

**Opening Statement of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
at the Sixtieth Session of the Executive Committee of the  
High Commissioner's Programme**

*(Geneva, 28 September 2009)*

**Elements**

In his Opening Statement to the 60<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee, the High Commissioner will outline his strategic vision for the year ahead, identifying the key challenges facing the organization and the efforts required to meet them.

- Operating environment: Joint impact of worldwide financial, economic and social crisis and maturing mega-trends (population growth, urbanization, climate change and food/water/energy insecurity)
- Specific challenges: Shrinking humanitarian space (and threats to staff safety), shrinking asylum space, reduced availability of solutions and consequent risk of increase in protracted situations
- Protection: new policy on urban refugees, High Commissioner's Dialogue on protecting persons of concern in urban settings, positive developments in asylum legislation, asylum and migration, statelessness, AU Special Summit on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons
- Solutions: Declining availability, some bright spots, generosity of developing country hosts, Global Plan of Action on protracted refugee situations
- Staff security: Security Steering Committee, Country Security Steering Committees and other efforts to enhance staff security
- UNHCR Reform: savings achieved through outposting, increased resources for operations, needs-based budgeting, pending human resource reforms, enhanced internal and external communications
- UN Reform: protection cluster lead in natural disaster situations
- Partnership: Emerging trends spurring new partnerships, continuing emphasis on development partners and regional organizations, extraordinary support of donors

*4 September 2009*