

**Speaking Notes for High Commissioner's Forum  
Friday, March 12, 2004**

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**Update on status of Core Group on Resettlement**

**INTRODUCTION**

- General introductory remarks
- Last week members of the Core Group made substantial progress on the key elements that will be reflected in a Convention Plus Agreement dealing with resettlement.
- As a revised draft will be shared with capitals, it is not available for circulation at the Forum.
- Le document final, un cadre d'engagement multilatéral, pourra constituer un outil servant à la prise d'engagements pour des situations particulières, ce qui comprend une composante réinstallation.
- The finished product will be a multi-lateral framework of undertakings that would act as a tool in the formulation of situation-specific undertakings that include a resettlement component.
- The text used to outline the framework of undertakings mirrors the language of the Agenda for Protection in that it avoids being prescriptive and casts things in terms of aspirations.
- Work still remains to complete this multilateral framework and to more effectively link it to other components of the Convention Plus initiative, namely: the strategic use of resettlement, addressing irregular secondary movements of refugees and asylum seekers, and targeting development assistance to achieve durable solutions.

## RECOGNIZING CONTRIBUTIONS

- The Convention Plus initiative has steadily gained momentum since its launch in 2003, particularly as it pertains to the development of its three strands.
- Discussions on the strategic use of resettlement strand were initiated at the June Forum, and have gained considerable momentum since then, beginning with the creation of the Core Group on Resettlement.

### The Core Group on Resettlement

- Much of the progress made in the area of resettlement is attributed largely to the active participation of States and organizations that volunteered to be part of this process.
- Immediately following the Forum in June, a number of States and organizations expressed an interest in furthering the development of the resettlement strand of Convention Plus. All interested parties were welcomed and, as a result, the Core Group on Resettlement comprised an appropriate balance of resettlement interests and expertise.
- De nombreux intervenants, par exemple de pays d'accueil, de pays de réinstallation traditionnels et de nouveaux pays de réinstallation, ont participé au processus. Des partenaires pour la réinstallation, tels que l'OIM et la Commission européenne, ont aussi contribué à la démarche.
- The process brought together a multitude of players ranging from host countries to long time resettlement countries, as well as countries that are new to resettlement. Also included in this exercise were partners such as the IOM and the European Commission.
- As the process evolved, there came a point when the group reached a manageable size with an appropriate balance of regional representation and resettlement expertise. But additional countries continued to express an interest in being involved.

- In an attempt to ensure full participation without increasing the size or unbalancing the regional representation of the group itself, the co-chairs introduced another avenue for additional States to feed into the process.
- Suite à une discussion avec les Etats intéressés, on a accepté que le partage des documents pour discussion et le compte-rendu après la rencontre rencontraient leurs besoins et offraient un niveau suffisant de participation.
- After a discussion with the interested States, it was agreed that sharing the documents for discussion and de-briefing after the meeting met their needs and offered a sufficient level of participation.
- And while mixed representation was necessary to ensure a thorough analysis of the issues, it also invariably led to vigorous debate. In the end, however, this debate paved the way for consensus, one that was only strengthened by the process.
- With that in mind, I will share with you the topics that were discussed along with the consensus reached on each of the topics:
  1. Leadership and Coordination: Multilateral resettlement operations require clear coordination, participatory planning, ongoing oversight and monitoring to maximise the benefits for all parties and for refugees. The roles and responsibilities of all parties must be clearly articulated at the outset of the effort.
  2. Registration: To maximize the benefits of a multilateral resettlement operation, all parties must have a full understanding of the characteristics of the refugee population so as to best delineate and coordinate their respective responsibilities.

3. Selection Criteria: Flexible resettlement criteria and the use of group methodology contribute to securing protection and durable solutions for more refugees.
4. Family Unity: Family is the fundamental unit of society. Executive Committee Conclusions nos. 1, 9, 24, 84, 85 and 88, each reaffirm States' obligations to take measures which respect family unity and family reunion. Family members can provide a strong and effective support system and in so doing enhance the integration of resettled refugees.
5. Transparency: Multilateral resettlement operations require open communication among parties on all matters that have an impact on resettlement processing. It is equally important that refugees be provided with information on the process, to avoid misunderstandings and to ensure that the situation in the refugee host country is not adversely affected due to false information or unrealistic expectations.
6. Integrity of Process: Misuse of resettlement processes compromises resettlement operations, and jeopardises the strategic use of resettlement.
7. Efficient Programme Delivery: Among the benefits of multilateral resettlement operations are the efficiencies that can be gained by a pooling of resources and expertise, and by having ready access to refugees for resettlement purposes. Time and cost savings result in additional resources to assist more refugees.
8. Integration Support: Realising the full and mutual benefits of resettlement requires measures to enhance the integration of resettled refugees in their new communities.
9. Sustained and Enhanced Commitment: Multilateral resettlement operations, designed to provide durable solutions for a refugee population, require sustained commitment.

- Un dialogue ouvert et une discussion franche sont intégrals au développement d'un produit qui demeurera pertinent et utile à la communauté internationale pour des années à venir.
- Open dialogue and frank discussion are integral to developing a product that will be relevant and useful to the international community for years to come.
- In the end, the collective will to engage in a process that was positive and productive, combined with expertise and interest, led to the development of a multi-lateral framework of undertakings.
- The efforts were tremendous and are greatly appreciated.

### **Consultation with NGOs**

- The achievement of the Core Group cannot be considered without recognizing the important role of the NGOs.
- The strategic use of resettlement is undoubtedly of interest to the NGO community. As such, mechanisms were established to enable NGOs to feed directly into the process undertaken by the Core Group.
- All drafts were shared with the NGOs and their written feedback and suggestions were taken into account.
- The process reflected a spirit of good faith and positive dialogue; elements required for the successful implementation of any future resettlement arrangements.
- It would be worthwhile to consider this approach as a best practice which should be drawn upon for work on the other strands of Convention Plus discussions.

### **UTILIZING THE FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT**

- The Core Group set out to provide States with a resource for furthering involvement in resettlement initiatives. As such, the Group was conscious of the desire to have a document that would

allow the international community to move ahead with Convention Plus agreements.

- After months of discussions and numerous drafts, we are progressing towards a framework for multi-lateral undertakings that is reflective of the realities of resettlement and flexible enough to adapt to the uniqueness of country-specific situations and
- Le Groupe cadre voulait fournir aux États une ressource pour favoriser une participation plus grande aux initiatives de réinstallation. À ce niveau, le Groupe était conscient de la volonté de mettre au point un document qui permettrait à la communauté internationale d'aller de l'avant avec des ententes découlant de la Convention Plus.
- The framework document will be a hands-on practical tool that, very concretely, outlines the key components involved in the strategic use of resettlement.
- Whether it is applied from the perspective of a host country, a resettlement country, or a country interested in developing a resettlement capacity, this document will be a useful resource in developing future Convention Plus agreements.

## **CONCLUSION:**

- In addition to the framework document, what emerges from the discussions is an important consensus: closer cooperation and improved coordination are needed to exploit more fully resettlement's multi-faceted potential as a tool of protection, as a durable solution and as a palpable manifestation of burden sharing with countries hosting large numbers of refugees, particularly in protracted situations.
- Même si le cadre d'engagement multilatéral offre une vue d'ensemble des éléments de l'initiative pour la réinstallation, il faut insister sur le fait que la réinstallation ne peut être prise isolément. Pour que la réinstallation soit une solution efficace pour les réfugiés dans une situation qui perdure, les ententes devront tenir

compte des conclusions provenant des autres composantes de l'initiative de la Convention Plus.

- While the multi-lateral framework of undertakings provides a comprehensive look at the components of a resettlement initiative, it must be emphasized that resettlement should not be considered in isolation. In order for resettlement to be effective as a solution for protracted refugee situations, agreements must incorporate the findings from the other strands of the Convention Plus initiative.
- Together, the components that address resettlement, development aid, and secondary migration will produce Convention Plus agreements that offer a comprehensive approach to solving protracted refugee situations.
- The Convention Plus initiative should stay focused on using diplomatic, aid, and resettlement tools to resolve protracted refugee situations. From a Canadian perspective, this has been the added value of the High Commissioner's initiative. Canada remains committed to working towards this end.