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Diversification of Resettlement Opportunities

Introduction

1. The question of diversification of resettlement opportunities, i.e. the effort to broaden the base of resettlement countries, has been on the international agenda for a number of years.
2. The objective of this paper is to examine the possibilities of diversifying resettlement opportunities using available resources and keeping the cost to a minimum.

The need for diversification

3. It has been argued that UNHCR is not able to fill existing resettlement quotas and therefore there is no need to diversify resettlement opportunities further. However, there is also acknowledgement of the fact that this problem is caused primarily by limited referral capacity on behalf of UNHCR and not related to a lack of need.
4. Furthermore, a number of new policy objectives seem to be preconditioned by a further diversification of resettlement opportunities.
5. The Agenda for Protection (AfP) speaks about sharing of burdens and responsibilities more equitably and building of capacities to receive and protect refugees. Resettlement is mentioned as one of the elements to be used to achieve this. The AfP also specifically refers to the strategic use of resettlement and advocates that if resettlement is to be used strategically with the desired outcome, a substantial increase in the global resettlement capacity is needed. As the High Commissioner's thoughts on the concept of Convention Plus develops, it is also becoming increasingly clear that resettlement is thought to play a determining role, when drafting agreements of a comprehensive nature.

Question: Is it possible to fulfill the objectives of AfP and engage wholeheartedly in the Convention Plus initiative without further diversification?

Funding of diversification – consolidating and broadening the base

6. The current availability of funding for diversification purposes is limited. Some EU funding might be available for consolidation of new resettlement programmes within the EU. This option needs to be further explored.

Question: Are funds available for diversification purposes – bilateral, UNHCR, other?

Question: Is it possible to diversify resettlement opportunities without substantial funding?

The need for consolidating new resettlement programmes

7. New resettlement programmes need to be consolidated in order to ensure sustainability and volume. One example is the programmes of Brazil and Chili, which were established through the Trust Fund initiative.

Question: To what extent does new resettlement countries need support to ensure consolidation of their programmes?

8. Any new resettlement country has the possibility of becoming a member of the Geneva based Working Group on Resettlement (WGR). Information sharing, identification of best practices and the establishment of bilateral contacts are some of the objectives of the group.

Question: Would the mere membership of the WGR and continues participation in its meetings in itself lead to the needed consolidation?

9. In addition, low cost twinning arrangements, building on the existing WGR structure, could further support the consolidation of new resettlement countries. Low costs twinning would build on the principle of developing administrative capacity through bilateral arrangements involving a resource receiving and a resource giving country. Such arrangements could include, but not be limited to:

- identification of bilateral focal points in receiving and giving country
- bilateral meetings in connection with WGR/ATC meetings
- participation in selection missions
- when in the region of receiving or giving resource country
 - seminars
 - study visits
- on going (e-mail) correspondence with bilateral focal point

Question: Are involvement in low cost twinning arrangements seen as an effective way of ensuring consolidation?

10. At the tripartite meeting in March 2003, The Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) presented a project proposal relating to consolidation. Based on a limited budget, the proposal suggests creating an information platform, where needs and resources can interface plus lead to the identification of bilateral focal points.

Question: Would the CCR project proposal be valuable in terms of facilitate a low cost twinning model?

11. Alternatively, the natural choice for a facilitating entity would be UNHCR. The responsibility would appear fall under the mandate of UNHCR, and be in line with the High Commissioners strengthened focus and thinking on resettlement.

Question: Will it be possible to engage in low cost twining arrangements with out a facilitating entity?

Broadening of the resettlement base

12. At present, only a small number of countries have established regular annual resettlement programmes. The programmes provide a limited global capacity. In order to use resettlement strategically, a substantial increase in the global resettlement capacity is needed, including broadening the base of resettlement.

13. Diversification of resettlement opportunities could be directed at creating new full-fledged resettlement countries as well as a pool of ad hoc country ready to resettle on a situation specific basis. Participation on an ad hoc basis could be guided by the nature of the case (emergency) and links to a specific region or country (family, ethnic belonging, religious ties, historical).

Question: Should priority and support be given to the development of full-fledged or ad hoc/situation specific resettlement programmes – or both?

14. The Trust Fund initiative showed that further diversification is possible.

15. In 1999, 31 countries were involved in a humanitarian evacuation of Kosovo Albanians from primarily Macedonia. Although humanitarian evacuation is different in its nature than resettlement, there are many similarities, in particular the notion of transfer from a country, which cannot offer protection to a country that can. In the report evaluating the evacuation effort, the number of countries showing an interest in evacuating/transferring persons from the country of first asylum to their own country is highlighted. Several of the countries that participated in this burden sharing effort had not traditionally been involved in resettlement. Presumably, the interest in participating in the humanitarian evacuation indicates a possible potential vis-à-vis participating in resettlement at least on an ad hoc basis.

16. In trying to create protection possibilities as close to the country of origin establishing resettlement opportunities in all regions of the world could be considered.

Question: Wouldn't most countries in the world be able to at least resettle a small number of refugees?

Question: Under which circumstances is it not possible for a country to take part in resettlement?

17. At present only 6 EU member states have established or are planning to establish full-fledged resettlement programmes. In addition to this Iceland and Norway have resettlement programmes. A few other EU countries have been involved on an ad hoc basis.

Question: Are EU member states, which are not presently involved in full-fledged resettlement considered as a realistic potential?

18. A potential group of new resettlement countries are the EU candidate states. These countries are in the process of aligning their asylum and migration system to EU standards and are increasing their administrative capacity day by day. The possibility of using funds from the EU Refugee Fund for this group of countries needs further exploring.

Question: Which countries could be regarded a potential new full-fledged resettlement countries and how should they be approached?

Question: Which countries could be regarded as potential ad hoc or situation specific resettlement countries and how should they be approached?