

ANNUAL TRIPARTITE CONSULTATIONS ON RESETTLEMENT
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The Integration Initiative: Next Steps by Tripartite Partners

1. As the *Mission Statement* and foundational *Mandate* document for the *International Conference on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees* both state, the conference was envisioned as "...the mid-point catalyst in an on-going process of exchanging best practices in the integration of resettled refugees among the resettlement countries." In its capacity within the context of the broader *Integration Initiative*, conference participants agreed that this event provided an excellent forum for the development of resources, an exchange of "best practices" and the development of jointly endorsed Principles to guide the development of "successful" reception and integration programmes among the 18 resettlement countries.
2. It is critical that the momentum gained, the "intellectual capital" collected, through the conference sessions, the reports and framework papers, the networking and relationships formed through the planning preceding ICRIRR, now take hold and become an integral part of the broader discussions about resettlement and other durable solutions for refugees.
3. Now that INTEGRATION has been put on the map, we must move to the next level and begin to establish measurable objectives in the follow-up to the conference. Our task is to "integrate" this excellent discussion and dialogue on integration into existing mechanisms, structures and processes, so that INTEGRATION is no longer an issue talked about in the corridors of meetings and consultations, but included in the core discussions about resettlement as a tool of international protection and a durable solution.
4. As noted earlier, the ICRIRR Steering Group conceived the conference to be a catalyst, and not the capstone event, of a broader effort designed to increase, enhance and improve the quality of resettlement. The follow-up inherent in the design of the broader *Integration Initiative* is crucial to ensuring that the success of the conference is sustained and made operational over the long term.
5. The MISSION of this *Integration Initiative* was clearly articulated in the principles endorsed at ICRIRR: INTEGRATION, in a sense, begins and ends with the refugee, individually and collectively in the context of family and community. It is, at the core, a personal process. It is also mutual and multifaceted, involving practitioners and policy makers, non-governmental actors and refugee leadership, as well as international organizations and national governments.
6. Just as integration is, at root, a personal process for refugees, one cannot force governments or other actors to get involved in this work: Ultimately, it is up to States to decide whether they will participate in the work of resettlement and integration. THEREFORE, CENTRAL TO THE MISSION OF THE *INTEGRATION INITIATIVE* IS THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THIS IS ABOUT FACILITATION, SUPPORTING EFFORTS, ENHANCING EXISTING WORK, EMPOWERING PRACTITIONERS AND POLICY MAKERS, AND STRATEGICALLY

BUILDING CAPACITY AT THE LOCAL, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS.

7. We must harness the energy and good will of ICRIRR into an on-going vision of how to dialogue about integration in order to achieve the FOUR GOALS of the *Integration Initiative* outlined by the Assistant High Commissioner, Mr. Soren Jessen-Petersen:

- a. What are the practical ways through which we can strengthen the work of both emerging and traditional countries in the area? Perhaps we need to concretely think about “twining” projects between countries to provide the needed technical assistance, training and transfer of knowledge on what works and what does not work in integration services...
- b. How can we enhance regional linkages and information exchanges on reception and integration? Perhaps we need to specifically resource the utilization of information technology, websites, list serves and links, advertising and promoting existing opportunities for staff at the local level to learn and develop in their professions...
- c. How do we keep true to the promise to include refugees in these discussions, facilitating their participation and developing leadership opportunities? We must find ways to keep our sights on the goal of inclusion, listening to refugees, share their experiences, and shape our vision of integration from the perspective that refugees are not the passive recipients of assistance, but the real and most important actor in the integration process...
- d. What will it take to ensure that this *Initiative* is adequately funded? Clearly, there will be a need for support to ensure success in these future endeavors. Support is first and foremost political: the will to make this happen has to be evident. Governments and private foundations should look into joint initiatives that focus on the integration discussion from the perspective of the refugee. UNHCR should continue to provide the focal point to ensure that there is a central repository of information, coordination is achieved, and progress is evaluated so that recommendations can suggested when improvements are necessary.

8. To maintain momentum and ensure continued success, we need a process and a mechanism to accomplish all of these objectives. The (expanded) Executive Committee of the Steering Group of ICRIRR had its final meeting, yesterday, 19 June 2001, and several key next steps emerged for consideration and affirmation by the ATC today.

9. The (expanded) Executive Committee noted that without a clear mission and specific objective in place, the planning process for ICRIRR would not have been as successful. There was also general recognition, as has been stated earlier by others, that while the immediate goals and objectives of ICRIRR were met, the next steps of the broader *Integration Initiative* would be solidly grounded on the Principles agreed to at ICRIRR. The mission of the *Initiative* will take into account the central role played by refugees, encourage and facilitate their participation, as well as focus on the mutual and multi-faceted aspects of the integration process as a whole. It will have a strategic focus to build capacity, both in emerging and traditional resettlement countries, so that the work of integration is enhanced, networks and linkages strengthened, and new resources generated.

10. The (expanded) Executive Committee has recommended that a REFERENCE GROUP be established to provide continuity to the ongoing *Integration Initiative* arising out of previous ATC meetings and the ICRIRR conference. Since the mechanisms for membership and participation were well established in the setting up of the Steering Group and the Executive Committee of ICRIRR, the recommendation is also that the same processes be applied here, based upon the principles of *INCLUSION, REFUGEE PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP, and TRIPARTITE COLLABORATION*.

11. On a preliminary basis, the REFERENCE GROUP's work plan would be for one year, subject to review and assessment, and focus on three concrete actions:

- a. Provide guidance and input to the UNHCR Facilitator in the completion of the Reception and Integration Handbook, so that it may serve as a practical tool to enhance the resettlement training modules currently used by UNHCR, and supplement the information contained in the Resettlement Handbook.
- b. Encourage and design a strategic approach to capacity building, at the local and national level, in emerging and traditional resettlement countries, to facilitate and enhance the work of reception and integration. The role here would be primarily coordination, information sharing, and sustaining networks and linkages already established in the planning process of ICRIRR, such as websites, list serves, promotion of existing training seminars and venues for professional development on integration issues, etc.
- c. Provide needed feedback and input on resettlement and integration into the UNHCR work programme in the context of the Global Consultations, as the discussions on Track Three move into the area of durable solutions, including resettlement. Other venues such as the Standing Committee and the Executive Committee of the UNHCR where suggested, as well.

11. In recommending these next steps and the establishment of the REFERENCE GROUP, the (expanded) Executive Committee believes that future work in this area should be incorporated within existing structures, particularly the program of the ATC Working Group on Resettlement. Incorporation into these structures can ensure that INTEGRATION as an issue, and the work plans and concrete proposals that emerge are grounded, so that improving resettlement outcomes is a focus of all the participating tripartite partners. This also avoids any duplication that may arise from establishing new structures and committees.

12. The (expanded) Executive Committee also recommends that a focal point for integration be maintained at UNHCR to ensure that the work of the REFERENCE GROUP is coordinated, assuring that the gains and momentum of the ICRIRR are sustained, mainstreamed, and carried to the next level. This would more effectively ensure clear communication links with the Working Group on Resettlement as well as reporting on the progress made in the *Integration Initiative* at next year's Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement.

13. It should be emphasized that the over-arching goal for the continuation of this *Initiative* is to "integrate" the various principles and dimensions of the *Integration Initiative* into the *mainstream activities* and *core discussions* of UNHCR and the tripartite partners for the *sole purpose* of strengthening resettlement as a tool of protection and durable solution.