

East Asia and the Pacific

A woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a white short-sleeved button-down shirt, looks directly at the camera with a neutral expression. She is in a crowded indoor space, possibly a community center or office, with other people in the background. Some people are wearing blue shirts. A green 'EXIT' sign is visible above a doorway in the background. The lighting is warm and indoor.

Australia
China
Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Japan
Mongolia
New Zealand
Pacific Island Countries
Papua New Guinea
Republic of Korea



| Working environment |

The East Asia and the Pacific subregion presents diverse challenges for UNHCR, as well as opportunities. In China, the need for the enactment and implementation of national asylum legislation requires sustained advocacy efforts and technical advice. A recently adopted Exit-Entry Administration Law will come into force in July 2013. In the Hong Kong SAR (China), while there are no national laws that provide protection specifically for refugees, a Memorandum of Understanding between the authorities and UNHCR has improved the protection of asylum-seekers and refugees.

In Mongolia, UNHCR is advising the Government on how to build its national capacity in anticipation of the country's accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention. Meanwhile, the

National Assembly of the Republic of Korea has passed a new refugee law which will come into force in July 2013. This landmark legislation will not only strengthen Korea's domestic asylum system, it will also have a positive impact on refugee protection in the East Asia region as a whole.

Vietnamese refugees at a ceremony marking their receipt of citizenship in Papua New Guinea.

East Asia and the Pacific

In November 2011, to mark the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Convention and the 30th anniversary of Japan's accession to it, both Houses of the Japanese Parliament unanimously adopted a resolution confirming the country's continuing commitment to refugee protection. Subsequently, a ground-breaking cooperation framework on asylum issues, and alternatives to detention in particular, was adopted by the Ministry of Justice and key civil society organizations.

The Government of Japan has extended the term of a pilot resettlement project by two years. It has expanded the resettlement selection sites to two other refugee camps in Thailand and established an Experts Council to discuss the way forward after the pilot phase.

The increasing number of asylum-seekers coming by boat to Australia, and several major tragedies involving loss of life at sea, have stirred vigorous public debate in the country. This has led to the introduction of tougher policies aimed at deterring asylum-seekers from taking dangerous boat journeys. In August 2012, Australia passed legislation to allow the transfer of asylum-seekers arriving by boat to third countries, including Nauru and Papua New Guinea, where their claims for protection will be assessed. At the same time, Australia has committed itself to longer-term investment and cooperation in South-East Asia. It is also currently implementing an increase in its annual humanitarian intake to 20,000.

In mid-2012, New Zealand introduced legislation designed to respond to the possibility of asylum-seekers arriving by boat. A new national settlement strategy for the 750 refugees resettled by New Zealand each year is also being implemented.

In Papua New Guinea (PNG), there has been gradual progress towards improving refugee protection, with a policy submission for the withdrawal of the seven reservations to the 1951 Convention tabled by the National Executive Council, and referred to the new Government for decision.

Japan, Australia, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea have all maintained or increased their generous contributions to UNHCR, with Australia and Japan making record-high contributions in 2011. Greater efforts in private-sector fund raising in Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Hong Kong SAR (China) have yielded positive results, and this trend is expected to continue.

| Strategy |

UNHCR will continue to advocate for improved protection of all people of concern, respect of the principle of *non-refoulement*, alternatives to detention, unhindered access to asylum, high-quality refugee status determination (RSD) procedures and



expanded opportunities for durable solutions. It will also advocate for better opportunities for livelihoods and integration for urban refugees, improved reception conditions, and the prevention of statelessness.

Offices in Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia and China will continue working on strengthening public support for refugee issues. They will also intensify their efforts to raise funds from public and private sources in these countries, including through the development of existing and new partnerships with state and civil society actors.

| Constraints |

UNHCR's efforts to promote a more favourable protection environment in East Asia and the Pacific continues to be challenged by States' still limited understanding of the protection dimension of population displacement issues and a general orientation to deal with refugees from a narrow national security and border control angle. Under these circumstances, the legitimate concerns of governments related to curbing and

containing irregular migration, smuggling and human trafficking have an impact on the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers in the region in a situation of mixed migration flows. Limited state ownership of asylum processes and social support initiatives on behalf of refugees and asylum-seekers in South East Asia countries exacerbates regional unbalances, which further encourage onward movements. Challenges remain in ensuring entry to territory and access to asylum procedures as well as the provision of proper reception conditions at points of entry. Furthermore, the detention of asylum-seekers and refugees, including children and vulnerable groups, remains cause for disquiet. Limited livelihood opportunities increase the vulnerability of refugees and asylum-seekers in urban areas.

| Operations |

In **China**, UNHCR will continue to advocate for respect for the principle of *non-refoulement*, undertake RSD under its mandate and identify durable solutions for all people of concern, while lobbying for the enactment of national refugee legislation and policies in accordance with international refugee law. UNHCR will continue to provide life-sustaining assistance to refugees pending the implementation of appropriate durable solutions, including accommodation, living allowances and access to basic health care. It will also continue its efforts to raise public awareness on refugee issues. In the **Hong Kong SAR (China)**, UNHCR's focus will be on strengthening its partnerships with the authorities and civil society.

In **Mongolia**, UNHCR will undertake training and other capacity-building activities to assist government institutions, civil society and academia to promote refugee law principles in preparation for the country's accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention.

In the **Republic of Korea**, UNHCR will work with the Ministry of Justice and civil society to assist the Government to draft a robust Presidential Decree ahead of the enforcement of the Refugee Act in July 2013. In particular, UNHCR will emphasize the need for clear asylum procedures at points of entry to ensure that the principle of *non-refoulement* is respected.

UNHCR will increase its engagement with NGO partners and continue to expand the network of service providers in order to address the most pressing needs of asylum-seekers and refugees more effectively until relevant Government programmes are introduced. A Government-run refugee reception centre is expected to be completed in 2013. UNHCR will strengthen its efforts to mobilize resources from the private sector in Korea by expanding its individual giving programmes through face-to-face and online fund raising channels. In order to diversify its donor base, UNHCR will also start fund-raising among corporations and foundations in 2013.

In **Japan**, UNHCR will build on the positive developments achieved so far and assist the Government, in close cooperation with key stakeholders, to develop a comprehensive asylum process. UNHCR will not only strengthen its cooperation with the immigration authorities to build their capacity but also develop a strategy on asylum that looks at every aspect of the process from reception to local integration. UNHCR will undertake a wide range of awareness-raising activities in partnership with the national association and partners such as

the clothing retailer Fast Retailing (UNIQLO), including collaborative internship programmes, school outreach activities and public events such as the Refugee Film Festival.

In **Australia** and **New Zealand**, UNHCR's focus will be on monitoring policy and legislation to ensure that asylum space is maintained and that compliance with the Refugee Convention continues. UNHCR will monitor the quality of decision-making and jurisprudence on asylum, and will advocate for the expanded use of alternatives to detention that Australia has been increasingly relying on – such as its community detention programmes.

UNHCR will work with Australia and New Zealand to maximize the use of resettlement as a strategic protection tool and burden-sharing mechanism, particularly as Australia moves to increase its annual humanitarian intake to 20,000 by July 2013. UNHCR will closely monitor any bilateral arrangements involving the transfer of asylum-seekers, including those agreed to in 2012 by Australia and Nauru as well as Australia and Papua New Guinea, to ensure such arrangements include fundamental protection principles in both their letter and their implementation.

The engagement of Australia and New Zealand under the Regional Cooperation Framework (RCF) and by the new Regional Support Office (RSO) will continue to be strongly supported by UNHCR, which will advocate for long-term regional cooperation on the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers in the region. UNHCR will also promote public awareness of asylum issues to optimize support from public and private donors in Australia and New Zealand.

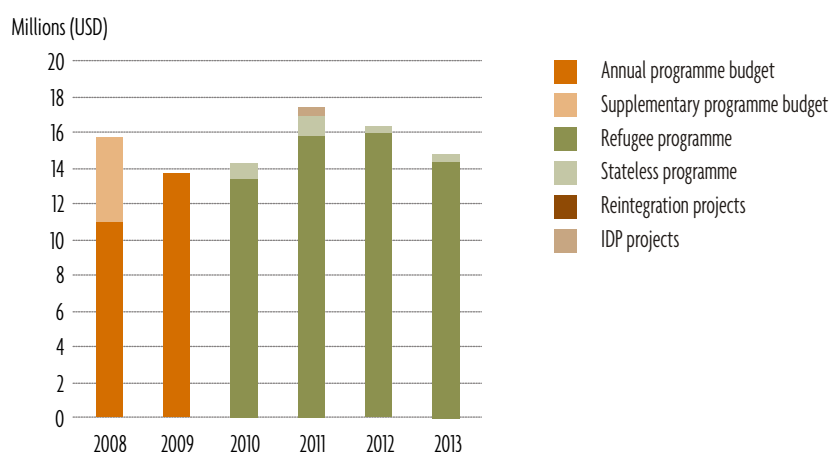
In the **Pacific Island Countries**, UNHCR will provide practical support to States to introduce protection safeguards in immigration procedures, and continue to provide support in the areas of RSD and training. Under the Pacific region protection cluster, UNHCR, in coordination with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, will support efforts to integrate protection considerations into the responses to natural and man-made disasters.

UNHCR's Branch Office in **Papua New Guinea (PNG)** will be closed by the end of 2012. UNHCR will maintain a staff presence in the country with the PNG programme being supported by the Regional Office in Canberra, Australia. Where necessary, UNHCR will continue to provide limited material assistance to non-Melanesian refugees in urban areas. Public awareness activities will be undertaken in cooperation with government counterparts to support on-going legal initiatives.

| Financial information |

UNHCR's 2013 budget reflects the comprehensive needs of the populations of concern in East Asia and the Pacific, while taking into account implementation capacity. Though the overall requirements for the sub-region have come down since 2011, the budget in 2013 will enable UNHCR to maintain its capacity to address the protection and assistance needs of populations of concern, carry out key advocacy activities and develop innovative regional approaches to the management of mixed migration flows.

UNHCR's budget in East Asia and the Pacific 2008 – 2013



UNHCR's budget in East Asia and the Pacific (USD)

OPERATION	2012 REVISED BUDGET (as of 30 June 2012)	2013		
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	TOTAL
Australia Regional Office ¹	2,144,316	2,859,382	0	2,859,382
China Regional Office ²	5,765,054	4,211,144	152,574	4,363,718
Japan	4,758,452	4,430,057	48,176	4,478,233
Papua New Guinea ³	1,375,249	0	0	0
Republic of Korea	2,152,250	2,352,304	187,348	2,539,652
Regional activities	412,770	600,000	0	600,000
Total	16,608,090	14,452,888	388,098	14,840,986

¹From 2013, Papua New Guinea will be reported under the Australia Regional Office.

²Provides support to Mongolia.

³From 2013, Papua New Guinea will be reported under the Australia Regional Office.