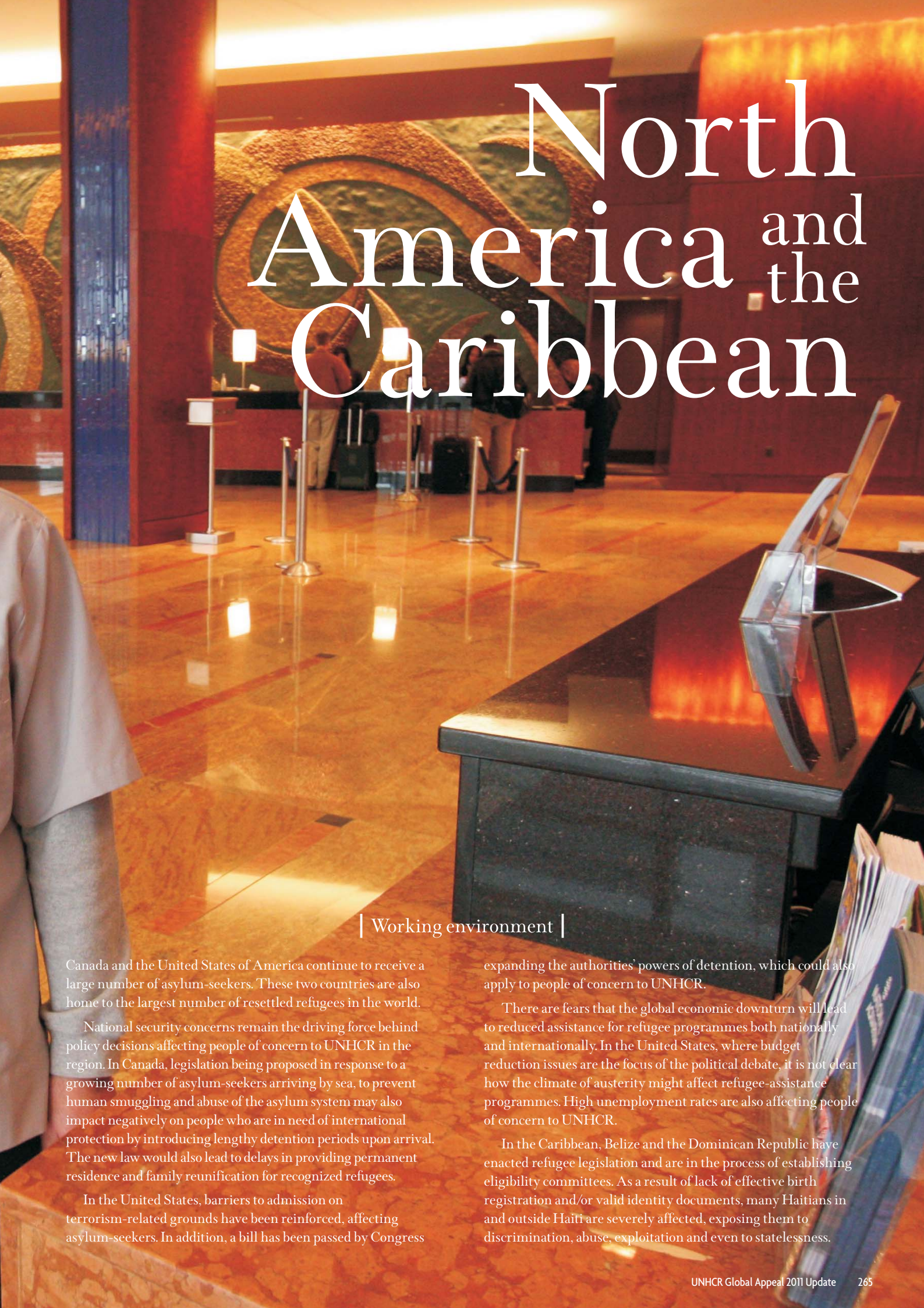




Antigua and Barbuda
Bahamas
Barbados
Belize
**British overseas territories (Anguilla, Bermuda,
British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands,
Turks and Caicos Islands, Montserrat)**
Canada
Dominica
Dominican Republic
**Dutch overseas territories in the Caribbean
(Aruba, Curaçao, Saint Maarten, Bonaire,
Saint Eustatius, Saba)**
**French overseas departments (Martinique,
Guadeloupe, Saint-Barthélemy, Saint-Martin)**
Grenada
Guyana
Haiti
Jamaica
St. Kitts and Nevis
St. Lucia
St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Suriname
Trinidad and Tobago
United States of America

**Iraqi refugee who found work
at the Hilton Hotel.**



North America and the Caribbean

| Working environment |

Canada and the United States of America continue to receive a large number of asylum-seekers. These two countries are also home to the largest number of resettled refugees in the world.

National security concerns remain the driving force behind policy decisions affecting people of concern to UNHCR in the region. In Canada, legislation being proposed in response to a growing number of asylum-seekers arriving by sea, to prevent human smuggling and abuse of the asylum system may also impact negatively on people who are in need of international protection by introducing lengthy detention periods upon arrival. The new law would also lead to delays in providing permanent residence and family reunification for recognized refugees.

In the United States, barriers to admission on terrorism-related grounds have been reinforced, affecting asylum-seekers. In addition, a bill has been passed by Congress

expanding the authorities' powers of detention, which could also apply to people of concern to UNHCR.

There are fears that the global economic downturn will lead to reduced assistance for refugee programmes both nationally and internationally. In the United States, where budget reduction issues are the focus of the political debate, it is not clear how the climate of austerity might affect refugee-assistance programmes. High unemployment rates are also affecting people of concern to UNHCR.

In the Caribbean, Belize and the Dominican Republic have enacted refugee legislation and are in the process of establishing eligibility committees. As a result of lack of effective birth registration and/or valid identity documents, many Haitians in and outside Haiti are severely affected, exposing them to discrimination, abuse, exploitation and even to statelessness.

North America and the Caribbean



Strategy

UNHCR's strategy for North America and the Caribbean will include efforts to:

- Enhance political and financial support for its global programmes to maximize access to solutions for people of concern.
- Raise public awareness of refugee priorities and gradually increase private support for all UNHCR programmes.
- Promote favourable protection environments for all populations of concern and increase resettlement programmes.
- Promote and implement updated contingency plans and ensure preparedness for mass displacement scenarios.

In Canada and the United States, UNHCR will focus on obtaining pledges to address existing protection gaps. It will also embark on selected monitoring activities and judicial interventions. In the Caribbean, the focus will be on obtaining documentation ensuring access to a nationality for undocumented people of Haitian descent. UNHCR will also engage in capacity-building activities and direct protection interventions.

Constraints

Concerns over national security represent the main constraint in the region, which includes major destinations for migratory movements and for people in need of international protection.

Significant constraints also arise from laws which may inhibit or prevent certain categories of refugees from being resettled and some individuals from being granted asylum. The detention of people of concern continues to be common throughout the region, although more attention is being given to finding alternatives, especially in Canada and the United States.

UNHCR does not have enough capacity to monitor all ports of entry or visit detention centres and areas where asylum claims are being processed.

In the Caribbean, asylum issues have been in the past a low priority for most States, reducing UNHCR's scope for engagement. However, the opening of an office in the Dominican Republic and a new UNHCR presence in Haiti, as well as a better understanding by States on how to address the protection needs of refugees and asylum-seekers in mixed migration flows have made it easier to address some specific protection and documentation issues related to the Haitian population in the Caribbean region.

Operations

UNHCR offices in the region will seek to ensure that asylum-seekers have effective access to RSD procedures. They will raise awareness on asylum matters to ensure that claims are dealt with effectively and that the highest possible protection standards are maintained. UNHCR will also work with governments to safeguard the integrity of asylum systems by developing mechanisms that forestall fraud but do not work to the detriment of legitimate cases.

UNHCR will monitor detention policies and practices with regard to asylum-seekers, including families and minors, and advocate for alternatives to detention. It will also seek increased financial and political support, as well as opportunities to resettle more refugees.

In **Canada**, UNHCR will monitor the implementation of the 2010 Balanced Refugee Reform Act, which introduced a number of changes in the RSD system. In the **United States**, it will continue to lobby for a lifting of “terrorism-related” bars preventing certain categories of refugees from being resettled and some individuals from being granted asylum. It will also monitor access to asylum and reception conditions for unaccompanied minors at the southern border with Mexico in order to ensure they are properly screened and processed.

In the **Caribbean**, UNHCR will increase its outreach through regular missions. This will enable it to strengthen its support of refugee status determination and the identification of durable solutions, as well as bolster its work with NGOs in delivering humanitarian assistance, supporting the local integration of refugees and providing documentation for people at risk of statelessness.

In the **Dominican Republic**, UNHCR will help the Eligibility Commission to clear a backlog of asylum claims and provide a durable solution to mandate refugees recognized in the past. UNHCR will work with the appropriate authorities to provide birth certificates and civil documentation to undocumented

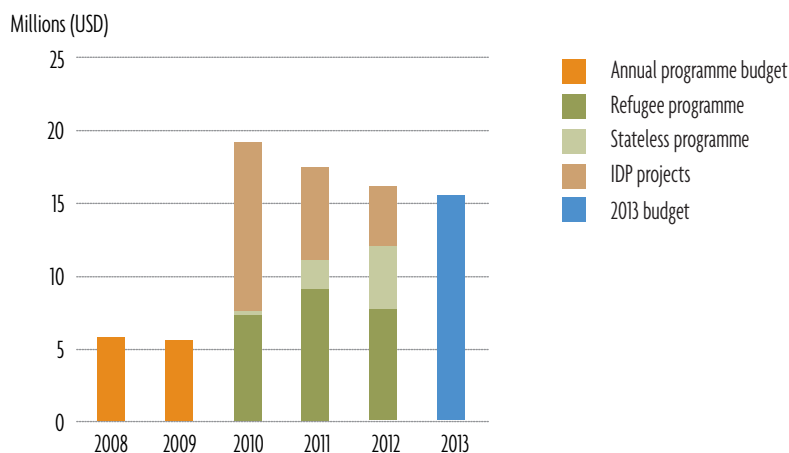
Haitian migrants and people of Haitian descent, focusing on the most vulnerable, as a way of increasing their access to legal protection and basic services. It will also assist the most vulnerable of the undocumented Haitians by implementing Quick-Impact Projects (QIPs) for income generation and community-based infrastructure improvement. The QIPs will also benefit the small refugee population in the country.

In **Haiti**, UNHCR will work with the authorities and other partners to reform the legal framework for nationality and systems for birth registration and civil documentation. This will ensure better access to nationality both for people living in Haiti and those who migrate.

Financial information

Until 2009 UNHCR Annual Budget for the North America and the Caribbean remained below USD 5 million. However, the provision of humanitarian assistance as well as support to the protection cluster in Haiti in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake resulted in an important increase in the budget, both in 2010 and 2011, particularly for IDPs. In 2012, financial requirements for Canada and the United States remain stable but need to cover increasing staffing costs. Increased requirements for the Caribbean are due to expanded activities in the Dominican Republic and in Haiti to prevent statelessness.

UNHCR’s budget in North America and the Caribbean 2008 – 2013



UNHCR Budget in North America (USD)

OPERATION	2011 REVISED BUDGET	2012				2013
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	IDP PROJECTS PILLAR 4	TOTAL	
Canada	2,080,946	1,301,317	148,727	0	1,450,044	1,450,044
United States of America Regional Office	14,843,837	6,467,521	4,116,118	4,166,655	14,750,293	14,100,002
Total	16,924,783	7,768,837	4,264,845	4,166,655	16,200,337	15,550,046