

**Supermodel and former refugee Alek Wek** playing with a young returnee in her native South Sudan.



# Support *Celebrity*

**U**NHCR's family of Goodwill Ambassadors and high-profile supporters use their talents and influence to bring the refugee cause to a wide range of audiences around the globe. Their efforts enable UNHCR to be more effective in raising awareness about refugee needs and generating much-needed financial support. With displacement in 2014 predicted to be at its highest level in two decades, UNHCR needs the engagement of its celebrity supporters more than ever. ●●●

Goodwill Ambassadors and supporters contribute to the work of UNHCR in a variety of ways. They visit field operations to better understand the challenges that refugees face, drawing media and public attention to UNHCR's work at the same time. These supporters are also active when they return to their home countries, conveying key messages, bringing visibility to UNHCR, and most importantly, engaging. By conveying the individual stories behind the statistics, they put a human face on UNHCR's work.

UNHCR selects a Goodwill Ambassador based on his or her history of support for the refugee cause, thus ensuring appointments are credible and sustainable. New National Goodwill Ambassadors appointed in 2013 are acclaimed writer and former Afghan refugee, Khaled Hosseini; Chinese actress Yao Chen; supermodel and former Sudanese refugee, Alek Wek; and Kazak musician, Aidos Sagat. In addition, National Ambassadors Osvaldo Laport, Jesus Vazquez, Julien Clerc and Georges Dalaras added their voices to UNHCR campaigns in 2013. In 2014-2015, UNHCR will seek to appoint new Goodwill Ambassadors and supporters.

The new title of Eminent Advocate will be awarded to selected individuals of standing and influence in their own community and beyond, including government officials, elder statesmen and women, royalty, prominent academics, religious leaders and leading figures in the private sector. The honorary title is bestowed in recognition of an individual's strong and active support for UNHCR and its work. Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher Bint Mohammed Al Qasimi, who has supported UNHCR projects for forcibly displaced women from Somalia and Syria, was named the first UNHCR Eminent Advocate in May 2013.

UNHCR's longest-serving celebrity supporter, Honorary Lifetime Goodwill Ambassador Barbara Hendricks, continues her distinguished service through a range of public appearances and media interviews as well advocacy and fundraising. In 2013, Hendricks lent her support to the UNHCR-Thalys fundraising campaign in France, while continuing to chair UNHCR's private-sector fundraising foundation in Sweden. Looking forward to 2014, her support will include participation in activities focused on statelessness.

Other examples of support from UNHCR ambassadors include Alek Wek speaking at the New York Africa Forum in Gabon and Osvaldo Laport recording a message on violence against women. Khaled Hosseini has spoken about UNHCR's work at every one of his 40 engagements as part of the promotional tour for his new novel. Long-standing supporter, Juanes, added his influential voice to a radio spot, urging Colombian refugees to register their children and ensure their access to entitlements.

#### GROWING SUPPORT

Compelled by their concern for the human impact of crises and driven by their belief that even one family torn apart by war is too many, many new supporters have added their voices in support of UNHCR. They include globally renowned country music group, Lady Antebellum (see *News and Views*), acclaimed writers, Neil Gaiman and Henning Mankell, and actors, Elena Anaya, Diego Luna and Kat Graham.



Honorary Lifetime Goodwill Ambassador Barbara Hendricks greets a Malian refugee who fled violence in northern Mali to seek safety with her children in Burkina Faso.

## Major events and campaigns

#### WORLD REFUGEE DAY

On 20 June of each year, high-profile supporters join UNHCR staff and partners around the world to draw public attention to the refugee cause. Focusing on the impact of war on families, Goodwill Ambassadors and celebrities have had a major impact on the reach and traction of the 2013 "1 Family" campaign. Nineteen public service announcements (PSAs) recorded by these ambassadors and celebrities in seven languages have been

screened online, on broadcast channels and at outdoor venues in many countries.

The PSA recorded by Juanes was screened in more than 200 cinemas across Colombia, and the PSA by Lady Antebellum was screened throughout the day in Times Square, New York. In addition, celebrities took part in UNHCR's World Refugee Day advocacy activities, including in media interviews and speaking engagements. Spanish film director

Fernando Leon and actress Elena Anaya, produced their own short film recorded in Ethiopia, *Welcome to My Country*, in support of World Refugee Day.

The social media activity of celebrities such as Yoko Ono, Paulo Coelho, Luol Deng, Stephen Fry, Maher Zain and Yao Chen – who has over 50 million-plus followers on the website *Sina Weibo* – reached a total of more than 130 million viewers. Their efforts resulted in greatly increasing traffic to UNHCR's World Refugee Day platforms and enhancing its social engagement, especially with new audiences. In 2014-2015, UNHCR's Goodwill Ambassadors and celebrity supporters will continue their important work.

#### NANSEN REFUGEE AWARD

The 2013 Nansen Refugee Award Ceremony saw performances by

acclaimed musicians Dido, Amadou and Mariam, and Yuna. Isabelle Kumar of Euronews acted as master of ceremony and the keynote address was given by acclaimed author and United Nations Messenger of Peace, Paulo Coelho. In addition, more than 30 high-profile supporters utilized social media channels to spread the word and engage the public around the inspirational story of the Laureate, Sister Angeliqwe Namaika (see feature on *Coming back to life* in chapter on *Combating SGBV*). In 2014, UNHCR will build on the success of the ceremony and engage three new renowned performers and a distinguished keynote speaker. It will also benefit from the support of celebrities who offer their social media channels to honour the laureate and engage their audiences on the issue of displacement.

## Emergency call to action

Goodwill Ambassadors and high profile supporters have added their powerful voices to UNHCR's emergency messages, most notably in 2013 around the Syrian refugee crisis. In addition to missions by Special Envoy Angelina Jolie (see feature on Special Envoy in *Foreword*), Jesus Vazquez travelled to Jordan in order to drive media interest in Spain, and a number of celebrities have publically conveyed messages of concern to help keep the Syria situation in the spotlight and support the call for donations.

Looking forward, Goodwill Ambassadors will continue to help keep UNHCR's work for Syrian refugees and help highlight other, less visible, emergencies.

## Speaking out for refugees

In July 2013, Olympic sportsman and former refugee, Guor Mading Maker, made an emotional return home to South Sudan, where he was reunited with his family after a 20-year separation. He witnessed UNHCR's work and was able to convey important advocacy messages both to the displaced community and to decision makers in the country. He also took part in the distribution of sports kits donated by the International Olympic Committee's *Giving is Winning* partnership with UNHCR.

Another key mission in 2013 was Henning Mankell's visit to Uganda to

write about the emergency response to the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the vital importance of education for refugee children, including the positive impact of the Educate a Child Initiative.

A number of field missions for high-profile supporters are planned for 2014 and 2015. These will give individual refugees the chance to share their stories with these prominent individuals who can help amplify refugee voices and support advocacy and fundraising campaigns. ■

## Country music trio Lady Antebellum link up with UNHCR to help refugee children

**NASHVILLE, UNITED STATES** | *The Grammy Award-winning country music trio, Lady Antebellum, is joining forces with UNHCR to help millions of refugee children around the world.*

*This article is an adapted version of a UNHCR news story*

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**The partnership with the UN refugee agency is part of a philanthropic initiative** launched by Lady Antebellum in December 2012 in Nashville, Tennessee, the home of country music. LadyAID was created to bring awareness to and generate support for children in need locally, nationally and globally.

"Individually we are committed to various causes, but we can do a lot more to raise awareness and money together," said band member Charles Kelley.

The trio chose UNHCR as one of their two LadyAID global partners because they want to help children affected by persecution and conflict. The other partner, myLifespeaks, helps orphans with special needs in Haiti.

**UNHCR helps more than 10 million refugees worldwide** as well as millions displaced within their own countries – and more than half are young people under the age of 18. "In the face of these needs, Lady Antebellum's support is hugely appreciated by UNHCR," said Alison Tilbe, head of UNHCR's Goodwill Ambassador programme.

Lady Antebellum singer-songwriter Hillary Scott, who began her international humanitarian work after the devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti, said she was excited at the thought of visiting UNHCR field operations.

"We wanted to find a way to help those around the world and this is one of the ways we can do it. We're blessed with this platform and people do listen to what we say," Scott stressed. "There are children all over the world who are suffering because they don't have the resources to get the help they need," she added.

**Lady Antebellum** was formed by Scott, Kelley and Dave Haywood in 2006 and released its first single in 2007. Two years later, their self-titled first album was certified platinum for selling more than 1 million copies in the United States. Since then, they have won seven Grammy Awards and multiple other prizes for their music. ○