

UNHCR 2003 COUNTRY OPERATION PLAN

Executive Summary

Morocco

Context and Beneficiary Population

Due to its strategic location and the different conflicts on the African continent, Morocco has become a point of transit for many asylum-seekers as well as for economic migrants, mainly from Sub-Saharan countries. To stem illegal migration, Moroccan authorities have taken a number of measures to control the illegal migrant movement from neighbouring countries.

One third of the asylum seekers from Sub-Saharan countries who approach UNHCR Morocco do not have legal documents.

Morocco has signed and ratified the 1951 Convention, the 1967 Protocol and the OUA Convention. However, the authorities have neither adopted a refugee nor established a procedure in order to respond to asylum seekers and refugees. Presently in force is a decree adopted in 1957, which regulates all issues relating to refugees and asylum seekers.

UNHCR will give priority to improve the refugee legislation, in particular to seek the adoption of a new law on refugees in accordance with the 1951 Convention. For this purpose, contacts and training will be further developed with the concerned authorities as well as with the parliament.

Morocco did not sign the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless persons nor the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. UNHCR will promote the Morocco's accession to both instruments.

It is generally felt that UNHCR need to develop a regional strategy, within the framework of its mandate, seeking at developing the negotiation process with other essential actors.

Pending the adoption of a new refugee legislation and the establishment of an eligibility procedure, UNHCR Morocco will continue to carry out refugee status determination of asylum seekers (RSD) and ensure protection of refugees and asylum seekers against arrests, detention, deportation and refoulement. UNHCR Morocco will also continue to provide legal assistance to refugees, particularly for obtaining some legal documents or refugees summoned by courts due to the lack of legal documents for their stay in Morocco.

UNHCR Morocco will ensure the access to basic health-care and life-saving medical assistance to the vulnerable cases among these asylum seekers/refugees. This component, as well as the subsistence allowance provided to the most needy beneficiaries will be given for a maximum period of 6 months. After finalisation of an agreement with an implementing partner, most probably, the Moroccan Red Crescent, this task will be carried out by a national NGO. The national NGO, with the assistance of UNHCR, will carry out a survey in order to check the situation of the assisted refugees and target the most vulnerable cases.

In 2003, UNHCR will continue to ensure skill training projects in order to facilitate economic integration for refugees. The purpose will be to achieve self-sustainability. UNHCR's assistance partner will also implement this programme.

In 2003, UNHCR Casablanca will continue to provide with an educational assistance to refugee and asylum seeker children enabling them to have access to the primary and secondary education. UNHCR will also assist some 350 Palestinian refugee students who cannot any longer be assisted by their families in Palestine (one time educational grant).

UNHCR Casablanca will continue to seek to identify resettlement solutions for refugees, focusing mainly on most vulnerable cases like women and unaccompanied minors.

In 2003 UNHCR's public information resources in Morocco will be devoted to support the legal assistance activities. The aim will be to raise awareness among both the authorities and the public, including universities and national NGOs dealing with refugees, the refugee and asylum issues, international and domestic legislation procedures and rights and duties of refugees and asylum seekers.

(b) Selected Programme Goals and Objectives

Assistance to refugees, asylum seekers and durable solutions

<p><i>Name of Beneficiary Population /Theme:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National refugee legislation and RSD procedure Statelessness issues 2,700 Asylum seekers and refugees scattered in the main cities of Morocco 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Main goal(s):</i> Promote the adoption of a new refugee law meeting 1951 Convention standards and ensure training to competent authorities in order to establish a fair and efficient refugee Status Determination procedure Promote the ratification of the 1954 Convention relating to the Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention relating to the Reduction of Statelessness Ensure protection and assistance of asylum seekers and refugees 	
Principal objectives	Related outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To discuss with the competent authorities: parliamentary commission in order to draft a national refugee law or amend the 1957 Decree on refugees issues To train the Bureau for refugees and Stateless persons for carrying out RSD to carry out RSD of ICs registered by UNHCR Morocco; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings, workshops, work sessions organised with the authorities in order to draft a new refugee law or amend the 1957 Decree on Refugees Training, workshops, coaching organised by UNHCR on RSD, interview techniques, and COI Number of decisions given on Individual cases (ICs) registered by UNHCR Morocco

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to promote accession to the 1954 and 1961 Conventions relating to stateless persons and Reduction of Statelessness; • to prevent arrest, detention and deportation of ICs in particular asylum seekers and particular groups of refugees whose origins are politically sensitive for the authorities; • To provide legal assistance to refugees/asylum seekers summoned by courts; • to provide medical, educational and/or financial temporary assistance to vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers in order to meet their basic needs: shelter, food, health and education; • to develop an skill training program in favour of refugees who have good prospect of integration in the Moroccan society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with the authorities, workshops organised on statelessness issues • UNHCR's intervention to the authorities in order to prevent deportation and refoulement • Lawyers hired by UNHCR for assisting refugees who are summoned by courts mainly in reason of lack of proper documents • Medical, educational and financial assistance given to vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers according to UNHCR criteria • Skill training program organised by UNHCR implementing partner to 50 refugees selected by UNHCR
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