

Chapter XII

Refugees and displaced persons

In 2000, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provided assistance to 21.1 million persons throughout the world, a decrease from 22.3 million the previous year. More than half of those people (12.1 million) were refugees, 5.5 million were internally displaced persons, 900,000 were asylum-seekers, 800,000 had repatriated, and almost 1.7 million were in other special situations. While there were no new refugee emergencies on the scale experienced in the previous few years, UNHCR continued to face challenging refugee and forced displacement situations, often exacerbated by natural disasters.

African countries continued to host the largest number of refugees, representing almost a third of the worldwide total, with the main groups originating in Sierra Leone, 487,000; the Sudan, 468,000; Somalia, 452,000; Angola, more than 351,000; Eritrea, 346,000; and Burundi, 326,000. The United Republic of Tanzania hosted one of the largest caseloads on the continent, some 488,000 refugees. In January, the Security Council, in a statement on assistance to refugees in Africa, affirmed the need to ensure that both refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa received sufficient protection and assistance, taking into account the special difficulties in providing humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons on that continent.

Protracted inter-ethnic tension and violence caused displacement of more than 200,000 non-Albanians from Kosovo province into other parts of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which remained one of UNHCR's major concerns in Europe.

In Central and South-West Asia, renewed and continued fighting between warring factions in Afghanistan dampened hopes for finding a long-term political settlement and peace, a situation that was further compounded by the worst drought experienced in three decades. Thousands of Afghans were displaced internally and thousands more were forced to flee across the border into Iran and Pakistan, where the vast majority of the 2.6 million Afghan refugees were living. During 2000, UNHCR assisted 261,000 Afghans to return voluntarily to Afghanistan from those countries.

Staff safety remained a major concern for UNHCR as it faced restricted access to and lack of security in conflict-ridden areas in Africa, South-West and South-East Asia, the Balkans and Caucasus regions, and South America. During the year, three UNHCR staff members were killed in West Timor and one in Guinea, while carrying out their duties. In October, the UNHCR Executive Committee, noting the coming into force of the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, urged States to consider signing and ratifying that instrument. It also urged the conclusion of an optional protocol to the Convention, which would extend protection to all humanitarian personnel. In other action, the Executive Committee welcomed the UNHCR proposal for commencing global consultations with States aimed at revitalizing the international protection regime for refugees.

In October, the General Assembly elected Ruud Lubbers (Netherlands) as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2001 to succeed Sadako Ogata (Japan), who had held the position for 10 years.

UNHCR observed its fiftieth anniversary in 2000. In December, the Assembly paid tribute to the work and dedication of UNHCR staff and reaffirmed its support for UNHCR activities on behalf of returnees, stateless persons and internally displaced persons. It decided that, as from 2001, 20 June would be celebrated as World Refugee Day.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Programme policy

Executive Committee action. At its fifty-first session (Geneva, 2-6 October) [A/55/12/Add.1], the Executive Committee of the UNHCR Programme welcomed the UNHCR proposal to commence global consultations on international protection with States to revitalize the international refugee protection regime and to discuss measures to ensure international protection, while taking ac-

count of the legitimate concerns of States, host communities and the international community. It affirmed that such a process, on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees [YUN 1951, p. 520], was important for promoting effective implementation of that Convention and its 1967 Protocol [YUN 1967, p. 477], while identifying approaches to new situations not covered by those instruments. The Committee encouraged UNHCR to seek practical responses, in cooperation with States and other relevant actors, to address current and future protection challenges.

For consideration of its annual theme "UNHCR@50: from response to solutions", the Committee had before it a millennium theme paper [A/AC.96/938], which retraced some of the main challenges of the past in chronological order and portrayed in broad terms the essential elements of the international community's response to the refugee problem. It also gave an overview of some of the current dilemmas and identified elements for solutions.

The Secretary-General, in a statement to the Committee in which he paid tribute to the commitment of High Commissioner Sadako Ogata, whose term of office would expire in December, called for support for the High Commissioner's legacy in three areas: strengthening the notion of asylum; a more timely, consistent and adequate system of funding for UNHCR's programmes; and action by States to ensure the safety of humanitarian workers.

Addressing the Committee, the High Commissioner outlined areas needing concrete action in the future. The High Commissioner noted that the refugee crisis in the Kosovo province of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) had revealed a critical need to review UNHCR's emergency mechanisms and response capacity. Consequently, based on the recommendations of an independent evaluation of UNHCR's response to that crisis, UNHCR had begun implementing a plan of action to increase its "surge capacity" through expanded standby arrangements, rosters of trained personnel ready for rapid deployment, and kits and packages designed to meet immediate security, logistics, telecommunications and accommodation needs in the field. In the area of staff safety, UNHCR was examining its security arrangements, including reassessing benchmarks for suspending operations, evacuating staff and the resumption of activities. In developing new approaches to complex forced population movements, UNHCR needed to address two key aspects: ensuring asylum for refugees and meeting the requirements of internally displaced people more effectively. The High

Commissioner also addressed the need to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development assistance in the transition from war to peace, and to promote coexistence in divided communities in post-conflict situations.

To meet those challenges, the High Commissioner emphasized that the Office should be managed, trained and equipped for a technologically advanced and globalized environment, taking advantage of the revolution in communications and information technology. Decentralization was crucial, especially in the area of financial and human resources management, and, in that regard, the process had already begun in Africa. Other areas that should be addressed were human resources, staff rotation policies and fund-raising. Raising funds had been a major activity for the High Commissioner, yet UNHCR remained an underfunded organization, while new emergencies had added \$100 million to its requirements. UNHCR was reaching out to a new, wider circle of potential supporters among the private sector, the corporate world and the public at large. The budget had been repeatedly reduced during the year, resulting in diminished credibility of UNHCR and strained relations with refugees, Governments and its non-governmental organization (NGO) implementing partners.

By **decision** 2000/289 of 28 July, the Economic and Social Council took note of the High Commissioner's report for 1999/2000 [E/2000/18 & Corr.1,2].

By **decision** 55/417 of 4 December, the General Assembly took note of the High Commissioner's report for 1999 [YUN 1999, p. 1128].

Coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance

In 2000, UNHCR developed new partnerships, while reinforcing ongoing ones in efforts to increase resources reaching refugees and returnees [A/56/12]. Two memorandums of understanding (MOUs) on partnership arrangements were signed with the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and with the League of Arab States. As a complement to its MOU with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), a joint "Guidance Note on Cooperation in the Transportation Sector" was issued in May.

UNHCR strengthened its collaboration with the World Bank through staff exchanges and joint initiatives under the terms of a Framework for Cooperation signed in 1998 [YUN 1998, p. 1108]. Joint projects were implemented in Sri Lanka and in countries in the southern Caucasus region, and a staff exchange agreement was activated between the two organizations. During the year, UNHCR also collaborated with the Interna-

tional Labour Organization (ILO) and held its annual high-level meeting with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which discussed internally displaced persons and the situations in Angola, Colombia and Sri Lanka. UNHCR began a series of meetings with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) on geographical and technical issues. UNHCR and IFRC also embarked on an NGO training programme on protection.

In terms of coordination within the UN system, UNHCR continued to participate in the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), where, with the support of operational agencies, it ensured that staff safety and security remained high on the agenda, as well as in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). Using tools such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the common country assessment (CCA), UNHCR was able to strengthen cooperation and coordination with other UN agencies.

During 2000, UNHCR entered into project agreements with 536 NGOs covering operational activities in favour of refugees and other populations of concern to UNHCR. It continued to promote the Partnership in Action (PARinAC) process, aimed at enhancing coordination of refugee activities. The process was introduced to NGOs from the five Central Asian republics, linking members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to the more global UNHCR-NGO network. In the Balkans, UNHCR met in Sarajevo with 30 NGOs from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and FRY to discuss the return of refugees and internally displaced persons and linking those efforts to a broader international NGO network. Meetings were also held in the United Republic of Tanzania and Tunisia where a conference was held for UNHCR and NGO staff from North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf States.

In October [A/55/127Add.1], the Executive Committee, recognizing the importance of NGOs as partners in UNHCR's humanitarian work on behalf of refugees, extended their observer participation until the end of 2003, at which time it would be reviewed.

Evaluation and inspection activities

UNHCR, reporting on its evaluation activities in an August report [A/AC.96/935], stated that, with the establishment of the Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit [YUN 1999, p. 1129], a new evaluation policy was introduced based on the principles of transparency, independence, consultation and relevance. As an initial step in its application, UNHCR declassified all previous evaluation reports and posted those issued during the past four years on its web

site. It also established an Evaluation Committee to guide the evaluation function and created individual steering committees for each evaluation project. Several initiatives were being undertaken to further enhance the evaluation function in UNHCR, including providing evaluation training, expanding the evaluation consultancy roster and finding ways to plan the work programme more systematically and to integrate evaluation findings more effectively into UNHCR's planning, programming and policy-making.

The major evaluation undertaken during the year was a review of UNHCR's emergency preparedness and response in the Kosovo refugee crisis, based on the findings of an independent team of experts. That evaluation played a major part in the formulation of UNHCR's plan of action to strengthen its emergency preparedness and response capacity. In the area of refugee security and protection, UNHCR undertook a study of violence in Kenya's refugee camps and an evaluation of its security measures in the United Republic of Tanzania. The Office began an evaluation of its policy for refugees in urban areas with reviews of its programmes in New Delhi, India; Cairo, Egypt; and Nairobi, Kenya. Other evaluations were initiated on the reintegration of returning refugees, refugee education, internally displaced persons, protracted situations of displacement, UNHCR's role in relation to statelessness and in strengthening national NGOs, and UNHCR training activities with implementation partners, among others.

As described by UNHCR in its annual report [A/56/12], real-time evaluation missions were undertaken to assess new emergency operations in Angola, Eritrea and the Sudan, while a beneficiary-based evaluation of the UNHCR programme was conducted in Guinea. The Office also joined the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP) in commissioning an inter-agency evaluation of the UN humanitarian assistance programmes in Afghanistan, focusing on needs assessment and beneficiary identification.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 4 December [meeting 81], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) Committee [A/55/597], adopted **resolution 55/74** without vote [agenda item 109].

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The General Assembly,
Having considered the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the activities of

her Office and the report of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the work of its fifty-first session and the conclusions and decisions contained therein,

Recalling its resolution 54/146 of 17 December 1999,

Commending the High Commissioner, her staff and their implementing partners for the competent, courageous and dedicated manner in which they discharge their responsibilities, paying tribute to those staff members whose lives have been endangered in the course of their duties, and strongly condemning the deaths and injuries and other forms of physical and psychological violence experienced by staff members as a consequence of generalized as well as targeted violence,

Expressing appreciation, in this year which marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for the work accomplished since its establishment in responding to the protection and assistance needs of refugees and in promoting durable solutions to their plight, and commending States for their cooperation and support,

1. Endorses the report of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the work of its fifty-first session;

2. Strongly reaffirms the fundamental importance and the purely humanitarian and non-political character of the function of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees of providing international protection to refugees and seeking permanent solutions to the problem of refugees, and reiterates the need for Governments to continue to facilitate the effective exercise of this function;

3. Expresses sincere appreciation and gratitude to Sadako Ogata for her unrelenting efforts throughout her tenure as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to promote innovative humanitarian solutions to the refugee problem in various parts of the world, and for her inspiring example in performing her functions in an effective and dedicated manner;

4. Reaffirms that the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees remain the foundation of the international refugee regime and recognizes the importance of their full application by States parties, notes with satisfaction that one hundred and forty States are now parties to one instrument or to both, welcomes the fact that an intergovernmental event involving those States is planned on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Convention, and encourages the Office of the High Commissioner and States to strengthen their efforts to promote broader accession to those instruments and their full implementation;

5. Notes that fifty-two States are now parties to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and that twenty-three States are parties to the 1961 Convention on the reduction of statelessness, and encourages the High Commissioner to continue her activities on behalf of stateless persons;

6. Reaffirms that, as set out in article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution, and calls upon all States to refrain from taking measures that jeopardize the institution of asy-

lum, in particular by returning or expelling refugees or asylum-seekers contrary to international standards;

7. Emphasizes that the protection of refugees is primarily the responsibility of States, whose full and effective cooperation, action and political resolve are required to enable the Office of the High Commissioner to fulfil its mandated functions, welcomes the proposal of the Office of the High Commissioner to commence a process of global consultations on international protection, and requests a report thereon;

8. Welcomes measures taken by the Office of the High Commissioner to make protection effective, recognizing that international protection is a dynamic and action-oriented function, carried out in cooperation with States and other partners, inter alia, to promote and facilitate the admission, reception and treatment of refugees and to ensure protection-oriented solutions;

9. Stresses the importance of international solidarity, burden-sharing and international cooperation to share responsibilities and partnerships in reinforcing the international protection of refugees, urges all States and relevant non-governmental and other organizations, in conjunction with the Office of the High Commissioner, to cooperate and to mobilize resources with a view to reducing the heavy burden borne by States, in particular developing countries, that have received large numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees, and calls upon the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to play its catalytic role in mobilizing assistance from the international community to address the economic, environmental and social impact of large-scale refugee populations, especially in developing countries;

10. Condemns all acts that pose a threat to the personal security and well-being of refugees and asylum-seekers, such as refoulement, unlawful expulsion and physical attacks, and calls upon all States of refuge, in cooperation with international organizations where appropriate, to take all necessary measures to ensure respect for the principles of refugee protection, including the humane treatment of asylum-seekers;

11. Urges States to uphold the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, inter alia, through effective measures to prevent the infiltration of armed elements, to identify and separate any such armed elements from refugee populations, to settle refugees in secure locations and to afford the Office of the High Commissioner and other appropriate humanitarian organizations prompt, unhindered and safe access to asylum-seekers, refugees and other persons of concern;

12. Calls upon States and all concerned parties to take urgently all possible measures to safeguard the physical security and property of the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner and other humanitarian personnel, to investigate fully any crime committed against them and to bring to justice persons responsible for such crimes;

13. Encourages the Office of the High Commissioner, in cooperation with host countries and in coordination with other relevant United Nations bodies, further to develop and integrate appropriate security arrangements in its operations, and to allocate adequate resources for the safety and security of its staff and the persons under its mandate;

14. Notes that the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel is now in force, calls upon those States that have not yet done so to consider signing and ratifying the Convention, but notes in this regard that the Convention does not automatically apply to most humanitarian personnel, and therefore invites States to provide a timely response to the recommendation of the Secretary-General to extend the scope of legal protection to all United Nations and associated personnel through the development of a protocol to the 1994 Convention or by other appropriate means;

15. Urges all States and relevant organizations to support the High Commissioner's search for durable solutions to refugee problems, including voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement in a third country, as appropriate, reaffirms that voluntary repatriation is the preferred solution to refugee problems, and calls upon countries of origin, countries of asylum, the Office of the High Commissioner and the international community to act in a spirit of burden-sharing and partnership to enable refugees to exercise their right to return home in safety and with dignity;

16. Calls upon all States to promote conditions conducive to the voluntary repatriation of refugees in safety and with dignity, including conditions furthering reconciliation and long-term development in countries of return, and to support the sustainable reintegration of returnees by providing countries of origin with necessary rehabilitation and development assistance in conjunction, as appropriate, with the Office of the High Commissioner, relevant mechanisms, including those within the United Nations system, and development agencies;

17. Reiterates the right of all persons to return to their country of origin, emphasizes in this regard the obligation of all States to accept the return of their nationals, calls upon all States to facilitate the return of their nationals who have sought asylum and have been determined not to be in need of international protection, and affirms the need for the return of persons to be undertaken in a humane manner and with full respect for their human rights and dignity, irrespective of the status of the persons concerned;

18. Acknowledges the desirability of comprehensive approaches by the international community, notably at the regional level, to the problems of refugees and displaced persons, and notes in this regard that capacity-building in countries of origin and countries of asylum can play an important role in addressing the root causes of refugee flows, strengthening emergency preparedness and response, promoting and building peace, and developing regional standards for the protection of refugees;

19. Urges States, in cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner and other relevant organizations, to explore and support fully capacity-building initiatives as part of a comprehensive approach to addressing refugee issues and to take necessary measures to promote sustainable development and to ensure the success of capacity-building activities, and reiterates that such initiatives may include those which strengthen legal and judicial institutions and civil society, those which promote services for refugees, the observance of human rights, the rule of law and accountability and those which enhance the capacity of States to fulfil

their responsibilities with respect to persons under the mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner;

20. Reiterates its support for the role of the Office of the High Commissioner in providing humanitarian assistance and protection to internally displaced persons on the basis of criteria enumerated in paragraph 16 of its resolution 53/125 of 9 December 1998, and underlines the continuing relevance of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement;

21. Calls upon States to adopt an approach that is sensitive to gender-related concerns and to ensure that women whose claims to refugee status are based upon a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons enumerated in the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, including persecution through sexual violence or other gender-related persecution, are recognized as refugees, and encourages the Office of the High Commissioner to continue and to strengthen its efforts for the protection of refugee women;

22. Urges States and relevant parties to respect and observe principles of international human rights and humanitarian and refugee law that are of particular relevance to safeguarding the rights of the child and adolescent refugees whose situation is particularly vulnerable to abuse, welcomes in this regard the adoption of the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and calls upon States to consider signing and ratifying them as a matter of priority;

23. Underlines the particular role of elderly refugees within the refugee family, welcomes the development by the Office of the High Commissioner of guidelines to address their special needs, and calls upon States and the Office of the High Commissioner to make renewed efforts to ensure that the rights, needs and dignity of elderly and disabled refugees are fully respected and that programmes are designed bearing in mind their special vulnerabilities;

24. Recalls that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and that it is entitled to protection by society and the State, and calls upon States, working in close collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner and other concerned organizations, to take measures to ensure that the refugee's family is protected, including through measures aimed at reuniting family members separated as a result of refugee flight;

25. Calls upon Governments and other donors to demonstrate their international solidarity and burden-sharing with countries of asylum, in particular developing countries, countries with economies in transition and countries with limited resources that, owing to their location, host large numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers, and urges Governments to respond promptly and adequately to the global appeal issued by the Office of the High Commissioner, presenting requirements under its annual programme budget, to support efforts to widen the donor base so as to achieve greater burden-sharing among donors and to assist the High Commissioner in securing additional and timely income from traditional governmental sources, other Governments and the private sector so as to ensure that the needs of persons under the mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner are fully met.

UNHCR fiftieth anniversary and World Refugee Day

In 2000, UNHCR commemorated its fiftieth anniversary. As a lasting legacy to that achievement, the High Commissioner announced that the independent Refugee Education Trust was being launched on 14 December to provide refugee adolescents in developing countries with opportunities for post-primary education.

The Executive Committee, in a decision on the anniversary and World Refugee Day [A/55/12/Add.1], forwarded to the General Assembly a draft resolution for adoption.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 4 December [meeting 81], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third Committee [A/55/597], adopted **resolution 55/76** without vote [agenda item 109].

Fiftieth anniversary of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and World Refugee Day

The General Assembly

1. Commends the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for its leadership and coordination of international action for refugees, and acknowledges the tireless efforts of the Office of the High Commissioner to provide international protection and assistance to refugees and other persons of concern and to promote durable solutions for their problems during the past fifty years;

2. Pays tribute to the dedication of United Nations humanitarian workers and associated personnel, the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner in the field, including local staff, who risk their lives in the performance of their duties;

3. Reaffirms its support for the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions, on behalf of returnees, stateless persons and internally displaced persons;

4. Notes the crucial role of partnerships with Governments and international, regional and non-governmental organizations, as well as of the participation of refugees in decisions that affect their lives;

5. Recognizes that, by virtue of its activities on behalf of refugees and other persons of concern, the Office of the High Commissioner also contributes to promoting the purposes and principles of the United Nations, in particular those related to peace, human rights and development;

6. Notes that 2001 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, which sets out the fundamental concepts for international refugee protection;

7. Also notes that the Organization of African Unity has agreed that an international refugee day may coincide with Africa Refugee Day on 20 June;

8. Decides that, as from 2001, 20 June will be celebrated as World Refugee Day.

Enlargement of Executive Committee

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 28 July, the Economic and Social Council, by **decision 2000/302**, took note of Mexico's request [E/2000/92] for membership in the UNHCR Executive Committee and recommended that the General Assembly take a decision at its fifty-fifth (2000) session on the question of increasing the membership of the Executive Committee from 57 to 58 States.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 4 December [meeting 81], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third Committee [A/55/597], adopted **resolution 55/72** without vote [agenda item 109].

Enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The General Assembly,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council decision 2000/302 of 28 July 2000 concerning the enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,

Taking note also of the request regarding the enlargement of the Executive Committee contained in the letter dated 11 July 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General,

1. Decides to increase the number of members of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from fifty-seven to fifty-eight States;

2. Requests the Economic and Social Council to elect the additional member at its resumed organizational session for 2001.

Financial and administrative questions

UNHCR's initial annual programme budget for 2000, presented for the first time under a single unified structure, was \$933.5 million [A/56/12], revised later to \$942.3 million. Of that amount, \$824.7 million related to the annual programme budget, \$6.8 million to Junior Professional Officers, \$20.2 million to the UN regular budget and \$90.6 million to supplementary programmes for Angola, East Timor, Eritrea, Sierra Leone and the northern Caucasus. Total income, including adjustments and prior-year cancellations, reached \$786 million. Total expenditure amounted to \$801.4 million, of which \$707.5 million was from the annual programme budget. The latter figure was \$117.2 million (or 14 per cent) less than the revised budget, as a result of actions taken in late 2000 to closely manage expenditure. UNHCR expenditure by region in 2000 was as follows: Africa, \$285 million; Asia and the Pacific, \$75.4 million; Europe, \$229 mil-

lion; the Americas and the Caribbean, \$25 million; Central and South-West Asia, and North Africa and the Middle East, \$73.4 million.

For 2001, the Executive Committee approved budgetary requirements of \$898.5 million. By 31 December, total needs had increased to \$953.7 million due to supplementary programmes for Angola, Eritrea and Sierra Leone. It approved the revised 2000 annual programme budget amounting to \$824,740,973, which, together with the UN regular budget contribution of \$20,191,400, provision for Junior Professional Officers of \$6,826,400 and the needs for supplementary programmes, brought total requirements for the year to \$942,346,173. The Committee requested the High Commissioner, within available resources, to respond flexibly and efficiently to needs currently under the 2001 budget and authorized her, in the case of additional emergency needs that could not be fully met from the Operational Reserve, to issue special appeals and create supplementary programmes.

Funding arrangements

The Executive Committee, in a decision on the pledging conference [A/55/12/Add.1], recalled the decision of the Standing Committee at its eighteenth meeting [A/AC.96/393] proposing an alternative pledging arrangement and reaffirmed the need to link more closely the procedures relating to the adoption of UNHCR's annual programme budget, the issue of the global appeal and the funding mechanism. It recommended a draft resolution to the General Assembly for adoption.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 4 December [meeting 81], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third Committee [A/55/597], adopted **resolution 55/75** without vote [agenda item 109].

Ad hoc Committee of the General Assembly for the announcement of voluntary contributions to the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 1556 A (XV) of 18 December 1960 and 1729(XVI) of 20 December 1961 on the convening of an ad hoc Committee of the Whole, under the chairmanship of the President of the General Assembly, as soon as practicable after the opening of each regular session of the Assembly, for the purpose of announcing pledges of voluntary contributions to the refugee programmes for the following year,

Recalling also that the ad hoc Committee of the General Assembly for the announcement of voluntary contributions to the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has been convened annually, under the chairmanship of the President of the General Assembly or his or her designated repre-

sentative, at United Nations Headquarters, immediately following the debate on the report of the High Commissioner in the Third Committee,

Noting that the General Assembly, in its resolution 54/146 of 17 December 1999, endorsed the presentation of a unified annual programme budget of the Office of the High Commissioner,

Noting also that financial requirements under the annual programme budget for the programmes of the Office of the High Commissioner are presented in the global appeal issued late in November or early in December each year at Geneva, forming the basis for pledges in response to the information provided in the global appeal,

Decides, in order to improve and rationalize the funding mechanism following the adoption of the annual programme budget, that the ad hoc Committee of the General Assembly may be convened as from 2001 at Geneva, the headquarters of the Office of the High Commissioner.

Accounts (1999)

The audited financial statements on voluntary funds administered by UNHCR for the year ending 31 December 1999 [A/55/5/Add.5] showed total expenditure of over \$1,023 million and total income of \$927 million, with a reserve balance of \$145.1 million.

The Board of Auditors' main findings were that a decline in voluntary contributions from donor countries posed a liquidity risk for UNHCR; inadequate segregation of functions in field offices could not ensure checks and balances of responsibility; the asset tracking system had been inadequate to capture accurate and complete non-expendable property databases and had failed to support effective tracking and decentralized management of UNHCR assets; financial statements did not include comprehensive inventory lists and therefore did not reflect an accurate valuation of non-expendable property; of 13 implementing partners having \$8.2 million in outstanding advances, 8 had not submitted final sub-project monitoring reports, which had delayed closure of the projects; and the required submission of audit certificates by implementing partners had reached the set target of 70 per cent.

The Board recommended that the Administration should improve presentation of non-expendable property in notes to the financial statements; ensure regular reconciliation of account balances between headquarters and field offices; strengthen proper monitoring and evaluation of programme implementation; and strictly adhere to UN accounting standards.

UNHCR, in September [A/AC.96/933/Add.1], reported on measures taken or proposed to respond to the recommendations of the Board of Auditors.

In an October report [A/55/487], the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) shared the concern of the Board of Auditors about UNHCR's financial situation. It commended the Office for steps taken to ensure accountability of implementing partners and hoped that, in view of resource constraints, UNHCR activities would be planned and implemented more efficiently, and greater financial control would be exercised over agency funds and operations. It urged UNHCR to address urgently the shortcomings identified by the Board regarding budgetary control, human resources, programme management and project implementation. Noting the abandonment of the asset management system, ACABQ requested comprehensive data on the implementation of all information technology projects, including costs.

The Executive Committee, in a decision on administrative, financial and programme matters [A/55/12/Add.1], requested to be kept regularly informed on measures taken to address the recommendations and observations raised by the Board of Auditors and ACABQ.

OIOS report

On 7 April, the General Assembly, in **resolution 54/257**, took note of the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the 1998 review of the procurement of Lysol disinfectant by UNHCR [A/52/887]. That review determined that there was no evidence that UNHCR staff had acted negligently in the loss of \$2.1 million.

Standing Committee

The Standing Committee held three meetings in 2000 (29 February-2 March [A/AC.96/929]; 5-7 July [A/AC.96/939]; 27-28 September [A/AC.96/943]). It considered programmes and funding for the near term, as well as UNHCR's medium-term plan for 2002-2005, and reviewed its programmes and activities in various regions. Other issues included programme/protection policy issues, such as safety and security of staff, and the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements and their security; the independent evaluation of UNHCR's response to the Kosovo emergency; international protection; and matters relevant to management, finance, oversight and human resources. Decisions were adopted on programme and funding, the medium-term plan, the new annual programme budget, and mobilizing resources for a unified budget: the pledging conference, as were conclusions on older refugees and on mainstreaming environmental concerns in refugee operations. The Committee recognized general principles

on resourcing UNHCR's unified budget. It endorsed UNCHR's policy on older refugees.

In October [A/55/12/Add.1], the Executive Committee requested UNHCR to include in the documentation for each item of the Standing Committee's 2001 programme of work the relevant audit and ACABQ recommendations, as well as information on steps taken to implement those recommendations and related Executive Committee decisions and conclusions. It authorized the Standing Committee to add items to or delete them from its intersessional programme of work, as appropriate. The items adopted for the 2001 programme of work were international protection; programme/protection policy; programme and funding; governance; coordination; and management, financial, oversight and human resources.

Safety of staff

In 2000, restricted access in conflict areas in various parts of the world inhibited UNHCR's ability to protect and provide relief to many affected populations and impacted the Office's own security, as was evidenced by the murder of three UNHCR staff members in West Timor and one in Guinea. In the aftermath of the killings and abductions of several staff members, UNHCR reassessed its safety and security preparedness and established a strategy to improve security.

On 8 September, the Security Council, in **resolution 1319(2000)** (see p. 283), welcomed Indonesia's intention to conduct a full-scale investigation into the killings in West Timor and to take firm action against those found guilty.

In an October decision on safety of staff of UNHCR and all other humanitarian personnel [A/55/12/Add.1], the Executive Committee urged States to safeguard the physical security of the staff of the United Nations and its agencies and of other humanitarian personnel, to ensure their safe and unhindered access to affected populations and to investigate fully any crimes committed against those persons and bring to justice those responsible. It noted that the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel [YUN 1994, p. 1289] was in force and urged States to consider signing and ratifying that instrument. It also urged the conclusion of an optional protocol to the Convention, which would extend protection to all humanitarian personnel. The Committee encouraged UNHCR to further develop appropriate security arrangements in its operations and to allocate sufficient resources for the safety and security of its staff and its beneficiary populations.

Refugee protection and assistance

Protection issues

In the 2000 annual report [A/56/12], the High Commissioner said many States, often those with the most limited resources, continued to host large refugee populations on their territories. However, the quality of asylum had deteriorated in a number of countries due to economic and social difficulties of hosting such populations for extended periods, national security considerations, concern about the use of asylum procedures by illegal immigrants, and trafficking and smuggling of persons. While there was general tightening of borders around the world, regions faced different problems, such as politicization and militarization of refugee camps; security risks due to the presence of armed elements in camps and areas populated with refugees; forced conscription of refugees, often minors; trafficking of refugee women and their vulnerability to sexual violence; exploitation and abuse of refugee children; and forced repatriation despite the risks to returnees' safety.

A July note on international protection [A/AC.96/930] pointed out that the Office's international protection function had evolved over the past five decades from being a surrogate for consular and diplomatic protection to ensuring the basic rights of refugees and, increasingly, their physical safety and security. UNHCR had to contend with a rapidly changing and complex environment in which the political, security, economic and social costs of hosting refugees had affected States' willingness and capacity to receive refugees. Its protection function had come under increasing scrutiny and, in situations of large-scale influxes, international assistance to affected States had overshadowed issues of international protection, causing confusion over the relationship between protection and assistance. Additionally, because a plethora of varying notions of protection had emerged, there was a need to clarify its content. International protection encompassed activities covering both policy and operational concerns carried out in cooperation with States and other partners to enhance respect for the rights of refugees and to resolve their problems. The operational focus of UNHCR's international protection activities, coupled with the fact that UNHCR did not have to be invited to become involved in protection matters, had made UNHCR's mandate distinct within the international system. The note examined the Office's organizational practice regarding its four principal protection challenges: ensuring the

availability and quality of asylum; revitalizing the refugee protection system; promoting durable solutions for protection and engaging in in-country protection activities; and fostering partnerships to support the international refugee protection system.

Regarding asylum, UNHCR activities were aimed at enhancing the capacity of States to receive and protect refugees; intervening with authorities; ensuring physical safety of refugees; prioritizing the protection needs of women, children, adolescents and the elderly; promoting national legislation and asylum procedures; and determining refugee status. In efforts to revitalize the protection system, UNHCR promoted international refugee law and standards, including through its global campaign to promote accession to international refugee instruments. The Office also explored new approaches to refugee protection, strengthened linkages with international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and encouraged consistency in regional approaches.

UNHCR's work in the field focused on establishing conditions for voluntary repatriation, an activity that retained a political nature, placing it beyond the Office's capabilities. According to the note, return had been used in certain countries as the sole vehicle to achieve ethnic integration and promote multi-ethnicity and, eventually, reconciliation. However, in the highly politicized context in which it often occurred, caution was necessary to ensure respect for protection standards. Other activities in that area included concluding voluntary repatriation agreements; monitoring treatment of returnees; maintaining a presence in the country of origin; assisting returnees, particularly women and children; local integration; and resettlement.

The Office strengthened its partnerships with States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, judges, parliamentarians, journalists, the military and the corporate sector. It promoted collaboration on refugee protection through the "Reach Out" consultative process, initiated in 1998 to engage non-State actors in dialogues on the nature and dimensions of protection challenges, among other initiatives.

In an October conclusion on international protection [A/55/12/Add.1], the Executive Committee welcomed UNHCR's proposal to commence global consultations with States, involving refugee protection experts, NGOs and refugees, to revitalize the international protection regime and to discuss measures to ensure international protection for those who needed it. It also affirmed the importance of according priority attention to the protection needs of women, children, adoles-

cents and the elderly in the planning and implementation of UNHCR's programmes and State policies.

International instruments

In 2000, Mexico and Trinidad and Tobago became parties to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees [YUN 1951, p. 520] and its 1967 Protocol [YUN 1967, p. 477]. Swaziland also acceded to the 1951 Convention, bringing the number of States party to one or both instruments to 137. Guatemala, Lithuania, Mexico and Slovakia became parties to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons [YUN 1954, p. 416], raising the number of States parties to 53. With the accession of Slovakia and Tunisia, the number of States party to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness [YUN 1961, p. 533] reached 23.

Promotional activities

Global consultations

In July, UNHCR launched a process of global consultations on international protection to promote full and effective implementation of the 1951 Convention [YUN 1951, p. 520] and its 1967 Protocol [YUN 1967, p. 477] and to develop new approaches, tools and standards to ensure its continuing vitality and relevance. The consultations were designed along three parallel tracks. The first was to encourage reaffirmation of States parties' commitment to implementation of the Convention and its Protocol, and to promote further accessions. To that end, a major inter-governmental event to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Convention was being organized by the Swiss Government and UNHCR, to be held in Geneva in December 2001. The second track would provide for the study of developments in refugee law and an examination of emerging issues through expert discussions on specific interpretive aspects of the Convention and its Protocol. The process would comprise four round tables, drawn from Governments, NGOs, academia, the judiciary and the legal profession. The third track would focus on protection policy issues, including those inadequately covered by the Convention. It was designed to foster common understanding of protection challenges and enhance cooperation to address them; to identify and promote practical responses to those challenges; and to develop new approaches, tools and standards. The discussions would take place within the framework of the Executive Committee in 2001 and 2002.

Assistance measures

The global population of concern to UNHCR decreased from 22.3 million in 1999 to 21.1 million in 2000. Those assisted included asylum-seekers, refugees, returning refugees in the early stages of their reintegration, internally displaced persons and other people of concern, mainly victims of conflict. Although there was no massive repatriation on the scale of the 1999 Kosovo repatriation [YUN 1999, p. 1135], some 800,000 refugees returned home, often to situations of uncertainty or fragile peace. The Office also facilitated the resettlement of 40,000 refugees from first asylum countries. Although less frequently an option, local integration provided an opportunity for some groups of refugees to start new lives, particularly in West Africa and the Balkans region. However, solutions remained elusive for the majority of displaced persons, and some protracted situations spanned decades, as in the case of refugees from Afghanistan.

In 2000, UNHCR received a total of some \$705.3 million in voluntary contributions towards its annual programme budget.

Refugees and the environment

In 2000, UNHCR's focus on environmental issues evolved in response to the changing needs of its operations in different countries and regions. Priority issues addressed included promoting and implementing UNHCR's environmental policy through practical field activities; designing and implementing an environmental assessment and monitoring programme; strengthening the education programme to raise environmental awareness; training in environmental management for UNHCR staff and implementing partners; and improving communications and outreach within and outside UNHCR.

The Office supported a number of model projects in Afghanistan, Rwanda, the Sudan and Zimbabwe. To raise awareness of environmental management, other initiatives included developing an educational booklet in Liberia, *Our Environment: Taking Care of Our Future*, in collaboration with the Environmental Foundation for Africa. UNHCR also worked with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on environmental education projects in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, the Sudan and Zambia, as well as with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on projects in Guinea and Kosovo, and in assessing the environmental impact of refugees in Albania and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Refugee women

UNHCR's approach in addressing the rights and needs of refugee women was to continue efforts to incorporate a gender equality perspective in all its operational activities. Key objectives included the integration of gender analysis into UNHCR's policies, guidelines and key documents, as well as the evaluation of activities from a gender perspective; improvement of prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence; empowerment of refugee and returnee women to participate in peace-building; encouragement of dialogue with displaced women; and development of multisectoral regional and country-level gender networks. UNHCR disseminated a new policy directive, Gender Based Persecution, in 2000 and began developing a new Policy on Gender Equality for People of Concern to UNHCR. It also updated its Policy on Refugee Women and began a revision of the Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women. The Office facilitated a consultation between representatives of displaced women from Burundi, Colombia, Kosovo, Myanmar and Sierra Leone, and government and intergovernmental and non-governmental organization representatives in October to maintain focus on those women's real needs and concerns.

Also in 2000, UNHCR funded the participation of Burundian refugee women in the Arusha peace talks for Burundi (see p. 146) and supported the creation of a network of women peace activists in West Africa. In addition, UNHCR continued to implement programmes to address sexual and gender-based violence.

Refugee children and adolescents

Some 10 million, approximately 45 per cent of all refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR, were children and adolescents under 18 years. In 2000, UNHCR retained the issue of refugee children as a policy priority in terms of both international protection and assistance activities. It worked closely with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and with UNICEF. It also collaborated with the Geneva-based NGO subgroup on refugee children and children in armed conflict and maintained close association with the Action for the Rights of Children training and capacity-building programme. The focus throughout 2000 remained the review and revision of resource materials and regional follow-up activities. Five resource packs—Working with Children; Community Mobilization; Child Soldiers; Education; and Sexual and Reproductive Health—were completed and made

available on UNHCR's web site. Other initiatives included workshops to train trainers in East and West Africa and in the Great Lakes region, an expansion of the regional scope of the project to Southern Africa and regional follow-up activities in Eastern Europe and West Africa.

Elderly refugees

UNHCR's policy on older refugees, calling for efforts to mainstream the policy priorities relating to the elderly, was endorsed by the Standing Committee in March [A/AC.96/929] and operationalized through integration into UNHCR programming and learning tools. During the year, all field offices received HelpAge International research and best practices, funded by UNHCR and the European Community Humanitarian Office, as well as the video *Hardship and Courage*, which described the situation of older refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees in Croatia, and a policy document on older refugees. The policy and examples of activities with older refugees in UNHCR operations were presented in the form of a brochure, *Older Refugees—A Resource for the Refugee Community*, which was disseminated to UNHCR offices and partners.

Refugees and HIV/AIDS

UNHCR, recognizing that conflicts, instability, food insecurity, poverty and deprivation offered fertile ground for the spread of HIV and AIDS, developed a strong partnership with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and continued to rely on that agency's expertise and advocacy role in ensuring that refugees were included in existing assistance programmes. In 2000, UNHCR benefited from a grant from the United Nations Foundation—a public charity founded by Robert Edward Turner to manage his gift to the United Nations of some \$1 billion—to strengthen reproductive health and HIV/AIDS activities for refugees. The focus of UNHCR's efforts was in Southern and East Africa.

Regional activities

Africa

Security Council consideration. The Security Council, on 13 January [meeting 4089], considered the agenda item "Promoting peace and security: humanitarian assistance to refugees in Africa".

Addressing the meeting, the High Commissioner said that in the last few years, the pattern of refugee crises, especially in Africa, had undergone significant changes. Although refugees continued to flee violence and conflict and to

seek asylum in safer countries, they increasingly sought refuge in safer parts of their own countries. In Angola, almost 20 per cent of the population had fled, both outside and inside the country's borders. Hundreds of thousands of people at risk in war areas, such as Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and southern Sudan, the majority of them displaced, were currently not accessible to humanitarian organizations. Where such access was possible, it was often very dangerous. Asylum countries that had generously hosted refugees, such as Guinea and the United Republic of Tanzania, had paid a high price in terms of their security and socio-economic and natural environment. War-induced mass population movements had also contributed to the spread of conflicts, as in Central and West Africa. The High Commissioner said that there could be no solution to the refugee crisis if wars that forced people to flee did not stop. However, refugee crises could not be solved in a vacuum. The Council should seek more decisive measures to solve the problems of the indiscriminate struggle for resources, the uncontrolled flow of arms, the lack of a conflict resolution mechanism, and weak support in post-conflict situations.

The High Commissioner suggested the adoption of a comprehensive regional strategy to deal with the host of problems facing Africa. The Council should promote regional initiatives, following the model of the Stability Pact on South-Eastern Europe [YUN 1999, p. 398], that could involve States in the respective regions. It had an essential role to play in preventing, containing and resolving conflicts and, hence, refugee problems in Africa by taking clear, strong and united positions, supporting more decisively, rapidly and substantively the follow-up to peace agreements and promoting the mobilization of resources for reconstruction and peace-building.

The High Commissioner noted that resources provided to refugees in Africa, including food and other basic survival items, were far less than in other parts of the world. She hoped that the Council would prompt the international community to address seriously that grave imbalance in material assistance.

SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION

On 13 January [meeting 4089], the Security Council President, following consultations among Council members, made statement S/PRST/2000/1 on behalf of the Council:

The Security Council recalls its previous statements concerning protection for humanitarian assistance to refugees and others in conflict situa-

tions, the situation in Africa, the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and the role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts. The Council further recalls its relevant resolutions, as well as relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

Bearing in mind its primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Council underlines the importance of taking measures aimed at conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. The Council stresses the need to address the root causes of armed conflict in a comprehensive manner in order to prevent those circumstances that lead to internal displacement and the outflow of refugees. The Council notes with concern that the majority of refugees, returnees, internally displaced persons and others affected by conflict are women and children, and stresses the need to intensify efforts to meet their special protection needs, including their vulnerability to violence, exploitation and disease, including HIV/AIDS. The Council underlines the obligation of all Member States to seek to settle their international disputes by peaceful means. The Council condemns deliberate targeting of civilians and practices of forced displacement. The Council reaffirms its commitment to the principles of political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States. The Council emphasizes that national authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons within their jurisdiction. The Council reaffirms the obligation of States to prevent arbitrary displacement in situations of armed conflict, and reaffirms as well their responsibility to meet the protection and assistance needs of internally displaced persons within their jurisdiction.

The Council expresses its grave concern that alarmingly high numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa do not receive sufficient protection and assistance. In this context, the Council notes that refugees are protected under the 1951 United Nations Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, and other relevant initiatives in the region. The Council notes also that there is no comprehensive protection regime for internally displaced persons and that existing norms are not being fully implemented. The Council recognizes that large-scale human suffering as well as violations of human rights and humanitarian law are consequences of, and contributing factors to, instability and further conflict. In this regard, the Council affirms the need to ensure adequate protection and assistance both for refugees and for internally displaced persons, taking into account the special difficulties in the provision of humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons in Africa.

The Council urges all parties concerned to comply strictly with their obligations under international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, and emphasizes the need for better implementation of relevant norms with regard to internally displaced persons. The Council invites States that have

not already done so to consider ratifying the relevant instruments of international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. The Council takes note of the efforts made within the United Nations system aimed at promoting an effective collective response by the international community to situations of internal displacement. The Council calls upon States, in particular States with situations of internal displacement in Africa, to cooperate fully with such efforts. The Council notes further that the United Nations agencies and regional and non-governmental organizations, in cooperation with host Governments, are making use of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, *inter alia*, in Africa.

The Council reaffirms the responsibility of States hosting refugees to ensure the security and the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, in accordance with existing international standards and international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. In this regard, the Council underlines the unacceptability of using refugees and other persons in refugee camps and settlements to achieve military purposes in the country of asylum or the country of origin.

The Council underlines the importance of safe and unhindered access, in accordance with international law, of humanitarian personnel to civilians in armed conflict, including refugees and internally displaced persons, and the protection of humanitarian assistance to them, and recalls the responsibility of all parties in conflict to ensure the safety and security of such personnel. The Council condemns recent acts of deliberate violence in Africa against humanitarian personnel.

The Council recognizes the extensive experience and burden of African States in hosting refugees and in dealing with the effects of refugee camps and settlements. The Council welcomes the efforts made to support the needs of refugees in Africa, in particular those of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the host countries. Noting with concern the shortfall in funding for programmes for refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa, the Council calls upon the international community to provide such programmes with the necessary financial resources, taking into account the substantial needs in Africa.

Report of Secretary-General. In an October report on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa [A/55/471], submitted in accordance with resolution 54/147 [YUN 1999, p. 1141], the Secretary-General stated that, at mid-year, UNHCR was assisting almost 6.3 million persons in that continent, nearly one third of the total number of refugees worldwide. The report noted that the main refugee groups continued to originate in Sierra Leone (487,200), the Sudan (467,700), Somalia (451,500), Angola (350,700), Eritrea (345,600) and Burundi (325,500). The tripartite agreement signed in April by Eritrea, the Sudan and UNHCR raised hopes that some 160,000 Eritrean refugees living in the Sudan for

the past 30 years would finally go home. However, with the resumption of hostilities between Eritrea and Ethiopia one month later, that did not happen.

In West Africa, security incidents in northern Liberia triggered the flight of more than 11,000 Sierra Leonean refugees further south in Liberia, while 8,000 Liberian refugees left their homes for Guinea. UNHCR and its non-governmental partners also had to leave the area. Since 1997, more than 356,000 Liberian refugees had returned home, either spontaneously or with assistance, and UNHCR was planning to complete the organized repatriation by the end of 2000. During the year, UNHCR continued preparations for the voluntary return of refugees to safe places in Sierra Leone and facilitated the return of some 1,200 Chadian refugees from Cameroon. Meanwhile, it continued humanitarian assistance activities in Gabon and Guinea.

In Central Africa, Sudanese refugees fled to Chad, and the civil wars in the Congo and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) caused the flight of more refugees from those countries to the Central African Republic and Gabon. In the Great Lakes region, the DRC accommodated 300,000 refugees and 1.4 million displaced persons. UNHCR provided assistance to 180,000 refugees in the DRC from Angola, Burundi, the Congo, Rwanda, the Sudan and Uganda, as well as 300,000 displaced persons. Due to the ongoing unsettled situation in Burundi, refugees from that country continued to flee to the United Republic of Tanzania, which hosted one of the largest caseloads on the continent, some 488,000 refugees. UNHCR supported the Government in dealing with security issues in refugee-affected areas and surrounding villages, addressed sexual and gender-based violence and provided care and maintenance to the majority of refugees in that country. UNHCR monitored the situation in Rwanda and played a role in the reintegration of returnees. The Office contributed also to the drafting, translation and distribution of refugee legislation.

In East Africa and the Horn of Africa, strategies and solutions were developed to end protracted refugee programmes. Agreement was reached on arrangements to allow the repatriation beginning in March of some 3,700 Ethiopian refugees in the Sudan who had fled before 1991. In Somalia, an encouraging development was the resumed voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees from Ethiopia to north-west Somalia. By mid-2000, some 10,000 Somali refugees from camps in Ethiopia had been assisted to repatriate. The resumption of fighting between Eritrea and Ethiopia resulted in an influx of 90,000 Eritrean

refugees into the Sudan, and some 750,000 people were displaced inside Eritrea. The signing of a tripartite agreement by UNHCR, Ethiopia and Kenya in June paved the way for the return of 5,000 Kenyan refugees who had been in southern Ethiopia since 1992.

In 2000, UNHCR assisted over 300,000 refugees and asylum-seekers in Southern Africa and 300,000 internally displaced persons in northern Angola. Developments in the Caprivi Strip of Namibia triggered an influx of asylum-seekers into Botswana, which was hosting 3,000 refugees, and UNHCR was working with the Botswana Refugee Advisory Committee to integrate some of the refugees locally. Meanwhile, Angolan refugees in Namibia had increased to over 20,580 persons who were provided with food, non-food items, medical and legal assistance, and shelter. In Zambia, which hosted over 218,000 refugees, UNHCR provided food aid to 60,000 and helped to establish a new camp to accommodate the ever-increasing refugee population, mostly from Angola and the DRC. UNHCR also assisted over 2,000 refugees in Malawi from different countries and close to 1,750 who had been affected by extensive flood damage in Mozambique. The Office provided basic assistance and legal protection to the 58,000 asylum-seekers in South Africa. It also carried out activities to promote refugee law and protection principles in Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

The Secretary-General noted that inter-agency cooperation had been important in providing assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa, although the ravages caused by the AIDS pandemic had added to the difficulties encountered. Such cooperation had been undertaken in the areas of relief assistance; access to populations of concern; coordinating resources; assisting and protecting children; post-conflict reconstruction; and internally displaced persons in Africa. Regional cooperation was strengthened with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, as well as with financial institutions, such as the African Development Bank. UNHCR and OAU organized a special meeting of technical experts and policy advisers on international refugee protection (Conakry, Guinea, 27-29 March), which formulated proposals for a comprehensive plan to help strengthen the implementation of the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention and the regime of international protection for asylum-seekers, refugees and returnees and to facilitate the search for durable solutions to refugee problems.

Concluding, the Secretary-General stated that rebuilding a peaceful society in Africa could not

be achieved unless displaced persons and refugees successfully returned and reintegrated. Durable solutions could be found only if the alarming pattern of violence in the continent was reversed.

Report of High Commissioner. In the 2000 annual report [A/56/12], the High Commissioner, outlining UNHCR's regional activities in Africa, said that, following the assassination of a UNHCR staff member and the kidnapping of two others in Guinea in September and December, UN Security Phase IV was declared in all locations in that country, except Conakry and Kissidougou, further restricting UNHCR's protection and operational capacity. Responding to the evolving situation in West Africa, UNHCR adopted a regional strategy, establishing, among other initiatives, a subregional repatriation and reintegration cell in April, which contributed to the coordination of the Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugee situations and the reallocation of resources within the subregion. In Guinea, a three-pronged approach was used to provide emergency assistance to Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees and internally displaced persons in south-east Guinea; to organize internal relocation to relatively safe areas, giving priority to 135,000 refugees stranded west of Gueckedou; and to facilitate repatriation and reintegration for Sierra Leonean refugees from Guinea and promote the same for Liberian refugees. In Southern Africa, UNHCR's overall objective in 2000 was to ensure that the 320,000 refugees in the region continued to enjoy the right to seek asylum and be treated in accordance with international protection standards.

By subregion, UNHCR assisted 1.6 million persons in Central and West Africa, which received almost \$77 million in agency expenditure. In East Africa and the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region, \$175.2 million was spent on more than 2.9 million persons of concern, while in Southern Africa, \$32.8 million was spent on programmes assisting almost 600,000 refugees, internally displaced persons, asylum-seekers and returned refugees.

Communications. By a 3 August letter [A/55/286], Ghana transmitted the decisions adopted by the OAU Council of Ministers (Lome, Togo, 6-8 July) and the declarations and decisions adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU (10-12 July), which included a decision on the situation of refugees and displaced persons in Africa. The ministers endorsed the global implementation plan adopted by the OAU/UNHCR Special Meeting of Government and Non-Government Technical Experts (Conakry, Guinea, 27-29 March), as well as the recom-

mendations of the sixth OAU/ICRC Seminar on International Humanitarian Law (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 15-16 May).

By an October letter [A/55/506-S/2000/1006], Burundi conveyed the report of the Subregional Conference on the Question of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Central Africa (Bujumbura, Burundi, 14-16 August), organized by the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. The participants recommended measures to be taken at the national and subregional levels to find lasting solutions to the problems of refugees and displaced persons in Central Africa.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 4 December [meeting 81], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third Committee [A/55/597], adopted **resolution 55/77** without vote [agenda item 109].

Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 54/147 of 17 December 1999,

Recalling also the provisions of its resolution 2312(XXII) of 14 December 1967, by which it adopted the Declaration on Territorial Asylum,

Recalling further the Organization of African Unity Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa of 1969 and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights,

Recalling the Khartoum Declaration and the Recommendations on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa adopted by the Organization of African Unity at the ministerial meeting held at Khartoum on 13 and 14 December 1998,

Welcoming decision CM/Dec.531(LXXII) on the situation of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its seventy-second ordinary session, held at Lome from 6 to 8 July 2000,

Welcoming also the convening by the Organization of African Unity and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees of the Special Meeting of Governmental and Non-Governmental Technical Experts at Conakry from 27 to 29 March 2000, on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Organization of African Unity Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa, commending the comprehensive implementation plan adopted by the Special Meeting, and noting its endorsement by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its seventy-second ordinary session,

Commending the First Ministerial Conference on Human Rights in Africa of the Organization of African Unity, held at Grand-Baie, Mauritius, from 12 to 16 April 1999, and recalling the attention paid to issues relevant to refugees and displaced persons in the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the Conference,

Recalling the sixth Seminar on International Humanitarian Law, convened by the Organization of African Unity and the International Committee of the Red

Cross at Addis Ababa on 15 and 16 May 2000, and noting the endorsement of the recommendations of the Seminar by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its seventy-second ordinary session,

Recognizing the contributions made by African States to the development of regional standards for the protection of refugees and returnees, and noting with appreciation that countries of asylum are hosting refugees in a humanitarian spirit and in a spirit of African solidarity and brotherhood,

Recognizing also the need for States to address resolutely the root causes of forced displacement and to create conditions that facilitate durable solutions for refugees and displaced persons, and stressing in this regard the need for States to foster peace, stability and prosperity throughout the African continent,

Convinced of the need to strengthen the capacity of States to provide assistance and protection for refugees, returnees and displaced persons and of the need for the international community, within the context of burden-sharing, to increase its material, financial and technical assistance to the countries affected by refugees, returnees and displaced persons,

Acknowledging with appreciation that some assistance is already rendered by the international community to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and host countries in Africa,

Noting with great concern that, despite all the efforts deployed so far by the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and others, the situation of refugees and displaced persons in Africa, especially in the West African and Great Lakes regions and in the Horn of Africa, remains precarious,

Stressing that the provision of relief and assistance to African refugees by the international community should be on an equitable, non-discriminatory basis,

Considering that, among refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons, women and children are the majority of the population affected by conflict and bear the brunt of atrocities and other consequences of conflict,

1. Takes note of the reports of the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;

2. Notes with concern that the declining socio-economic situation, compounded by political instability, internal strife, human rights violations and natural disasters, has led to increased numbers of refugees and displaced persons in some countries of Africa, and remains particularly concerned about the impact of large-scale refugee populations on the security, socio-economic situation and environment of countries of asylum;

3. Recalls the commemoration in 1999 of the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Organization of African Unity Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa of 1969, and commends the convening by the Organization of African Unity and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees of the Special Meeting of Governmental and Non-Governmental Technical Experts at Conakry from 27 to 29 March 2000 to mark that anniversary;

4. Encourages African States to ensure the full implementation of and follow-up to the comprehensive

implementation plan adopted by the Special Meeting and endorsed by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity;

5. Also encourages African States to ensure the full implementation of and follow-up to the recommendations of the sixth Seminar on International Humanitarian Law, convened by the Organization of African Unity and the International Committee of the Red Cross at Addis Ababa on 15 and 16 May 2000;

6. Calls upon States and other parties to armed conflict to observe scrupulously the letter and the spirit of international humanitarian law, bearing in mind that armed conflict is one of the principal causes of forced displacement in Africa;

7. Expresses its sincere appreciation and gratitude to Sadako Ogata for her tireless efforts, throughout her tenure as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to address the plight of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa and for her inspiring example in performing her functions in an exemplary and dedicated manner;

8. Expresses its gratitude and appreciation, in this year which marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for the work accomplished since its establishment, with the support of the international community, in assisting African countries of asylum and responding to the needs of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa for assistance and protection;

9. Notes the intergovernmental event planned in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, in 2001, and encourages African States parties to the Convention to participate actively in the event;

10. Reaffirms that the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, as complemented by the Organization of African Unity Convention of 1969, remain the foundation of the international refugee protection regime in Africa, encourages African States that have not yet done so to accede to those instruments, and calls upon States parties to the Conventions to reaffirm their commitment to their ideals and to respect and observe their provisions;

11. Notes the need for States to address the root causes of forced displacement in Africa, and calls upon African States, the international community and relevant United Nations organizations to take concrete action to meet the needs of refugees, returnees and displaced persons for protection and assistance and to contribute generously to national projects and programmes aimed at alleviating their plight;

12. Also notes the link, *inter alia*, between human rights violations, poverty, natural disasters and environmental degradation and population displacement, and calls for redoubled and concerted efforts by States, in collaboration with the Organization of African Unity, to promote and protect human rights for all and to address these problems;

13. Encourages the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to continue to cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, within their respective mandates, in the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental free-

doms of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa;

14. Notes with appreciation the ongoing mediation and conflict resolution efforts carried out by African States, the Organization of African Unity and sub-regional organizations, as well as the establishment of regional mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution, and urges all relevant parties to address the humanitarian consequences of conflicts;

15. Expresses its appreciation and strong support for those African Governments and local populations that, in spite of the general deterioration of socio-economic and environmental conditions and overstretched national resources, continue to accept the additional burden imposed upon them by increasing numbers of refugees and displaced persons, in compliance with the relevant principles of asylum;

16. Expresses its concern about instances in which the fundamental principle of asylum is jeopardized by unlawful expulsion or refoulement or by threats to the life, physical security, integrity, dignity and well-being of refugees;

17. Calls upon States, in cooperation with international organizations, within their mandates, to take all necessary measures to ensure respect for the principles of refugee protection and, in particular, to ensure that the civilian and humanitarian nature of refugee camps is not compromised by the presence or the activities of armed elements;

18. Notes the proposal of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to commence a process of global consultations on the international refugee protection regime, and in this context invites African States to participate actively in this process so as to bring their regional perspective to bear, thus ensuring that adequate attention is paid to concerns that are specific to Africa;

19. Deplores the deaths and injuries and other forms of violence sustained by staff members of the Office of the High Commissioner and urges States, parties to conflict and all other relevant actors to take all necessary measures to protect activities related to humanitarian assistance, to prevent attacks on and kidnapping of national and international humanitarian workers and to ensure their safety and security, calls upon States to investigate fully any crimes committed against humanitarian personnel and bring to justice persons responsible for such crimes, and calls upon organizations and aid workers to abide by the national laws and regulations of the countries in which they operate;

20. Calls upon the Office of the High Commissioner, the Organization of African Unity, subregional organizations and all African States, in conjunction with United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the international community, to strengthen and revitalize existing partnerships and forge new ones in support of the international refugee protection system;

21. Calls upon the Office of the High Commissioner, the international community and other concerned entities to intensify their support to African Governments through appropriate capacity-building activities, including training of relevant officers, disseminating information about refugee instruments and principles, providing financial, technical and advisory services to accelerate the enactment or amendment and imple-

mentation of legislation relating to refugees, strengthening emergency response and enhancing capacities for the coordination of humanitarian activities;

22. Reaffirms the right of return and also the principle of voluntary repatriation, appeals to countries of origin and countries of asylum to create conditions that are conducive to voluntary repatriation, and recognizes that, while voluntary repatriation remains the pre-eminent solution, local integration and third-country resettlement, as appropriate, are also viable options for dealing with the situation of African refugees who, owing to prevailing circumstances in their respective countries of origin, are unable to return home;

23. Notes with satisfaction the voluntary return of millions of refugees to their homelands following the successful repatriation and reintegration operations carried out by the Office of the High Commissioner, with the cooperation and collaboration of countries hosting refugees and countries of origin, and looks forward to other programmes to assist the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of all refugees in Africa;

24. Reiterates that the Plan of Action adopted by the Regional Conference on Assistance to Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in the Great Lakes Region, held at Bujumbura from 15 to 17 February 1995, as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/149 of 21 December 1995, continues to be a viable framework for the resolution of the refugee and humanitarian problems in that region;

25. Appeals to the international community to respond positively, in the spirit of solidarity and burden-sharing, to the third-country resettlement requests of African refugees, and notes with appreciation that some African countries have offered resettlement places for refugees;

26. Welcomes the programmes carried out by the Office of the High Commissioner with host Governments, the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and the international community to address the environmental impact of refugee populations;

27. Calls upon the international donor community to provide material and financial assistance for the implementation of programmes intended for the rehabilitation of the environment and infrastructure affected by refugees in countries of asylum;

28. Expresses its concern about the long stay of refugees in certain African countries, and calls upon the Office of the High Commissioner to keep its programmes under review, in conformity with its mandate in the host countries, taking into account the increasing needs of refugees;

29. Emphasizes the need for the Office of the High Commissioner to collate statistics, on a regular basis, on the number of refugees living outside refugee camps in certain African countries, with a view to evaluating and addressing the needs of those refugees;

30. Urges the international community, in a spirit of international solidarity and burden-sharing, to continue to fund generously the refugee programmes of the Office of the High Commissioner and, taking into account the substantially increased needs of programmes in Africa, to ensure that Africa receives a fair and equitable share of the resources designated for refugees;

31. Requests all Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to pay particular attention to meeting the special needs of refugee women and children and displaced persons, including those with special protection needs;

32. Calls upon States and the Office of the High Commissioner to make renewed efforts to ensure that the rights, needs and dignity of elderly refugees are fully respected and addressed through appropriate programme activities;

33. Invites the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons to continue his ongoing dialogue with Member States and the intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned, in accordance with his mandate, and to include information thereon in his reports to the Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly;

34. Expresses grave concern about the plight of internally displaced persons in Africa, calls upon States to take concrete action to pre-empt internal displacement and to meet the protection and assistance needs of internally displaced persons, recalls in this regard the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, and urges the international community, led by relevant United Nations organizations, to contribute generously to national projects and programmes aimed at alleviating the plight of internally displaced persons;

35. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, taking fully into account the efforts expended by countries of asylum, under the item entitled "Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions", and to present an oral report to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2001.

The Americas

In 2000, UNHCR's primary operational challenge in South America continued to be the displacement caused by the internal conflict in Colombia and the consequent cross-border movements mainly into Ecuador, Panama and Venezuela. In response, the Office implemented an integrated regional strategy. It reinforced Ecuador's national asylum system, strengthened an emergency contingency plan, provided emergency assistance and supported initial repatriation movements. A tripartite mechanism between the Governments of Ecuador and Colombia and UNHCR was created to promote durable solutions. The Office also lobbied for the adoption of refugee legislation in Venezuela and the establishment of a formal eligibility mechanism. However, Venezuelan authorities reportedly returned more than 2,000 Colombians without granting them access to asylum procedures. In Panama, UNHCR provided emergency assistance to 1,100 Colombians under the special temporary protection mechanism established in Panama's refugee

legislation. The Office also strengthened Colombia's national institutional framework for internally displaced persons and, at the regional level, reinforced its emergency response capacity, early warning and standard-setting, paying particular attention to displaced women and children.

In Southern South America, UNHCR promoted regional harmonization of refugee laws and asylum procedures using model refugee legislation for Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) countries. Among its activities in Central America, UNHCR helped strengthen protection networks. It completed a repatriation programme in Guatemala and closed its office there in December. Other subregional activities were implemented in Costa Rica and Mexico.

In Canada and the United States, UNHCR continued monitoring and advising agencies that implemented complex refugee and asylum systems. The Office also monitored the situation in the Caribbean, particularly regarding possible displacement from Haiti, developed contingency plans and promoted capacity-building efforts in the subregion.

Total UNHCR expenditure in the Americas and the Caribbean for the year was \$24.6 million for a total population of concern numbering 1,620,784.

Asia and the Pacific and the Arab States

In 2000, total UNHCR expenditure for activities in Asia and the Pacific amounted to \$75.4 million for a total population of concern of 1,753,830. For activities in Central Asia, South-West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East, expenditure totalled \$73.5 million for a population of concern of 5,800,000.

South Asia

While the majority of refugees who had fled the Northern Rakhine State of Myanmar to Bangladesh had returned by 2000, procedural difficulties slowed the return of the remaining 21,500 refugees. Only 1,323 persons returned to Myanmar during the year. UNHCR discussed other possibilities with the Bangladesh Government for refugees who were unwilling or unable to return in the near future. In Myanmar, the Office assisted in reintegrating returnees to stabilize the situation of the Muslim population and reduce the likelihood of a renewed population outflow. UNHCR-funded assistance activities in Northern Rakhine State would be taken over by the United Nations Development Programme, but UNHCR would continue its field monitoring activities to address public policy and governance

issues affecting the 230,000 returnees from Bangladesh and the local population.

Some 170,000 persons in the Jaffna Peninsula of Sri Lanka were displaced because of the escalation of armed hostilities in the north of the country. UNHCR worked with the Government and others to ease the situation of 560,000 displaced persons. Although there were no large-scale movements of Sri Lankans to India, over 66,000 Sri Lankan refugees remained in India's Tamil Nadu State.

In December, Bhutan and Nepal resolved their differences over modalities for verifying the 97,500 Bhutanese refugees in Nepal. To facilitate the process, UNHCR provided technical expertise and financial support to Nepal and offered to do the same for Bhutan.

East Asia and the Pacific

In 2000, a regional emergency training centre on international humanitarian response (E-centre) was established by UNHCR in Japan to enhance the regional capacity to respond to emergency situations. In China, the Office encouraged naturalization of the majority of the 230,000 Vietnamese refugees who wanted to settle in that country and voluntary repatriation for a limited number who might wish to return. It continued to raise with China the situation of North Korean populations within its northern border provinces and sought access to those populations. UNHCR worked with Thailand on the admission of asylum-seekers from Myanmar into the 11 border camps, and cooperated with Mongolia in the areas of refugee law, capacity-building and refugee status determination. It phased out its reintegration assistance in north-west Cambodia in December and scaled down its activities in the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Timor

The brutal murder in September of three UNHCR staff members in West Timor precipitated the imposition of UN Security Phase V, which precluded UNHCR from implementing direct protection activities. However, the Office pursued ad hoc repatriation operations beginning in November, allowing for the return of demobilized soldiers, ex-civil servants and other refugees to East Timor. To encourage the return of East Timorese from West Timor, UNHCR expanded basic assistance to returnees, initiated discussions with the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) (see PART ONE, Chapter IV) on the prosecution of persons charged with committing various crimes

before and during the 1999 referendum on independence, and proposed the expansion of "safe houses", which served as transit centres for returnees hesitant to return to their villages of origin immediately after arriving in East Timor. Meanwhile, UNHCR was involved with screening a number of asylum-seekers intercepted in Indonesian waters while trying to reach Australia.

Central Asia, South-West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East

Little progress was achieved in realizing durable solutions to the refugee situation in the region in 2000. Protracted conflicts were exacerbated in many cases by either political or natural constraints, creating more displacement and suffering. In Central Asia, the repatriation operation in Tajikistan was delayed when the Government suspended returnee movements following security incidents between returnees and local populations. In Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, UNHCR offices worked for the passage and implementation of refugee laws. Local settlement projects were implemented in Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan for the Tajiks of Kyrgyz and Turkmen ethnicity, respectively. In South-West Asia, the situation in Afghanistan was compounded by the worst drought experienced in three decades, displacing thousands of Afghans internally, as well as to Iran and Pakistan. While the majority of the 2.6 million Afghans remained in those countries, UNHCR succeeded in assisting some 261,000 to return voluntarily to Afghanistan.

In North Africa, UNHCR focused on enhancing its protection presence, promoting refugee law and assisting Governments to establish national asylum legislation and procedures. The lack of a breakthrough in the peace process in Western Sahara prevented implementation of the UN settlement plan, including the repatriation of 165,000 refugees from Algeria. UNHCR continued to provide assistance in the Tindouf refugee camps, in cooperation with other partners. In the Middle East, it assisted 130,000 refugees living in urban settings, as well as in small camps in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Arab Republic, and resettled 7,000 refugees from the region.

Europe

In 2000, UNHCR's expenditure for activities in Europe (excluding South-Eastern Europe) totalled \$85.1 million for a population of concern numbering 5,148,062.

Western Europe

UNHCR's priority in the subregion in 2000 was maintaining and strengthening the quality of asylum. Its relations with European Union (EU) institutions intensified. In July, UNHCR and the European Commission signed an exchange of letters to reinforce cooperation on asylum and refugee matters, which led to formal strategic senior-level consultations, in addition to the day-to-day liaison and advocacy work of UNHCR Brussels. UNHCR also assisted Western European Governments in their adoption, implementation and amendment of national asylum legislation and policies.

Central Europe and the Baltic States

Central Europe and the Baltic States were in the process of developing functioning asylum legislation and systems, and UNHCR played a catalytic role in linking Governments and NGOs with Western European counterparts for capacity-building assistance. UNHCR offices in EU countries also participated in the EU's Poland/Hungary: Assistance for the Reconstruction of the Economy (PHARE) horizontal programme on asylum, which came to a close at the end of the year, by organizing meetings, workshops, and training and exchange programmes for governmental counterparts in cooperation with EU member States. Activities in the area of asylum institution- and capacity-building were being conducted through national action plans.

Eastern Europe

UNHCR assisted Governments in Eastern Europe to bridge the gap between legislation, in place in most countries, and its proper implementation, thus strengthening the quality of asylum. The Office also supported local NGOs in responding to the needs of asylum-seekers, refugees and displaced persons; assisted Governments to find sustainable solutions for displaced groups; and enhanced partnerships with the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and others.

In the Caucasus, finding durable solutions to those displaced due to the conflict in Chechnya in the Russian Federation remained a key objective. Over 160,000 internally displaced persons in the neighbouring republic of Ingushetia received assistance for accommodation, water, sanitation and basic domestic needs. In Georgia, UNHCR provided limited assistance to about 7,000 Chechen refugees, although security conditions hampered monitoring. A small number of convoys carrying food and non-food relief items were sent into Chechnya, and UNHCR worked with the Academy of Science of the Rus-

sian Federation to develop a geographical database for better targeting of assistance.

Conference on refugees of
CIS countries and neighbouring States

The formal follow-up process to the 1996 Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States (CIS Conference) [YUN 1996, p. 1117] ended in July. The Steering Group established to monitor implementation of the CIS Conference met on 13 and 14 July to review the achievements in the implementation of the Programme of Action [YUN 1996, p. 1118] adopted by the Conference and to take a decision on future activities. The Steering Group decided that the follow-up to the 1996 Conference would last for five years starting from 2000, and would focus on four thematic issues: assuring continued focus on groups of concern; migration management, including combating illegal/illicit migration and trafficking, particularly trafficking in women, and improving border management; sustaining the achievements and activities of NGOs and civil society and further promoting their participation; and implementing legislation and avoiding implementation gaps.

A work plan emphasizing protection matters was developed, focusing on building national asylum and migration management systems in the CIS countries in accordance with international standards, including the implementation of national refugee and citizenship legislation, reduction and avoidance of statelessness and support to NGOs and civil society development.

Executive Committee action. The Executive Committee endorsed the Steering Group's decision on the future of the follow-up action. It reaffirmed the continuing validity of the Programme of Action as the basis for future activities and stressed the necessity for joint efforts. The Committee called on Governments, which bore primary responsibility for addressing the acute problems of population displacement, to strengthen their commitment to implementing the Programme of Action to ensure more consistent and far-reaching progress. It urged the High Commissioner to further enhance relationships with other key actors, such as the European Commission and other human rights, development and financial institutions, and called on CIS countries to facilitate the formation and work of NGOs, to further strengthen cooperation with them and to increase their involvement in the follow-up activities.

Report of Secretary-General. The Secretary-General, in October [A/55/472], submitted a report on the follow-up to the Conference, in response to General Assembly resolution 54/144 [YUN 1999, p. 1146]. He said that the Conference process had considerably advanced several issues identified in the Programme of Action and had met its objectives. In addition, it had given impetus to the development of the NGO sector and civil society and forged vital partnerships.

UNHCR had contributed to the growing awareness of Governments in the region that refugees and asylum-seekers' problems needed to be addressed through effective legislative and institutional frameworks that were consistent with international standards. It continued to provide substantial humanitarian and integration assistance and played a key role in inter-agency efforts to assist internally displaced persons from Chechnya. It also contributed to finding solutions to problems of formerly deported Crimean Tartars, including their legal status. Other types of activities specifically generated by the CIS Conference process, such as legal assistance, capacity-building and training to help States strengthen implementation of the Programme of Action, had been gradually mainstreamed into UNHCR country operations. With the support of IOM, progress was made in establishing national migration management systems in 10 countries. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights supported the Programme of Action through its technical cooperation programme aimed at establishing or strengthening human rights institutions.

By decision 55/417 of 4 December, the General Assembly took note of the Secretary-General's report on follow-up to the CIS Conference.

South-Eastern Europe

Following a year dominated by massive population displacement caused by the conflict in the Kosovo province of FRY, hundreds of thousands of Kosovars were reintegrated into their home communities in 2000 as a result of the encouragement by the new FRY Government (see PART ONE, Chapter V) and a large-scale humanitarian relief effort. To facilitate assistance delivery and reconstruction, UNHCR developed a geographical database of the province using Geographical Information System technology. However, the fact that more than 220,000 non-Albanians from Kosovo remained in other parts of FRY was one of UNHCR's major concerns in the region. Inter-ethnic violence in southern Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) caused more than a million people to

remain displaced, with hundreds of thousands requiring support from the international community. The number of refugees and persons of concern to UNHCR in Albania and FYROM declined due to the large-scale repatriation to Kosovo, while tens of thousands of displaced persons and refugees, mainly from FRY, returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Enforcement of property legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, combined with improved security conditions, led many displaced persons to return to areas to which minorities had not ventured since the end of the war. In Croatia, the new administration eliminated discriminatory elements of legislation governing reconstruction of property in an effort to encourage minority returns.

UNHCR, in efforts to assist countries faced with an increasing number of migrants and asylum-seekers transiting the region en route to Western Europe, initiated a region-wide initiative within the framework of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (see p. 412) to develop national asylum systems and improve countries' capacities to deal with the issue.

During 2000, UNHCR remained engaged in emergency preparedness response activities with regard to potential areas of population displacement in the region, such as Montenegro, Kosovo, southern Serbia and FYROM.

Total UNHCR expenditure in South-Eastern Europe for the year was \$ 154 million for a population of concern numbering 1,698,342.