

## Improved Measures for the Protection of Refugee Children and Adolescents

A UNHCR initiative called Global Consultations on International Protection was launched in December 2000 because there was a sense of growing disillusionment among a number of States about their capacity to manage contemporary protection challenges using the tools available - in particular, the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol. The purpose was to provoke both reflection and action to revitalise the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol and to better equip States to address the challenges in a spirit of dialogue and co-operation.

The result of this consultative process was an *Agenda for Protection*, a series of activities which will serve as a guide to governments and humanitarian organisations in promoting greater overall refugee protection.

Below is an extract from the *Agenda for Protection* that outlines measures to improve the framework for the protection of refugee children and adolescents:

### Sources:

- UNHCR (2003) *Agenda for Protection*. UNHCR, Geneva

- States, UNHCR and partners to set in place measures to ensure that, **as appropriate, refugee children and adolescents participate equitably in decision-making in all areas of refugee life, as well as in the implementation of such decisions**, and that protection and age-sensitive approaches are applied at every stage of programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

- States that have not yet ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-Country Adoption to consider doing so, and States Parties to these instruments to implement them in good faith.

- States, UNHCR and humanitarian partners to continue or establish **programmes to inform refugee children of their rights and encourage their participation in identifying protection problems, actions to alleviate them and decisions affecting them.**

- States, UNHCR and humanitarian partners to continue or set in place training programmes on the rights of refugee children, drawing as appropriate on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, other relevant standards of human rights and international law and UNHCR's guidelines on the protection and care of refugee children.

- UNHCR to ensure continuous dissemination and to oversee implementation of the guidelines on the protection and care of refugee children.

- UNHCR to establish a monitoring process to measure implementation of the above guidelines as well as follow-up on the recommendations made in the independent evaluation Meeting the Rights and Protection Needs of Refugee Children (May 2002).

- UNHCR to ensure that Country Operations Plans (COPs) and Annual Protection Reports fully address critical children's rights issues, including detailed reporting on activities carried out and results achieved, and incorporate, where appropriate, plans of action for protection developed with partners and refugee children themselves.

- UNHCR to enhance its partnership with UNICEF and Save the Children, to improve training and capacity-building within the framework of the Action on the Rights of Children (ARC) project, and to give priority to training government and partner counterparts, as well as their own staff.

- States to accord importance to primary and secondary education for refugees, including by providing funding to host States and UNHCR, **in recognition that education is an important tool of protection.**



UNHCR / P. Smith