

ANNUAL TRIPARTITE CONSULTATIONS ON RESETTLEMENT
Geneva, 20-21 June 2001

Discussion Note
EMERGING RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES OF
SOUTHERN SOUTH AMERICA
(CHILE, BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA)

1. In July, 2000 following the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, it was decided to deploy a Resettlement Expert to the UNHCR Regional Office in Southern South America to work more intentionally with the Government and non-governmental partners in Chile, Brazil and Argentina in the design and implementation of resettlement programmes in each of the respective countries. The Resettlement Expert (UNHCR Consultant) took up her functions in the region in mid-November, 2000.
2. In addition to the meetings and strategic planning within the region, Government and NGO representatives from all three countries attended the *International Conference on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees (ICRIRR)* held 25-27 April, 2001 in Norrköping, Sweden. Representatives from Chile and Brazil were among the conference panellists.

CHILE

Structure of the Programme and Reception

3. The first phase of the Chilean resettlement project, begun in 1999, was completed by June 2000. In the end, despite several challenges and setbacks, excellent co-operation was established between the Government, Vicariate of Social Pastoral Care (Vicaría de la Pastoral Social) and UNHCR. In 2000, UNHCR re-negotiated the resettlement agreement with the Chilean government to re-affirm its willingness to continue accepting resettled refugees and to consider the resettlement of refugees from anywhere in the world.
4. In November, 2000, 16 new refugee case files (38 persons) were presented to the Chilean Government for their consideration. In December 2000, the Resettlement Expert was introduced and began a series of meetings with the Chilean Government and the Vicariate to further develop the national resettlement programme for 2001. An additional set of 5 cases/ 22 persons was submitted to the Ministry of Interior in late December along with a proposal for a selection mission to Baku, Azerbaijan.
5. In March of this year, a refugee selection mission to Baku was approved in order to interview refugees and provide pre-arrival orientation. The selection mission was held from 18-20 April, 2001 and the delegation was composed of a Government representative from the Ministry of the Interior and the Refugee Resettlement Co-ordinator from the Vicariate, accompanied by the Resettlement Expert.

6. In meetings held prior to the selection mission, basic selection criteria were discussed, an interview questionnaire and basic procedures developed, and a time line for the selection process, established. It was decided, at that time, that a selection mission would be considered only to countries of first asylum where there would be a minimum of 10 cases to be interviewed. Smaller caseloads would be screened via e-mail correspondence with the respective UNHCR field offices. Based on the criteria developed in these meetings, a preliminary selection was made.

7. During the selection mission to Baku, 11 cases/ 16 persons were interviewed, one Iraqi Kurdish family and the rest of Afghan origin. At the end of the mission, a two-hour orientation was held for all interviewees, at which time written orientation materials were also distributed. As of the writing of this report, the Chilean delegation is preparing a report for the Ministry of the Interior in order to make a final selection of those interviewed. There are four cases/nine persons pending final decision in other first countries of asylum.

Next Steps

8. Plans for the remainder of 2001 include: arrival of approved cases from Baku beginning in June or July; follow-up on pending cases and possible new submissions for resettlement in the last quarter of 2001; evaluation of selection processes to date; an evaluation of the second phase of Chile's resettlement experience, and setting preliminary resettlement goals for 2002.

BRAZIL

Structure of the Programme and Resettlement

9. At the December, 2000 meeting of the National Refugee Committee (CONARE), UNHCR agreed to work with the Government of Brazil in identifying a number of resettlement sites and the potential implementing partners in each location. In addition, the Regional Office will continue to work with the Brazilian Government to develop a refugee selection process, involving the active participation of the Justice Ministry and CONARE members. An initial target was set of 15-20 cases to be resettled for 2001.

10. In March of this year, a UNHCR mission was conducted to four different cities in Brazil. The purpose of this mission was to meet with State Government officials and local NGOs in the different cities that could then be considered by CONARE for the development of refugee resettlement pilot projects in the second half of 2001.

11. The decision to visit cities in different regions of Brazil resulted from the concern of Brazilian authorities to ensure that the first resettlement experience be positive for all involved, that refugees would be well-received by the local communities and successful in their integration. The Ministry of Justice, therefore, chose locales, that provided diversity in terms of size, economic activity and the ethnic/national origin of the residents. In addition, it was agreed that pilot projects would be small in size to avoid the possibility of creating any undue burden on the local community and/or Government services. The four cities visited were: Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul; Mogi das Cruzes, São Paulo; Santa Maria Madalena, Rio de Janeiro and Natal, Rio Grande do Norte.

12. Given the receptivity and sincere interest expressed by the respective state and local Governments and NGOs in each locale, investigations are continuing into the viability of each as possible resettlement project sites. Plans are also underway to develop a jointly sponsored training by the Brazilian Ministry of Justice and UNHCR on Resettlement and Integration for the NGOs and other interested parties.

Next Steps

13. Plans for the remainder of 2001 include a training event for NGOs; signed agreements with one or two NGOs as implementing partners for pilot projects; and the selection of refugees for resettlement in the latter part of 2001.

ARGENTINA

14. No formal progress was made regarding the establishment of a Framework Agreement between the Argentine Government and UNHCR for refugee resettlement. In late December, 2000, the Resettlement Expert made a presentation to the Government Refugee Eligibility Committee (CEPARE). In addition to providing a general overview of refugee resettlement, a refugee case (family of 3) was presented for their consideration. Meetings have been held with the local implementing agency to develop a basic resettlement programme design and this information was also provided to CEPARE in a subsequent meeting. At the writing of this report, no decision has been made by the Argentine Government regarding the case submitted for their consideration, nor has there been any progress regarding general discussions on resettlement in Argentina.