

UNHCR workshops help displaced children and adolescents in Colombia to use their free time constructively

## | OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS |

- In 2013, UNHCR began a series of consultations with governments, international organizations and civil society organizations under the Cartagena +30 process, which aims to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. The Cartagena +30 process will culminate in the adoption of a new Plan of Action at a ministerial-level event in Brazil in December 2014.

- UNHCR's Quality Assurance Initiative (QAI) helped to strengthen and harmonize refugee status determination (RSD) procedures in the region, where protection challenges are many and varied. The QAI is being implemented in Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Panama.

- Much of the operational focus in Colombia was centred on the Transitional Solutions Initiative (TSI), a joint UNHCR-UNDP project. Programmes in 17 communities have promoted developing public policies to consolidate durable solutions.

- In May 2013, UNHCR and IOM organized the Caribbean Regional Conference on the Protection of Vulnerable Persons in Mixed-

Migration Flows. Delegates to the conference, which was held in the Bahamas, agreed to strengthen cooperation to assist people in need of international protection, including by building stronger asylum systems throughout the subregion.

- Jamaica acceded to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and Peru ratified the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons. Nicaragua acceded to both Conventions. Argentina, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Haiti and Paraguay are at different stages in the legislative process leading to the adoption of one or both of these international instruments.

- A study on the protection needs of unaccompanied and separated children apprehended in the United States while irregularly crossing the southern border was concluded at the end of 2013. Interviews with over 400 of them found the vast majority were in need of international protection.

# THE





# AMERICAS



## | Working environment |

Asylum and protection in the Americas are buttressed by national legislative frameworks. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement in access to asylum, reception conditions, alternatives to detention and the application of protection safeguards in mixed-migration management.

The number of asylum applications in Canada dropped significantly following changes to laws governing refugee matters and the introduction of the safe-country concept, whereby asylum is not granted to those arriving from countries which are deemed safe for them.

Recognition rates are generally low across the region as the number of applications rejected is high. In the Dominican Republic, for example, virtually all applications for asylum in 2013 were rejected. Children apprehended when trying to cross borders are put in detention facilities, especially in the United States and Mexico, and there are no protection safeguards for those travelling in mixed-migration movements across the Caribbean region.

In the Dominican Republic, a Constitutional Court ruling in September 2013 led to loss of nationality for tens of thousands of Dominicans, the great majority of Haitian descent. These individuals became stateless. UNHCR and the United Nations Country Team worked with the national authorities to minimize the impact of the ruling.

Peace talks between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) continued in a bid to end five decades of armed conflict. Meanwhile, UNHCR continued its search for solutions in Colombia and responded to protection risks caused by continuing displacement.

## | Working with others |

UNHCR's partnership with the Organization of American States (OAS) grew stronger in 2013, and was central to the improvement of national refugee legislation on refugees throughout the region. Members of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, one of the organs of the OAS, visited the Dominican Republic to examine issues related to nationality. As part of this effort, an OAS General Assembly Resolution on statelessness has called for a comparative study of nationality laws in the Americas.

In Central America, UNHCR's strategic partnership with the Central American Integration System helped to improve protection for both internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees, in addition to raising awareness about new displacement trends in the region. A regional workshop on these issues at the end of October in El Salvador saw the participation of UNHCR, the Brookings Institution and other experts in forced displacement and protection. One of the main recommendations was to address forced displacement resulting from criminal violence in the region from a humanitarian perspective, including with a rights- and community-based approach to protection.

UNHCR worked with IOM to issue several guidelines on the identification and protection of vulnerable migrants and refugees within the framework of the Regional Conference for Migration.

Overall, UNHCR's work with governments in the region has helped to foster protection and find solutions for people of concern. UNHCR's cooperation with national and local institutions in Colombia on the TSI was particularly effective.

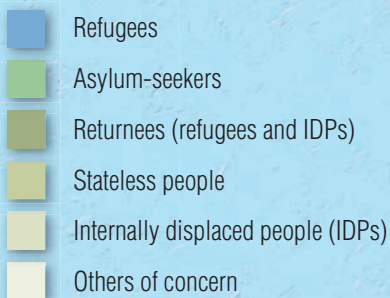
## | Achievements and impact |

In 2013, UNHCR began a series of consultations with governments, international organizations and civil society organizations under the Cartagena +30 process. This process provides a unique opportunity for Latin America and the Caribbean to establish higher protection benchmarks; expand and consolidate international cooperation in refugee integration and resettlement; share best practices on international protection and durable solutions; and propose innovative ways to address current humanitarian challenges.

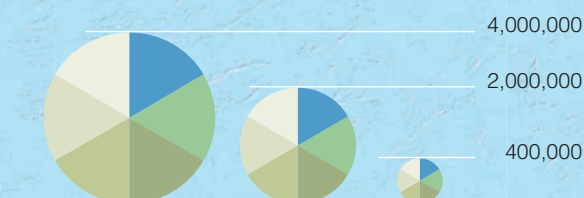
The Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming framework was implemented as a priority in the Americas. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGVB) prevention and response initiatives in several operations included data management, protection networks, referral mechanisms and emergency shelter. Additionally, a new post for a senior regional SGBV officer for the Americas was filled in 2013. SGBV-related databases, protection networks, referral mechanisms and emergency shelter were at the heart of several operations. Particular attention was paid to the protection of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex people of concern, through the provision of safe houses for emergency shelter and relocation and sensitization campaigns on the specific needs of this group.

NORTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

LATIN AMERICA



Population size



In October, UNHCR convened a roundtable of experts in Montevideo, Uruguay, on the interpretation of the extended refugee definition of the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. The meeting was part of a broader project to develop UNHCR's Guidelines on International Protection for people fleeing armed conflict and other situations of violence. It clarified the interpretation and application of the extended refugee definition in the region.

Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico and Panama, all of which have signed QAI agreements with UNHCR, continue to strengthen their RSD procedures.

In Colombia, UNHCR focused on providing assistance to people of concern in areas that have recently been affected by conflict. Key strategic priorities in Colombia are preventing displacement, protecting displaced populations and identifying solutions. Considerable priority was given to the TSI to help more victims of forced displacement to regain their full rights as citizens, both in rural and urban communities. UNHCR is assessing the risk posed by demobilized armed groups, which could drive population displacement, in some areas for a second or third time.

The Comprehensive Solutions Initiative (CSI) in Ecuador, conducted in coordination with the authorities, focuses on improving refugee livelihood and resettlement opportunities. Through the CSI, UNHCR and partners seek prospects for migratory solutions within the region and voluntary repatriation, depending on country of origin.

In Costa Rica, many Colombian refugees are integrated locally or have become less dependent on UNHCR's assistance. The organization is working with an implementing partner to provide a combination of social-protection, livelihood and microfinance programmes to help refugees who have no personal assets to move out of extreme poverty.

The Government of Panama has indicated its intention to grant permanent residence to approximately 400 Colombians who have benefitted from temporary protection status in the Darién region for the past 15 years.

In recent years, the number of asylum applications made by individuals from Central American countries, such as El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, has risen sharply in Canada, Costa Rica, Mexico and the United States of America. UNHCR provided the receiving States with country of origin information to aid in their RSD processes.

Mexico withdrew reservations to both the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons. The reservations were associated with the State's powers to expel foreigners – including asylum-seekers, refugees and stateless people.

In 2013, over 20,000 unaccompanied and separated children travelling from Central America and Mexico crossed the border into the United States, and the number is expected to continue to rise. UNHCR conducted two studies, one to determine the causes of the children's flight and provide adequate responses accordingly and another, analysing the movements of such children within Mexico.

## | Constraints |

Despite the prospect of peace from the negotiations between the Government of Colombia and the FARC, violence intensified in some parts of the country. This led to additional displacement and further forced recruitment, including of minors. In 2013, some 5.4 million people were internally displaced in Colombia, with almost 80,000 uprooted from their homes in 2013 alone.

Ecuador registered up to 1,000 new arrivals from Colombia each month in 2013. Access to asylum in the country became more difficult due to the introduction in May 2012 of strict procedural requirements.

In Central America, transnational organized crime and gang-related violence threaten local populations, national institutions and regional security.

UNHCR's research in Mexico and Central America on the magnitude and patterns of forced displacement, and on the profiles of people affected by violence, will help in the design and implementation of its programmes.

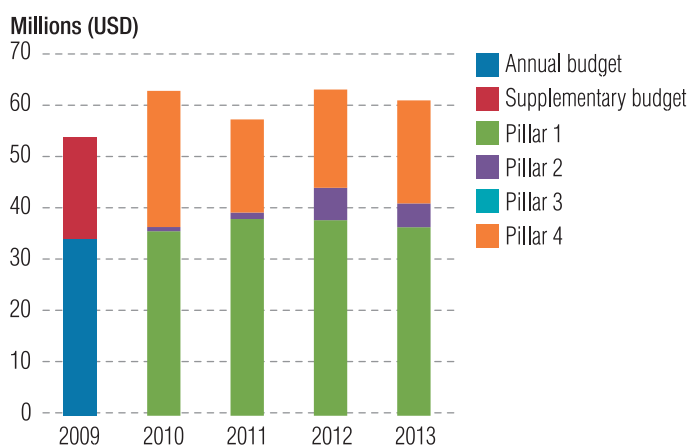
Though the majority of countries and territories in the Caribbean are States parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, few have established protection-sensitive asylum systems. Individuals who arrive in the region in an irregular manner continue to face the possibility of systematic detention and *refoulement*. ■

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The budget for the Americas region initially approved by the Executive Committee amounted to USD 101.7 million. The revised 2013 budget at the end of the year had grown to USD 102 million, with the additional funds channelled towards the search for solutions in Colombia and child-protection programmes in Mexico and the United States.

However, many needs were unmet throughout the region. Financial constraints made it difficult to build protection capacity in States affected by mixed-migration flows in the Caribbean, and to implement durable solutions in Ecuador. Funding gaps in Ecuador and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela hampered UNHCR's efforts to help the authorities to implement income-generation activities designed to promote refugee integration throughout the region.

## EXPENDITURE IN THE AMERICAS | 2009-2013



## BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE IN THE AMERICAS | USD

<i>Operation</i>		Pillar 1 Refugee programme	Pillar 2 Stateless programme	Pillar 4 IDP projects	Total
<b>NORTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN</b>					
Canada	Budget	1,675,490	33,225	0	1,708,715
	Expenditure	1,502,483	29,856	0	1,532,339
United States of America Regional Office <sup>1</sup>	Budget	6,106,270	8,850,354	3,935,343	18,891,967
	Expenditure	5,033,119	4,179,188	1,088,159	10,300,466
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>7,781,759</b>	<b>8,883,579</b>	<b>3,935,343</b>	<b>20,600,682</b>
	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>6,535,602</b>	<b>4,209,044</b>	<b>1,088,159</b>	<b>11,832,805</b>
<b>LATIN AMERICA</b>					
Argentina Regional Office <sup>2</sup>	Budget	4,264,664	126,305	0	4,390,969
	Expenditure	3,154,229	126,304	0	3,280,534
Brazil	Budget	4,912,318	208,868	0	5,121,186
	Expenditure	2,528,682	104,581	0	2,633,263
Colombia	Budget	1,250,050	0	28,388,581	29,638,631
	Expenditure	858,870	0	18,870,843	19,729,712
Costa Rica	Budget	2,056,514	0	0	2,056,514
	Expenditure	1,778,346	0	0	1,778,346
Ecuador	Budget	21,178,736	0	0	21,178,736
	Expenditure	11,640,442	0	0	11,640,442
Mexico	Budget	3,098,622	0	0	3,098,622
	Expenditure	2,214,931	0	0	2,214,931
Panama Regional Office <sup>3</sup>	Budget	5,696,697	158,151	0	5,854,849
	Expenditure	3,872,178	158,152	0	4,030,329
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Budget	9,974,811	0	0	9,974,811
	Expenditure	3,829,174	0	0	3,829,174
Regional Activities <sup>4</sup>	Budget	160,744	0	0	160,744
	Expenditure	146,437	0	0	146,437
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>52,593,157</b>	<b>493,324</b>	<b>28,388,581</b>	<b>81,475,062</b>
	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>30,023,288</b>	<b>389,037</b>	<b>18,870,843</b>	<b>49,283,167</b>
<b>Total Americas</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>60,374,916</b>	<b>9,376,903</b>	<b>32,323,924</b>	<b>102,075,743</b>
	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>36,558,890</b>	<b>4,598,081</b>	<b>19,959,002</b>	<b>61,115,973</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes Haiti, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, 12 Independent Caribbean states and UK and Dutch territories in coordination with the Europe Bureau

<sup>2</sup> Includes activities in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

<sup>3</sup> Includes the Regional Legal Unit in Costa Rica

<sup>4</sup> Regional activities cover the entire Americas Region

## VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE AMERICAS | USD

<i>Donor</i>	Pillar 1 Refugee programme	Pillar 2 Stateless programme	Pillar 4 IDP projects	All pillars	Total
Argentina				126,000	126,000
Brazil	24,204				24,204
Canada			3,894,839	1,460,565	5,355,404
Central Emergency Response Fund			435,000		435,000
Colombia	162,162				162,162
European Union	4,041,761		3,856,235		7,897,995
Holy See	5,000				5,000
Italy			127,714		127,714
Luxembourg			454,545		454,545
Norway			1,668,368		1,668,368
Private donors in Spain	211,303				211,303
Private donors in Switzerland	20,950				20,950
Private donors in the United States of America	260,000			7,203	267,203
Private donors in Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)				228,779	228,779
Spain			643,501		643,501
Sweden	168,481		623,269	1,342,883	2,134,632
Switzerland			1,079,914		1,079,914
United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS	35,000	25,000			60,000
United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security	542,307	283,550			825,857
United States of America	540,000			15,500,000	16,040,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,011,167</b>	<b>308,550</b>	<b>12,783,385</b>	<b>18,665,429</b>	<b>37,768,531</b>

Note: Includes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions to Pillars 3 and 4, supplementary budgets and the "New or additional activities – mandate-related" (NAM) Reserve