

# NORTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

UNHCR

2014 - 2015  
GLOBAL APPEAL

Antigua and Barbuda  
The Bahamas  
Barbados  
Belize  
British overseas territories  
(Anguilla, Bermuda, British  
Virgin Islands, Cayman  
Islands, Turks and Caicos  
Islands, Montserrat)  
Canada  
Dominica  
Dominican Republic  
Dutch overseas territories  
in the Caribbean (Aruba,  
Curaçao, Saint Maarten,  
Bonaire, Saint Eustatius, Saba)  
Grenada  
Guyana  
Haiti  
Jamaica  
Saint Kitts and Nevis  
Saint Lucia  
Saint Vincent and the  
Grenadines  
Suriname  
Trinidad and Tobago  
United States of America  
Territories with linkages to  
the United States (Puerto  
Rico and the United States  
Virgin Islands)



Resettled refugees learn  
life skills in a class at  
the International Rescue  
Committee Office in Atlanta,  
United States (February 2013)

UNHCR / E. HOCKSTEIN



# Overview



## Working environment

The intensification of several humanitarian crises in Africa and in the Middle East is keeping global resettlement needs high. Thanks to the generosity of countries such as the United States and Canada, which have large resettlement programmes, many vulnerable refugees are able to find a solution to their plight.

Canada is a key partner in refugee protection. It has established an independent refugee status determination tribunal and provides considerable support for UNHCR's work globally. In the United States, legislation on immigration reform (the Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act) currently pending passage through Congress would bring enhanced protection for refugees in the country.

As a result of the 2011 earthquake in Haiti, almost 280,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) remain in camps and another 200,000 are living with host families or

in informal settlements. Many of the IDPs in these informal settlements have been forcibly evicted from camps. This situation is likely to continue in 2014, while the precarious conditions in the existing IDP camps are bound to pose significant protection risks, particularly sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

Several thousand IDPs in Haiti have lost their documents and face difficulties in obtaining access to services. According to the Haitian National Archives, there are approximately 2 million Haitians who are in need of documentation. Since many undocumented Haitians have left the country, there is a high risk that some of them may become stateless.

The year 2014 will mark the 30th anniversary of Haiti's accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, and Haiti is seeking UNHCR's support in drafting asylum legislation. Due to the country's position at the crossroads of the Caribbean, the number of asylum-seekers arriving on

its shores has been rising. In the Dominican Republic, UNHCR will continue to work with the authorities on strengthening protection for people of concern.

The risk of statelessness across the Caribbean is high, especially among populations of Haitian origin or descent. New evidence indicates that there are significant numbers of people whose nationality might be undetermined due to gaps in nationality laws or unclear application of national policies.

Following the May 2013 UNHCR-IOM Caribbean Regional Conference on the Protection of Vulnerable Persons in Mixed Migration Flows, the potential for strengthening regional dialogue, inter-agency cooperation, and national capacities on mixed migration and protection in the Caribbean, has grown. However, strong donor support is needed to enable implementation of new initiatives.

## Strategies

- UNHCR in Canada will focus on supporting and advising the authorities on the implementation of the December 2012 refugee legislation, particularly with regard to access to procedures, the impact of the new timelines, implementation of the principles of Designated Country of Origin and Designated Foreign National categories, and new appeal procedures. Particular emphasis will be placed on the Refugee Appeal Division and UNHCR's statutory role within it.
- In the United States, UNHCR will support immigration reform efforts and monitor the impact of any new laws on people of concern. The Office will contribute to the revision and enactment into law of the Refugee Protection Act. On the operational side, the focus will be on improving protection safeguards for unaccompanied and separated children arriving at the southern border with Mexico. UNHCR will also seek a reduction in the use of mandatory detention through increased access to the parole option and other alternatives to detention, in addition to strengthening the independent review process for detention decisions. It will upgrade protection screening for people intercepted or rescued at sea by the authorities, as well as monitoring the interpretation and application of the refugee definition so that this complies with international norms.
- UNHCR will seek to expand resettlement in the United States and Canada and improve the integration of resettled refugees in host communities, with a special focus on women and girls at risk.
- In Haiti, UNHCR will focus on providing documentation to mitigate the risk of statelessness, as well as on improving the response to victims of SGBV, especially lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) individuals. In the neighbouring Dominican Republic, UNHCR will help the authorities' process asylum claims and respond to the refugees' most basic needs. UNHCR will also seek solutions for those deemed to be of undetermined nationality or at risk of statelessness.
- In follow-up to the May 2013 Caribbean Regional Conference, UNHCR will seek funds to help selected Caribbean States and territories establish or strengthen national asylum systems and develop more protection-sensitive migration management strategies.

## Challenges

The lack of sufficient institutional capacity and resources constitutes a significant impediment to progress in the establishment of protection safeguards in mixed migration management in the Caribbean States. The wide geographical span of the Caribbean makes it difficult to take coordinated action to protect people of concern travelling by sea in the region.

In Haiti, the heavy stigmatization of certain segments of the displaced population and the absence of any likely improvement in socio-economic conditions may imperil chances for sustainable solutions. The national authorities need the support of the international community to restore civil documentation and the civil registry.

The processing of the backlog of asylum claims and the search for stronger local integration and durable solutions strategies for refugees are priorities in the Dominican Republic. Addressing the needs of individuals with undetermined nationality will be a challenge.

## Implementation

### Operations

UNHCR's overarching strategy in **Canada** is to leverage its advisory functions under new refugee legislation to attain the highest standards of protection in respect of access to territory and refugee status determination (RSD). UNHCR will appeal for an enlargement of Canada's resettlement programme in response to identified resettlement needs, and will cooperate with government departments and NGO partners in the implementation of integration programmes for resettled refugees.

In 2014, UNHCR will continue to work with the authorities in the **United States** to support the adoption and implementation of national legislation that affects people of concern; to monitor and find solutions for unaccompanied and separated children in need of protection who cross the border

from Mexico; and to enhance the availability and quality of alternatives to detention. It will also provide advice on protection-sensitive procedures in cases of interception and rescue at sea, and work to ensure that the application of the refugee definition by asylum adjudicators is in accord with international standards.

In **Haiti**, UNHCR's focus will be on implementing its SGBV response strategy, mainly through safe and temporary housing solutions for LGBTI survivors and the provision of medical, legal, and psychosocial assistance. Small-scale livelihood projects will aim to improve the chances of relocation and reintegration. UNHCR will also pursue documentation projects and support reform of the civil registry to avert the risk of statelessness.

In the **Dominican Republic**, UNHCR will provide technical assistance to the National Refugee Commission and support integration

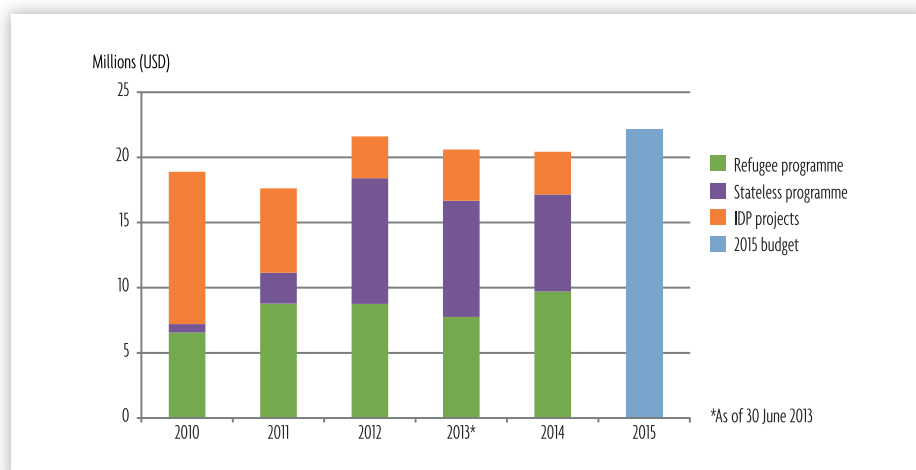
policies and livelihood activities for refugees. The most vulnerable individuals will be given assistance for their basic needs. UNHCR will also focus on finding solutions for individuals with undetermined nationality.

UNHCR will assist Governments in the **Caribbean** to improve the quality and efficiency of asylum procedures and strengthen their refugee protection capacities. It will also help develop asylum legislation and institutional frameworks in the countries where such systems are needed. The Office will conduct mandate RSD, strengthen detention centre monitoring and improve the capacity of NGO partners to assess needs and deliver services. It will promote national frameworks for local integration, including access to naturalization, health care, education and documentation for refugees, and will seek to expand the strategic use of resettlement in the region.

## Financial information

Over the last four years, the financial requirements for the North America and Caribbean subregion have grown from USD 18.9 million in 2010 to a revised 2013 budget of USD 20.6 million, due to new programmes to assist post-earthquake IDPs in Haiti and to restore a field presence in the Dominican Republic. However, funding constraints continue to hamper UNHCR's capacity to cover the ever-growing needs in 25 States and territories in the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. In 2014, the financial requirements for the subregion are set at USD 20.4 million.

### Budgets for North America and the Caribbean | 2010–2015



### Budgets for North America and the Caribbean | USD

Operation	2013 REVISED BUDGET (as of 30 June 2013)	2014			TOTAL	2015
		PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 4 IDP projects		
Canada	1,708,715	1,990,548	51,512	0	2,042,060	2,042,060
United States of America Regional Office	18,891,967	7,715,714	7,397,189	3,270,295	18,383,198	20,100,001
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,600,682</b>	<b>9,706,262</b>	<b>7,448,701</b>	<b>3,270,295</b>	<b>20,425,258</b>	<b>22,142,061</b>