

ECUADOR

| Working environment |

• The context

Ecuador continues to host the largest number of refugees in Latin America. The vast majority of them (97 per cent) are Colombians who fled their country over the past decade. This includes some 135,000 Colombians in need of international protection, 72,000 of whom have never been registered. Furthermore, there is a backlog of approximately 37,000 cases for refugee status determination (RSD).

Ecuador has taken a comprehensive approach to the protection challenges arising from the conflict in Colombia. Last year, the Government adopted a new asylum policy, and March 2009 saw the launch of a large-scale project to register, document and identify those in need of international protection, who had until then remained “invisible”. This registration project will continue to be the cornerstone of the protection programme in Ecuador.

The Government’s registration project goes hand-in-hand with the improvements to the asylum regime and the promotion of durable solutions. In 2008, the adoption of a new Constitution led to an intensive process of legislative reform, including in areas relating to asylum. UNHCR is currently providing technical advice to different actors participating in the elaboration of the Migration Code. The Office also took part in the elaboration of the amended Refugee Decree.

The asylum capacity in Ecuador has improved with the opening of a field location of the Government’s Refugee Directorate at the northern border, and the strengthening of its Refugee Office in Quito. The latter addresses the large number of pending asylum claims in the capital and will reduce the waiting period between asylum interviews and decisions.



Planning figures

TYPE OF POPULATION	ORIGIN	JAN 2010		DEC 2010 - JAN 2011		DEC 2011	
		TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHOM ASSISTED BY UNHCR	TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHOM ASSISTED BY UNHCR	TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHOM ASSISTED BY UNHCR
Refugees	Colombia	62,680	62,680	120,280	120,280	138,810	138,810
	Various	2,610	2,610	5,010	5,010	5,780	5,780
People in refugee-like situations	Colombia	47,300	30,000	–	–	–	–
Asylum-seekers	Colombia	31,420	31,420	28,720	28,720	24,220	24,220
	Various	3,490	3,490	3,190	3,190	2,690	2,690
TOTAL		147,510	130,210	159,510	159,510	171,510	171,510

● The needs

The lack of documentation is a key challenge in Ecuador because it limits access to Government services and self-reliance opportunities. The problem is aggravated because many people stay in remote areas and are afraid to register themselves for security reasons. The indigenous and Afro-Colombians, as well as single women and girls, are among the most vulnerable, making them particularly prone to exploitation and abuse.

Many refugees and Ecuadorians in refugee-hosting communities cannot access essential services because of their high cost or limited availability in remote areas. Inadequate shelter is another problem because existing shelter programmes can only meet the short-term needs of the most vulnerable people. Poor nutrition among refugees is another challenge, as well as inadequate care for the elderly, people with disabilities and other groups with specific needs.

Recognized refugees are allowed to work in the formal sector but there are few job opportunities, particularly in rural areas. The situation is worse for asylum-seekers and unregistered individuals as they are banned from formal employment and therefore compelled to work in the informal sector.

| Main objectives |

Favourable protection environment

- Ensure that the national legal and institutional frameworks respond to the growing protection needs of asylum-seekers and refugees.

Fair protection processes

- Strengthen the national capacity to process asylum claims, registration and documentation.
- Integrate refugee issues into development agendas and public policy.

Durable solutions

- Support local integration, economic self-sufficiency and access to basic services for refugees and their host communities.
- Promote a culture of tolerance and co-existence by engaging national institutions, refugees and host communities in activities that foster local integration and self-reliance.
- Make more efficient use of resettlement, ensuring that it is adapted to the specific protection needs of refugees.

| Strategy and activities |

UNHCR strengthens national protection mechanisms and promotes durable

Key targets for 2010

- All refugees are provided with proper identity documents, certifying their legal status and entitling them to fundamental rights.
- Some 20,000 people are registered in the northern provinces of Carchi and Imbabura.
- The four field offices of the Government's Refugee Directorate assume responsibilities in registration, the processing of asylum claims and documentation. Processing times are reduced to meet the three-month period determined by law.
- Approximately 1,000 people are referred for resettlement and 500 are assisted to depart for third countries.
- All people in need of international protection have access to health care provided by the State and civil society organizations.
- Some 60 per cent of registered school-aged children in need of international protection are enrolled.
- Around 30 per cent of communities at the northern border have improved access to water and sanitation.
- All identified victims of gender-based violence receive support.
- Approximately 2,000 people benefit from micro-credit in refugee-hosting provinces.
- All asylum-seekers and refugees with specific needs receive humanitarian assistance.
- All refugees and asylum-seekers are aware of their right to avail themselves of basic services and asylum procedures.

A UNHCR-financed bakery in Pampanal, Ecuador provides employment for Colombian refugees and local residents.



UNHCR's presence in 2010

□ Number of offices	5
□ Total staff	73
International	8
National	30
JPOs	2
UNVs	33

PARTNERS

Implementing partners

NGOs:

Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
 Fundación Ambiente y Sociedad
 Cooperazione Internazionale
 Ecuadorian Red Cross
 Jesuit Refugee Service
 Catholic Relief Services
 Vicariate of Sucumbios

Others:

Centro Internacional de Estudios Superiores
 de Comunicación Para América Latina
 Micro-credit institutions:
 Maquita Cusunchic, UCADE, Codesarrollo, FEPP,
 CACAEP, FODEMI

Operational partners

Government agencies:

General Directorate for Refugees
 National Secretariat for Migration
 Ministries of Health and Education

NGOs:

Refugee Education Trust
 Norwegian Refugee Council

Others:

WFP
 UNICEF
 UNIFEM
 IOM
 UNDP
 UNFPA
 WHO/PAHO

solutions in Ecuador in line with the Mexico Plan of Action.

The Government's registration project offers new opportunities to improve the asylum system in the country. The positive aspects of this project will be introduced in the regular RSD procedure to ensure consistency with the newly developed eligibility criteria.

In order to support local integration, UNHCR will implement health and education projects in refugee-hosting areas.

In 2010, UNHCR will make better use of resettlement to find solutions for individuals who are not safe in Ecuador or who have other specific needs. The resettlement programme will be strengthened through a more systematic and proactive identification of individuals and the detailed registration of specific protection needs.

○ Constraints

UNHCR and its partners face several challenges that limit the effectiveness of their interventions on refugee issues. Although many refugees live in urban areas, a considerable number still remain in remote locations, which are difficult to access. In addition, there is high mobility among refugees, who are widely dispersed within the country, making long-term interventions in specific communities difficult. Furthermore, the poor security conditions in the northern border provinces limit UNHCR's ability to intervene in these areas and prevent a stronger presence of other humanitarian actors.

Organization and implementation

○ Coordination

UNHCR will continue to support the Government and coordinate with a wide range of institutions in order to protect and assist refugees. Local integration activities in the northern border area will be included in local development programmes, such as *Plan Ecuador*.

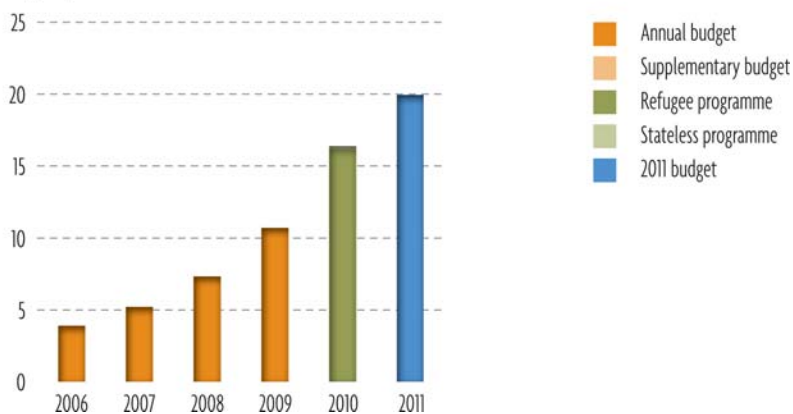
UNHCR leads the Northern Border Inter-agency Working Group, made up of 16 UN agencies. Within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, finalized in early 2009, UNHCR and its partners will develop new initiatives to support host communities and address specific protection concerns, such as gender-based violence.

Financial information

UNHCR has expanded its operations in Ecuador to cope with the increasing number of people of concern and address the needs identified in the comprehensive assessments. Over the last few years, the Government has gradually assumed more control over asylum matters through its Refugee Directorate and made an important contribution to UNHCR within the global needs assessment pilot project. UNHCR and the Government have also begun to jointly mobilize additional resources for refugees in the country.

UNHCR's budget in Ecuador 2006 - 2011

Millions (USD)



2010 UNHCR Budget for Ecuador (USD)

RIGHTS GROUPS AND OBJECTIVES	REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	TOTAL
Favourable protection environment			
National legal framework	356,265	0	356,265
Cooperation with partners	357,904	0	357,904
National development policies	156,958	0	156,958
Non-refoulement	355,390	0	355,390
Subtotal	1,226,517	0	1,226,517
Fair protection processes and documentation			
Reception conditions	460,832	0	460,832
Registration and profiling	765,368	0	765,368
Access to asylum procedures	618,599	0	618,599
Fair and efficient status determination	455,799	0	455,799
Subtotal	2,300,598	0	2,300,598
Security from violence and exploitation			
Impact on host communities	500,510	0	500,510
Gender-based violence	320,892	0	320,892
Protection of children	170,892	0	170,892
Non-arbitrary detention	96,305	0	96,305
Access to legal remedies	358,885	0	358,885
Subtotal	1,447,484	0	1,447,484
Basic needs and essential services			
Food security	560,642	0	560,642
Water	400,585	0	400,585
Shelter and other infrastructure	132,805	0	132,805
Basic domestic and hygiene items	464,760	0	464,760
Primary health care	572,814	0	572,814
HIV and AIDS	90,305	0	90,305
Education	1,206,876	0	1,206,876
Sanitation services	260,106	0	260,106
Services for groups with specific needs	331,733	0	331,733
Subtotal	4,020,624	0	4,020,624
Community participation and self-management			
Participatory assessment and community mobilization	167,829	0	167,829
Community self-management and equal representation	455,242	0	455,242
Self-reliance and livelihoods	1,788,777	0	1,788,777
Subtotal	2,411,848	0	2,411,848
Durable solutions			
Resettlement	648,236	0	648,236
Local integration support	610,944	0	610,944
Reduction of statelessness	0	225,594	225,594
Subtotal	1,259,180	225,594	1,484,774
External relations			
Donor relations	156,323	0	156,323
Resource mobilization	167,970	0	167,970
Public information	391,742	0	391,742
Subtotal	716,035	0	716,035
Logistics and operations support			
Supply chain and logistics	637,080	0	637,080
Programme management, coordination and support	2,167,181	0	2,167,181
Subtotal	2,804,261	0	2,804,261
Total	16,186,546	225,594	16,412,140

2011 Initial budget 19,995,700

2009 Revised annual budget 10,735,401

Consequences of a 20 – 40 per cent funding shortfall

- Additional offices of the Government's Refugee Directorate will not be opened, limiting access to RSD.
- Registration and documentation campaigns will not be organized in coastal areas.
- Activities to counter human trafficking will not be implemented.
- Training sessions for 10,000 police and army officers will not be organized.
- Some 6,000 people will not be registered under the Government's registration programme.
- Three legal clinics will not be opened.
- No projects to promote women's rights and gender equality will be implemented. A third safe house for women will not be opened.
- Two reception centres for unaccompanied and separated children will not be supported.
- Four food distribution points in the north will not be opened and food support to host communities will remain limited, increasing the possibility of tension.
- Psycho-social support for vulnerable people and survivors of torture will not be provided, affecting 16,000 people.
- Only 1,000 people will be assisted to access medical services, instead of the planned 1,500.
- Non-food items will only be provided to 50 per cent of new arrivals.
- Several sanitary projects, involving the construction of latrines, garbage collection and the installation of potable-water systems, will not be implemented.
- Micro-credit programmes will reach 950 people instead of the planned 2,000.
- Assistance for people waiting to be resettled will be reduced.
- A media campaign to promote awareness about refugees and their local integration will not be conducted.