 million in 1993.

Expressing grave concern at the magnitude of the emergency in the former Yugoslavia, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see PART TWO, Chapter IV), the UNHCR Executive Committee, in October,⁽¹⁴⁾ urged all Governments and concerned parties to ensure implementation of the Comprehensive Response to the Humanitarian Crisis in the former Yugoslavia and to continue to contribute generously to the United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Programme of Action.

During 1993, UNHCR's total expenditure in Europe amounted to \$585.5 million, of which \$25 million was under General Programmes and \$560.4 million was under Special Programmes.

Azerbaijan refugee situation

In two communications dated 15 November,⁽¹⁹⁾ Azerbaijan informed the Secretary-General that, as a result of an intensified offensive by Armenia in the south-west of Azerbaijan, more than 37,000 persons had fled their homes since 1 November, in addition to the one million people already displaced from territory occupied by Armenian armed forces. Many refugees had been forced to cross the Araks river into Iran, while others had settled in an overcrowded refugee camp in the Imisli district of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan noted that snow had fallen throughout the country and temperatures had reached freezing point, creating a desperate need for shelter and food so that the refugees could survive the winter. The Azerbaijani authorities appealed for foreign aid to avoid a catastrophe.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 20 December, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third Committee, adopted **resolution 48/114** without vote.

Emergency international assistance to refugees and displaced persons in Azerbaijan

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions regarding humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced persons,

Having considered the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,

Recognizing the catalytic role that the High Commissioner plays, together with the international community and development agencies, in the promotion of humanitarian aid and development with a view to finding durable and lasting solutions for refugees and displaced persons,

Expressing its grave concern at the continuing deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Azerbaijan owing to the displacement of large numbers of civilians,

Welcoming the efforts made by the United Nations interim office and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Azerbaijan to coordinate the needs assessment and the provision of humanitarian assistance,

Welcoming also the consolidated United Nations inter-agency humanitarian programme for Azerbaijan for the period 1 July 1993 to 31 March 1994,

Expressing its appreciation to the States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations that have responded positively and continue to respond to the humanitarian needs of Azerbaijan, and to the Secretary-General and United Nations bodies for mobilizing and coordinating the delivery of appropriate humanitarian assistance,

Also expressing its appreciation to the Governments of the neighbouring States that provide the necessary humanitarian assistance, including the provision of accommodation and transit routes through their territories for the displaced persons from Azerbaijan,

Noting with alarm that the humanitarian situation in Azerbaijan has continued to deteriorate seriously since the adoption of the programme in June 1993 and that the number of refugees and displaced persons in Azerbaijan has recently exceeded one million,

Aware that the refugees and displaced persons are in a precarious situation, facing the threat of malnutrition and disease, and that appropriate external assistance is needed for the provision of foodstuffs, medical aid and the necessary shelter for the winter,

Deeply concerned about the enormous burden that the massive presence of refugees and displaced persons has placed on the country's infrastructure,

Affirming the urgent need to continue international action to assist Azerbaijan in providing shelter, medication and food to the refugees and displaced persons, especially to the most vulnerable groups,

1. Welcomes with appreciation the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General in drawing the attention of the international community to the acute problems of the Azerbaijani refugees and displaced persons and in mobilizing assistance for them;

2. Urgently appeals to all States, organizations and programmes of the United Nations, specialized agencies and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to provide adequate and sufficient financial, medical and material assistance to the Azerbaijani refugees and displaced persons;

3. Invites the international financial institutions and the specialized agencies, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, where appropriate, to bring the special needs of the Azerbaijani refugees and displaced persons to the attention of their respective governing bodies for their consideration and to report on the decisions of those bodies to the Secretary-General;

4. Invites the Secretary-General to continue to monitor the overall situation of refugees and displaced persons in Azerbaijan and to make available his good offices as required;

5. Requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to continue her efforts with the appropriate United Nations agencies and intergovernmental,

governmental and non-governmental organizations, in order to consolidate and increase essential services to refugees and displaced persons in Azerbaijan;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution.

General Assembly resolution 48/114

20 December 1993 Meeting 85 Adopted without vote

Approved by Third Committee (A/48/631) without vote, 22 November (meeting 39); 24-nation draft (A/C.3/48/L.23/Rev.1); agenda item 113. Sponsors: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Costa Rica, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Republic of Moldova, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, Yemen. Meeting numbers. GA 48th session: 3rd Committee 23-28, 33, 34, 38, 39; plenary 85.

South-West As/a, North Africa and the Middle East

In South-West Asia, over 4 million Afghans remained in exile (2.5 million in Iran and 1.5 million in Pakistan) at the beginning of 1993 as internecine conflict in Afghanistan continued to undermine efforts to form a broad-based central Government and clouded prospects for a full-scale repatriation. The return of Afghan refugees from Iran and Pakistan slowed during the year, with 468,894 individuals repatriating with UNHCR assistance and an additional 400,000 returning spontaneously. The Afghan refugee population in Iran declined from 2.7 million to 1.8 million between December 1992 and the end of 1993. UNHCR was the lead agency in northern Afghanistan, coordinating assistance to 15,000 displaced persons from the capital who resided in five camps and numerous public locations. Some 23,000 Afghan repatriates who returned from Pakistan during January and February benefited from a UNHCR assistance package consisting of a cash grant and wheat provided by WFP. The number of camp administration units operating in Pakistan was more than halved from 347 before the 1992 mass repatriation⁽²⁰⁾ to 145. UNHCR expenditure in 1993 for voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees came to \$31.7 million.

The UNHCR Executive Committee, in October,⁽¹⁴⁾ urged the international community to contribute generously to humanitarian programmes in Afghanistan and to the ongoing repatriation operation from Pakistan and Iran.

The easing of the civil war in Tajikistan, which in 1992 had led to the displacement of some 500,000 persons (over 60,000 of whom fled to Afghanistan), enabled about half of the refugees and 80 per cent of the displaced persons to return home. The spontaneous and assisted repatriation of Tajik refugees began shortly after an amnesty agreement and the first meeting of the Quadripartite Commission on Repatriation

comprising Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and UNHCR. Some 13,000 refugees returned spontaneously to Tajikistan and an additional 17,000 returned with UNHCR assistance, primarily to Piandj and Gorno-Badakhshan.

In an 11 January letter,⁽²¹⁾ Afghanistan advised the Secretary-General of an exodus of people from Tajikistan to Afghanistan where they were living under very difficult circumstances. Faced with an extremely difficult financial situation after 14 years of war, the Government of Afghanistan sought emergency United Nations assistance for the Tajik refugees in the form of food, clothing, medicines and shelter. The High Commissioner reported⁽²²⁾ that, following a November 1992 United Nations assessment mission, a joint appeal was launched in January 1993 for \$7.8 million—a figure that was later increased to \$19.5 million. UNHCR dispatched its first emergency teams to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in January and launched an emergency operation aimed at preventing further population movements and at assisting the return of internally displaced persons and refugees to their places of origin. The first phase of the emergency assistance programme, involving the transportation of relief supplies by air from Pakistan and Turkey, was completed by June. The second phase involved the regional procurement of building materials for the repair and reconstruction of some 17,000 houses and the provision of supplementary food, fuel and other non-food items. In 1993, expenditures for Tajik refugees in Afghanistan came to \$3.9 million. Total UNHCR obligations for Central Asia amounted to \$8.7 million.

In January, Iraqi authorities formally requested UNHCR to increase its assistance to 22,500 Iranian refugees at the Al-Tash camp to hasten the voluntary repatriation of approximately 13,000 persons and to provide resettlement opportunities for those unable or unwilling to return to their homeland. UNHCR also continued its assistance programme for some 67,000 Iraqi Kurds and 42,000 Iraqi Shiites. Some 7,000 Iraqis from the southern marshes had sought asylum in Iran since June. When fighting erupted in Azerbaijan in August, Iran helped to transport some 50,000 Azerbaijanis, who crossed into its northern border areas, to take refuge in the safer eastern part of Azerbaijan where seven camps were established. UNHCR provided limited assistance to the group during transportation. In September, the Office initiated a pilot project that covered food, shelter and economic integration for the return of up to 10,200 Iraqi Kurds from neighbouring countries. Some 7,000 individuals were repatriated under the project. UNHCR continued to assist 3,800 Iranian refugees in Iraq's three northern governorates; 20,690 Iranian refugees in the Al-Tash camp in the Al Anbar governorate; 20,000 Iranian Ahwazi

refugees in the Wasit and Misan governorates and some 1,200 urban refugees of various nationalities. Saudi Arabia hosted and provided a range of assistance to 24,025 Iraqi refugees located in Rafha camp and, at year's end, the Syrian Arab Republic was hosting a refugee population of 37,100 persons, comprising 35,250 Iraqis, 1,250 Somalis, 300 Eritreans and 300 nationals of other countries. Since the influx to Syria from Iraq began, some 3,000 persons had repatriated voluntarily. UNHCR assisted 3,850 persons in the El Hol refugee camp and to needy urban refugees in Damascus through the Syrian Red Crescent Society.

In Yemen, some 11,300 Somali refugees were moved with UNHCR assistance in May from the Madinat Al Shaab camp (Aden) to the newly constructed Al Khoud camp in the Abyan governorate. Another 1,500 Somalis, who received monthly WFP food rations, were located in the Shihir and Sacar camps at Mukallah. While 512 Somalis from areas other than Mogadishu registered for repatriation, the prevailing insecurity in Somalia prevented their return. Among the 1,025 Ethiopian refugees in Yemen, 262 civilian and ex-navy personnel repatriated in 1993. Total UNHCR obligations in 1993 for Yemen amounted to \$3.5 million.

At the request of the Algerian Government, UNHCR began an assistance programme on 1 January for the neediest 9,000 of some 50,000 refugees from Mali and Niger in the southern Algerian provinces of Adrar, Illizi and Tamanrasset. Total 1993 obligations for Algeria, including assistance to Sahraoui refugees, amounted to \$4.3 million.

During the first six months of the year, the caseload of Malian refugees entering Mauritania reached 42,000 people. Within the framework of the "Pacte national", signed in April 1992 between Mali and the Mouvements et Fronts unifiés de l'AZAWAD, the Office commenced work in March on a comprehensive plan for the repatriation of Malians willing to return to their homeland. A first group of 6,500 refugees was registered for repatriation at year's end. Allocations for some 38,000 Malian refugees in Mauritania totalled \$4.3 million.

Total expenditure in 1993 in South West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East amounted to \$115.4 million, of which \$57.6 million were disbursed under General Programmes and \$57.8 million under Special Programmes.

Refugee protection

UNHCR's main functions on behalf of refugees were to provide international protection and promote durable solutions to their plight. In cases where

direct or indirect obstacles were placed in the way of refugee safety and recognition, UNHCR intervened with the authorities to secure the immediate safety of the refugee or asylum-seeker and to interpret certain doctrines enshrined in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees⁽¹⁶⁾ and other instruments. The Office's promotional activities sought to strengthen knowledge and understanding of refugee issues, as well as to foster the effective implementation of international legal standards on behalf of refugees, returnees and other persons. The development of model legislation on refugees was at the core of a cooperation project between UNHCR, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee. UNHCR participated actively in the World Conference on Human Rights in June (see PART THREE, Chapter X) to ensure that the Vienna Declaration noted the close link between human rights and refugee protection.

In an August note on international protection,⁽²³⁾ the High Commissioner presented a detailed review and analysis of current issues relating to refugee protection, including principles and other aspects of asylum and non-refoulement; respect for human rights; protection of the internally displaced; protection in situations of conflict; and voluntary repatriation. It concluded that the international protection of refugees would be impossible without the cooperation of States in a spirit of international solidarity and burden-sharing, both in providing asylum to those in need and in fostering solutions to refugee problems.

The UNHCR Executive Committee noted with appreciation the continued observance of international protection principles, and commended, in particular, developing countries with limited resources, which hosted the majority of the world's refugees. The Committee⁽¹⁴⁾ underlined the importance of establishing and ensuring access for all asylum-seekers to fair and efficient procedures for the determination of their refugee status and stressed the importance of adopting common criteria, in consultation with UNHCR, to determine responsibility for considering an application for asylum.

The Committee adopted a general conclusion on the personal security of refugees which deplored violence, intimidation, military or armed attacks, forced recruitment and arbitrary or inhumane conditions of detention. It called on States to adopt measures to prevent or remove such threats. In addition to the need to site refugee settlements securely and to ensure unhindered access by UNHCR and other organizations, States were called on to investigate abuses.

The UNHCR Centre for Documentation on Refugees, which provided authoritative and rele-

vant refugee literature and legal and country information, expanded its services and responded to more than 1,700 information requests. All databases were updated and transferred to the UNHCR local area network for easy access. A pilot project was initiated to test the possibilities for granting external access in the near future. Publication of the quarterly Refugee Abstracts was suspended temporarily for revision. Collaboration continued with the *International Journal of Refugee Law*, published by Oxford University Press.

International instruments

As at 31 December 1993, the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees⁽¹⁶⁾ had 121 States parties. Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Bahamas, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Slovakia and Tajikistan became parties in 1993. The 1967 Protocol⁽¹⁷⁾ to the Convention also had 121 States parties, with the same States, with the exception of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, becoming parties in 1993.⁽²⁴⁾

Other intergovernmental legal instruments of benefit to refugees included the 1969 OAU Convention governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, the 1957 Agreement relating to Refugee Seamen and its 1973 Protocol, the 1959 European Agreement on the Abolition of Visas to Refugees, the 1980 European Agreement on Transfer of Responsibility for Refugees, and the 1969 American Convention on Human Rights, Pact of San Jose, Costa Rica.

As at 31 December 1993,⁽²⁴⁾ there were 40 States parties to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons⁽²⁵⁾ and 16 States parties to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.⁽²⁶⁾

Nansen Medal

The Nansen Medal for 1993—presented since 1954 in honour of Fridtjof Nansen, the first League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees—was awarded to the NGO, Médecins sans Frontières, in recognition of its exceptional service to refugees.

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