

A Sudanese family in a transit centre in Romania, en route to a new life in the Netherlands.



Finding Durable Solutions

At the end of 2012, some 6.5 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate had been in exile for five years or more. With many of them unable to find jobs or become self-reliant in any other way, the waste of human potential is enormous, and the impact of relentless poverty intolerable for those concerned.

The drain on the countries that harbour the refugees is also huge. The search for sustainable durable solutions for refugees is at the forefront of UNHCR's work worldwide. This could mean voluntary repatriation to the country of origin when conditions allow, local integration in the host country when feasible, or resettlement in a third country. Regardless of whether a durable solution is available or not, UNHCR tries to help refugees to live more fulfilling lives in the country of asylum by helping them to build their resilience and self-reliance (see chapter on *Encouraging Self-Reliance*).

UNHCR will use all available solutions in a complementary manner. The emphasis will be on preventing new displacement situations from becoming protracted, and those already protracted from becoming entrenched. This chapter presents the latest thinking on durable solutions and plans for UNHCR's programmes in 2014. ●●●

Towards comprehensive durable solutions

With the formation of its Steering Group on Solutions, UNHCR's renewed push in the area of durable solutions is focused on the following:

MULTI-YEAR, MULTI-PARTNER PLANNING

Work is already underway in Colombia and Sudan, where the Transitional Solutions Initiative (TSI) is being piloted in cooperation with the World Bank and UNDP. Building on this work, the Solutions Steering Group is supporting operations seeking to develop comprehensive multi-year, multi-partner plans for solutions. Besides local integration, return and reintegration, they include activities designed to address statelessness and strengthen refugee protection in general.

In Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Côte d'Ivoire, where the Secretary-General's Policy Committee Decision on Durable Solutions is being piloted, UNHCR operations are drawing upon their knowledge of displaced and returned populations to persuade the respective governments to include people of concern in their national plans.

INCREASED ENGAGEMENT WITH PARTNERS

UNHCR will strengthen partnerships with development actors and the private sector, including through the TSI. For example, UNHCR is working with UNDP and the World Bank in eastern Sudan to transform camps into sustainable settlements. It is also helping national authorities to assume responsibility for the provision of basic services and the promotion of self-reliance among refugees.

Collaboration on strategic planning in Ecuador and Colombia, the Balkans, Zambia, Uganda, Somalia and several West African countries aims to increase the involvement of other actors, including refugee and host communities, local

authorities and the private sector, in the search for durable solutions.

In Dollo Ado in Ethiopia, UNHCR's collaboration with the IKEA Foundation, the regional government and other development partners is expected to improve the livelihoods of refugees and the host community by helping to diversify crops and ease access to markets.

TOOLS DEVELOPMENT

The Solutions Steering Group is responsible for ensuring that all field support tools and training have a strong focus on protection. These tools include sector-specific documents such as UNHCR's forthcoming *Livelihoods Strategy*; guidance on responsible withdrawal; an updated *Voluntary Repatriation Handbook*; as well as guidelines on reintegration. These various documents will subsequently be combined in a more general solutions handbook. The Steering Group will also support innovative pilot projects, including one to enhance labour mobility.

A PROGRESSIVE APPROACH

Even when there is no immediate solution available, UNHCR will strengthen self-reliance activities. This will reduce dependency and build financial and social capital so that populations of concern can lead productive and dignified lives while integrating, to the extent possible, into their host communities.

UNHCR and WFP have begun three pilot projects in South Sudan, Chad and Uganda to find ways of systematically reducing food aid dependency. The importance of self-reliance will be emphasized from the onset of displacement.

In Egypt, UNHCR is implementing the "Graduation Model", designed with the BRAC Development Institute and the NGO Trickle Up. This approach to poverty reduction uses a sequence of interventions in the areas of livelihoods, capacity building, social support and microfinance to move people out of poverty

in both rural and urban areas.

UNHCR is also exploring new approaches in terms of labour mobility, temporary migration and alternative forms of legal stay, that can help create solutions, such as those proposed at the workshop on labour mobility for refugees, organized with ILO in 2012. The workshop had provided an important opportunity for States, international organizations, members of civil society and academics to discuss how labour mobility might increase employment opportunities and freedom of movement for refugees, as well as facilitate durable solutions without undermining protection principles. In line with this, UNHCR plans to introduce a pilot labour mobility project in collaboration with the private sector and with regional structures.

● Voluntary repatriation

To go home is what refugees and IDPs most often seek. Across the world today, millions are just waiting for the opportunity to do so. Their decision is often based on the security conditions, on the social environment and on the availability of services and livelihood opportunities so that they can successfully reintegrate. UNHCR's principal concern is to ensure that returns are voluntary and that people can go home in safety and dignity. In anticipation of more than 400,000 people of concern deciding to return home in 2014, UNHCR is working with the countries where significant numbers may be expected, to reinforce reintegration efforts.

Although evolving situations in countries of origin require UNHCR and its partners to adapt to changing voluntary repatriation scenarios, most of the returns in 2014 are expected in Afghanistan, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, Somalia, Sri Lanka and various countries in the

A STRATEGIC APPROACH, INCLUDING SUPPORT FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In 2014-2015, UNHCR will help selected country operations to develop and implement multi-year solutions strategies. This will involve expanding access to technical capacity and services from external sources through

framework agreements, rosters and links with academic institutions. The multi-year strategies will include indicators and benchmarks that allow results to be measured. Priority country selection is underway, taking into account strategic multi-year, multi-partner planning and solutions opportunities.

Resettlement: beyond a durable solution

Resettlement is the transfer of refugees from the country in which they have sought asylum to another State that has agreed to admit them as refugees, granting them permanent settlement and the opportunity for eventual citizenship. Resettlement plays a vital role in protecting refugees at risk, including in emergency refugee situations, and is a tangible demonstration

of burden-sharing with governments of asylum countries.

UNHCR continues to encourage the engagement of States in selected priority situations in support of the strategic use of resettlement. There are currently seven such situations: (i) Kenya; (ii) the Islamic Republic of Iran; (iii) Pakistan; (iv) Turkey; (v) Syria, Jordan and Lebanon; (vi) the Colombian refugee situation; and (vii) the Congolese (DRC) refugee situation. The Congolese situation was added in 2013, in line with UNHCR's multi-year plan to increase the resettlement of Congolese refugees from Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. UNHCR encourages States to offer resettlement opportunities for refugees in these situations, since departures also serve to increase the protection space and livelihood opportunities for those remaining in the countries of asylum.

In response to the Syria crisis, UNHCR has given prominence to the use of resettlement as a protection tool and a durable solution for the increasing number of vulnerable Syrian refugees in the Middle East and North Africa. While the strategy is currently focused on individual referrals based upon specific needs and vulnerabilities, a larger resettlement programme may be considered in the future, depending on the situation in the region. In a parallel effort, UNHCR is asking States to consider admitting Syrian refugees under expedited humanitarian admission programmes.

RESETTLEMENT PLAYS A VITAL
ROLE IN PROTECTING REFUGEES AT
RISK, INCLUDING IN EMERGENCY
REFUGEE SITUATIONS

Balkans. The recent cessation of refugee status for those who had fled Angola, Liberia and Rwanda has increased voluntary repatriation to these countries. A significant number of communities and individuals who have been internally displaced in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo (Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999)), Mali, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Sudan, and Yemen are also expected to return in 2014.

Tensions can arise in communities absorbing returned refugees and IDPs, alongside others who are still displaced. While continuing to advocate for the rights of returnees, UNHCR will also promote peaceful coexistence within and among returnee, displaced and host populations, and develop new measures to aid these efforts. In 2014, UNHCR will contribute to joint efforts to render return more durable, in particular through community-based projects and an increased focus on governance. ■

UNHCR helps more than 100,000 refugees return to northern DRC



UNHCR staff help refugee returnees off the boat at Buburu in Equateur province.

UNHCR / S. LUBUKU

BUBURU, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO | Boats carrying more than 350 refugees crossed the Oubangui River to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) today, bringing the total number of people assisted by UNHCR to repatriate from the Republic of the Congo (Congo) to more than 100,000.

This article is an adapted version of a UNHCR news story

3 SEPTEMBER 2013

Anuarite Malanga, aged 31, was number 100,000 on the list of people finally going home.

The young mother, returning with her two sons and a niece, had fled her home in November 2009 after her brother-in-law – a fisherman – was killed. Many villagers like Anuarite had been displaced in 2009-2010 by ethnic violence linked to fishing and farming rights in their home area.

Anuarite and her relatives were among the group of 361 refugees on this morning's return convoy departing from Impfondo in the Congo's Likouala Department. They took just over an hour to reach Buburu in northern DRC's Equateur province, and were then transferred to a UNHCR-run transit centre. After receiving a hot meal, they then proceeded through registration, administrative

formalities and medical screening. Those living in areas close to Buburu will return to their homes today. The rest will spend the night at the transit centre and be taken to their villages of origin tomorrow. The inter-ethnic clashes in late 2009 and early 2010 forced more than 131,000 people to flee across the Oubangui to the Congo and 20,000 to the Central African Republic.

Last year, when the voluntary repatriation programme was launched, **more than 46,300 individuals returned home. So far this year, more than 53,700 have gone back** from Betou, Impfondo and Loukolela in the Congo to the areas of Dongo, Libenge, Mbandaka and Buburu in Equateur province. UNHCR also supports reintegration projects that

promote peaceful cohabitation and reconciliation between local tribes.

"The refugee agency is also encouraging the international community to support development projects to help prevent problems in the future and to bring relative prosperity to the region," said Stefano Severe, UNHCR's regional representative. He urged development organizations to come to the region and work with humanitarian agencies with this aim in mind.

Anuarite, meanwhile, said she was happy to be going back home and looked forward to being reunited with her relatives. She said she would resume her studies to become a teacher. ○

UNHCR welcomes commitments by new resettlement countries, such as Austria and Switzerland, to augment global resettlement capacity. Yet the number of resettlement places offered continues to be lower than needed. Particularly in light of multiple and on-going emergencies, it is more important than ever that the humanitarian basis of resettlement is preserved and State resettlement programmes are open to those refugees with the greatest need for them. UNHCR estimates that in 2014 some 691,000 people will be in need of resettlement, without taking into consideration possible new needs arising from the outflow of refugees from Syria into neighbouring States.

Given the deteriorating security conditions in some parts of the Middle East and the Horn of Africa, it remains difficult for officials from resettlement countries to secure timely and adequate access to the refugees they wish to interview. In 2014-2015, UNHCR will employ creative ways to overcome this persistent obstacle, such as videoconferencing, the transfer of resettlement candidates to emergency transit facilities and other arrangements.

In 2014-2015, UNHCR will promote resettlement as an integral component of comprehensive strategies. Emphasis will be placed on ensuring that durable solutions are applied in a complementary manner to maximize opportunities for the greatest number of refugees. ■

An overview of some of the main areas of intervention anticipated in the coming year, with examples, is presented in the matrix in this chapter. These are extracted from UNHCR's programme plans for the 2014-2015 biennium.

ANTICIPATED AREAS OF INTERVENTION IN 2014	EXAMPLES
DURABLE SOLUTIONS	
Potential for resettlement realized	
Submission of resettlement cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In 2014, UNHCR estimates that approximately 80,000 individuals will be submitted globally for resettlement consideration. ■ Resettlement submissions will likely increase in the Africa region, mainly as a result of increased efforts to submit Congolese (DRC) refugees from the Great Lakes region.
Expansion of resettlement programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Efforts to expand resettlement quotas and lobby for new resettlement programmes will continue (by mid-2013, 26 countries had developed resettlement programmes).
Arrangement of departures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ UNHCR will advocate for an increase in departure numbers to ensure that the estimated 80,000 country slots are fully utilized.
Identification and submission of cases under the <i>Women and Girls-at-Risk</i> category	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ At least 10% of all cases submitted for resettlement will be women and girls at risk, in accordance with the target set by the UNHCR Executive Committee in its Conclusion No. 105 (VII) of 2006. ■ Specialized learning programmes (on investigations and anti-fraud awareness) will be developed and delivered.
Implementation of a strategy to prevent fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ An electronic centralized inventory of incidence of fraud will be made available globally.
Potential for local integration realized	
Local integration advocacy conducted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strategies for local integration with clearer benchmarks and indicators will be introduced in selected countries (e.g. Uganda and Zambia). ■ Three workshops on the legal aspects of local integration will be held for UNHCR staff, government officials and other partners.
Potential for voluntary return realized	
Information provided to people of concern and individual voluntariness of return verified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The updated <i>Voluntary Repatriation Handbook</i> and guidance on how protection teams can better ensure that return is voluntary will be rolled out. ■ Two workshops will be held in return operations to test the training materials developed to support the updated guidance.
Voluntary repatriation and reintegration information systems improved and supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In operations contributing to the return and reintegration of large numbers of repatriating refugees and IDPs, improved reception and protection monitoring systems will connect country information more directly to intention surveys and to the obstacles to return identified by refugees and IDPs. ■ UNHCR's contributions to common planning will more consistently reflect those priorities. ■ UNHCR will continue to develop its profiling approach so as to support country teams in the development of comprehensive returns strategies that take into account the specific needs of the populations in question.
Partnerships with development actors established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In particular in operations supporting the reintegration of returned refugees and IDPs, UNHCR operations will continue to develop their relationships with development and national human rights partners, including through common planning and joint programming on governance and social cohesion, documentation and conflict resolution.
Comprehensive solutions strategy developed, strengthened or updated	
Partnerships with development actors and the private sector strengthened	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reliable partnerships with development actors and the private sector will be sought to engage effectively on solutions in selected countries and operations. ■ Efforts to place displacement issues on the development agenda will be pursued, notably through coordination with development partners, such as JICA, UNDP and the World Bank.
Monitoring and evaluation of solutions strengthened	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ More effective ways to measure progress towards solutions will be developed.