

**FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADOPTION OF THE  
1951 CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES**

***Resolution adopted without a vote by the IPU Council at its 168<sup>th</sup> session  
(Havana, 7 April 2001)***

The Inter-Parliamentary Council,

*Recalling* previous resolutions of the Inter-Parliamentary Union on the subject of refugees and, in particular, those adopted by the 99<sup>th</sup> Conference in Windhoek (April 1998) and the 103<sup>rd</sup> Conference in Amman (May 2000),

*Noting* that 2001 will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees which, together with its 1967 Protocol, are the most broadly accepted foundation instruments of the international protection regime,

*Recalling* that these two global instruments are complemented by the 1967 Declaration on Territorial Asylum, the 1969 OAU Convention governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa and the 1984 Cartagena Declaration which is used throughout the Latin American region, as well as the conclusions of UNHCR's Executive Committee, which also form part of the international refugee protection regime,

*Aware* of the need to develop new approaches, tools and standards to ensure the continuing vitality and relevance of the Refugee Convention, against a background of debate around large and protracted refugee situations, the high costs of asylum seekers in industrialised countries, the burden on developing countries hosting refugees, and the real or perceived abuse of asylum seekers,

*Alarmed* at the expanding number of refugees around the world and their terrible plight as well as the growing challenge faced by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which is the key institution mandated to secure respect for the Refugee Convention by offering both legal protection to refugees and material relief in major emergencies,

*Convinced* that the first ever meeting of States Parties to be jointly organised by the Swiss Government and the UNHCR in December 2001 will serve both to reinforce a truly global and meaningful commitment to the foundation principles, and contribute to the search for complementary and compatible new approaches, particularly on the basis of the outcome of the global consultations launched by the UNHCR to revitalise international refugee protection,

1. *Reaffirms* that the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol constitute the foundation of international refugee law and as such are pivotal in securing refugee protection;
2. *Urges* States that have not yet adhered to the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol to consider doing so as soon as possible, and *calls on* their respective parliaments to consider taking appropriate measures to this effect;
3. *Urges* parliaments to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the 1951 Refugee Convention in any appropriate manner, for example, by holding a debate on the refugee issue;

4. *Encourages* all parliaments to take an interest in and contribute to the Global Consultations on international protection undertaken by the UNHCR and their subsequent follow-up with a view to consolidating the international refugee protection regime by a strengthened and more effective implementation of the Convention;
5. *Urges* all parliaments to ensure that the need for providing adequate financial resources to national institutions and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is explicitly addressed when parliament examines and adopts the national budget;
6. *Welcomes* the UN General Assembly resolution adopted on 4 December 2000 deciding that, as of 20 June 2001, the date of 20 June will be commemorated as "World Refugee Day", and *encourages* parliaments to engage in activities supporting refugees on that day;
7. *Welcomes* the forthcoming joint publication by the IPU and the UNHCR of a handbook for parliamentarians on international refugee law as part of a consolidated institutional partnership to be further developed and strengthened in the years ahead.