COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN

Country: Papua New Guinea

Planning Year: 2002
Executive Summary

(a) Context and Beneficiary Populations

In Papua New Guinea UNHCR attempts to ensure that:

1. Papua New Guinea meets its obligations as a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention;
2. National refugee law is enacted and implemented;
3. Papua New Guinea builds a local capacity and establishes national refugee status determination procedures;
4. Public awareness of refugee issues and practical support for asylum seekers and refugees increases.

UNHCR faces no particular staff security issues in the countries it covers, although Papua New Guinea remains at UNSECOORD security Phase One, with additional security measures in place for defined areas of the country. All UN missions must have security clearance from the Designated Official (UNDP) in Port Moresby.

In Papua New Guinea, security of refugees and asylum seekers are a Government responsibility. Isolated incidents of discrimination and violence occur and are dealt with through established judicial and complaints procedures.

Papua New Guinea plays host to asylum seekers from neighbouring Indonesia (Irian Jaya). UNHCR has a monitoring role to ensure that protection of these persons of concern is maintained.


Papua New Guinea has hosted a significant (at times numbering up to 10,000 persons) population of refugees from Indonesia since 1985. UNHCR assisted the Government in the provision of emergency assistance, then care and maintenance, of these refugees for more than a decade. In the past four years, UNHCR has focused on the transition to local integration and voluntary repatriation of these persons. This goal was largely achieved in 2000 and 2001. In 2001, UNHCR also assisted the local authorities and church in providing material assistance to approximately 400 Indonesians who fled Irian Jaya in late 2000. This population travelled to Papua New Guinea as a precautionary measure in the lead-up to the 1 December 2000 commemoration of the Irian Jayan declaration of independence.

With the help of NGOs in the area and the Montfort Catholic Mission as well as the Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs, the UNHCR Office in Port Moresby will continue to monitor for significant cross-border movements to/from Indonesia.

UNHCR is also involved in the development of national capacity, primarily within the Immigration Department of the national Government, to receive and
Country Operations Plan
determine the status of asylum seekers under the refugee criteria of the 1951 Convention.

UNHCR closed its Office in Papua New Guinea in 1996 but found it necessary to re-open it in 2001, with the deployment of one international staff member and the employment of two General Service staff. The Office reports to the Regional Office in Canberra.

UNDP, UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA each have representative offices in Papua New Guinea, with the UNDP Resident Representative also serving as the UN Resident Co-ordinator. The UNDP Resident Representative acts as the UN Security Plan Designated Official.

(b) Selected Programme Goals and Objectives

| Name of Beneficiary Population: | Asylum seekers and refugees in Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific. |
| Goal: | To promote capacity building of national Governments and NGO's in Papua New Guinea (PNG) South |

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<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
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<tr>
<td>PNG builds a local capacity for refugee status determination</td>
<td>The PNG Government adopts national refugee legislation in compliance with international standards. The Government authorities in PNG implement and adhere to national legislation in a manner consistent with international standards relating to refugees and asylum seekers.</td>
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<td>PNG fulfils its obligations under the 1951 Convention</td>
<td>The PNG Government establishes administrative structures to implement refugee status determination procedures. The legal procedures and criteria for determination of claims for refugee status are accessible to all asylum seekers. Provide information to Government officials, and opinion leaders about international refugee law in PNG and the importance of fulfilling obligations under the Convention. Undertake promotion activities in respect to refugee instruments. Provides assistance as required to genuine asylum seekers who are assessed to be in need.</td>
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<td>National Refugee Law is implemented</td>
<td>Conduct targeted training on refugee law for senior government official, legislation, and opinion leaders in PNG.</td>
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<td>To promote awareness of refugee issues</td>
<td>Local authorities are trained in the implementation of refugee status determination. Training of NGOs and officials for refugee advocacy and refugee care.</td>
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