



| WORKING ENVIRONMENT |

● The 30th anniversary of the signing of the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, and the 10th anniversary of the Mexico Plan of Action — both of which fall in 2014 — will give UNHCR, governments and civil society an opportunity to take stock of efforts to protect and assist the millions of displaced people in the Americas region. In anticipation of the commemoration in November 2014, UNHCR will work with States in the region to develop and adopt a new plan of action for the next decade, building on the achievements of the Mexico Plan.

● Although the number of asylum-seekers and refugees in the Americas remains relatively stable, it is anticipated that this could change in 2014. The numbers of people of concern could rise in the event of an upsurge in violence by illegal non-State actors, including criminal entities, as a result of demobilization. Other potential causes of displacement include territorial control struggles in Colombia, criminal entities, and the growing incidence of gang violence in Central America.

● Meanwhile, peace talks between the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), combined with implementation of the Law on Victims and Land Restitution, could improve prospects for solutions; however, protection

and security challenges persist not only in Colombia but also in countries of asylum. With the situation still tense in some areas of Colombia, the end of hostilities might not necessarily mean an end to the violence nor its impact on the population. Some 1,200 Colombian nationals continue to cross into Ecuador every month in search of safety and protection and it is estimated that many others are entering the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

● In Haiti, official counts indicate that almost 300,000 individuals displaced by the January 2010 earthquake are still in camps, with many more living in spontaneous settlements scattered around the affected areas. Many camps have become *de facto* slums, and it is estimated that the number of IDPs is significantly higher than officially recorded. This population remains extremely vulnerable.

● While a precise mapping of the number of stateless people in the Americas is not available, estimates of those at risk of statelessness, or whose nationality might be undetermined, remain high. Individuals of Haitian descent in the Caribbean region are likely to be particularly affected. Widespread irregular migration has left several thousands of people, and especially their unregistered children, at risk of statelessness.

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Refugee mother and daughter from Colombia resettled in Uruguay.

E AMERICAS

| STRATEGY |

UNHCR's regional priorities in North America are to ensure States' compliance with international protection standards for access to asylum, *non-refoulement* and quality refugee status determination (RSD) procedures.

In **Canada**, UNHCR will support refugee law reform and fulfil the role it has been asked to play in precedent-setting cases before the newly-established Refugee Appeal Division.

In the **United States**, UNHCR will work closely with the authorities to protect unaccompanied and separated children, find alternatives to detention and ensure compliance with international standards in refugee law, in particular through the implementation of the Comprehensive Immigration Reform and Refugee Protection Act, currently under discussion in Congress.

In the **Caribbean**, UNHCR will focus on the prevention and reduction of statelessness and the resolution of nationality issues, mainly by advocating with relevant authorities for the adoption of appropriate laws on nationality, civil registry reforms, birth registration and documentation. UNHCR will also emphasize the need for protection safeguards in mixed migration with alternatives to detention. Capacity-building will be another priority in the region.

In the countries affected by the **Colombia** situation, UNHCR will strive to ensure that internally displaced people (IDPs), refugees and people at risk of displacement are not denied their rights under national and international law. In Colombia, UNHCR will explore the potential for viable solutions based on the Law on Victims and Land Restitution and the outcome of the peace dialogue with the FARC. Through the Transitional Solutions Initiative, UNHCR and UNDP are developing methodologies for sustainable solutions in 17 communities. This will assist the Government's efforts in respect of local integration in urban areas, relocation in rural areas and return of IDPs. In **Ecuador**, UNHCR will monitor implementation of

the refugee legislation reform, seeking to address any adverse impact on people in need of international protection. In the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**, efforts will continue to reinforce activities with the authorities to improve registration and documentation. The Office will increase the number of document processing missions to the border with Colombia to enhance protection and assistance for asylum-seekers and refugees in the area.

Statistics place Central America as the world's most affected region in terms of violence by illegal non-state actors. This has an impact on protection and creates new patterns of displacement. UNHCR will help national authorities to deal with displacement issues in **El Salvador**, **Guatemala** and **Honduras** by strengthening protection frameworks, improving field monitoring at borders and identifying vulnerable cases.

In this Cartagena Declaration 30th anniversary year, all operations in the Americas will focus on integrating UNHCR's main protection concerns within a regional framework for the next decade that will build on the 2004 Mexico Plan of Action. Particular efforts will focus on ensuring access to territorial protection and asylum procedures; protection against *refoulement*, especially in terrestrial and maritime border areas; and to improving refugee status determination procedures and decisions through the ongoing implementation of quality assurance initiatives. UNHCR will also try to ensure that urban refugees have access to affordable health, education and other essential services as well as dignified livelihoods. Comprehensive solutions initiatives will include a new push for local integration, naturalization, permanent resident status or resettlement. The potential use of organized migration with protection safeguards as a solution will be explored. Efforts to reduce sexual and gender-based violence and child recruitment will also be areas of priority.



FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The organization-wide move in 2010 from a resource-based to a comprehensive needs-based methodology for planning and budgeting explains the significant increase in the region's financial requirements as of 2010 when compared with previous years. In recent years, the Americas budget has grown from USD 93.4 million in 2010 to a revised 2013 budget of USD 102 million and in 2014, the region's financial requirements are set at USD 110.4 million. This increase is mainly due to needs arising from the establishment of operations in Haiti and the Dominican Republic in 2010, the search for solutions in Colombia and a general rise in costs in the region.

Notwithstanding the progressive increase, the needs of many people of concern in the region remain unmet. This is particularly so among those who are travelling in mixed migratory flows across the Caribbean to States that need UNHCR's support to build or strengthen their asylum and solutions capacities.

| CHALLENGES |

While countries in the Americas have strong regional and national instruments for the protection of people of concern to UNHCR, many challenges remain with regard to access to asylum; the quality of asylum procedures; livelihood opportunities; durable solutions; States' tendency to put security concerns above refugee protection needs; and low recognition rates.

The security situation remains volatile in border areas between Colombia and neighbouring Ecuador and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Many asylum-seekers continue to arrive in the area, but it is difficult for UNHCR to reach them, hindering adequate protection and assistance.

Although UNHCR actively promotes the ratification of the Statelessness Conventions in the region in efforts to prevent the risk of individuals or groups becoming stateless, advocating for adequate legislation on nationality and documentation projects, the resources available can only address a small

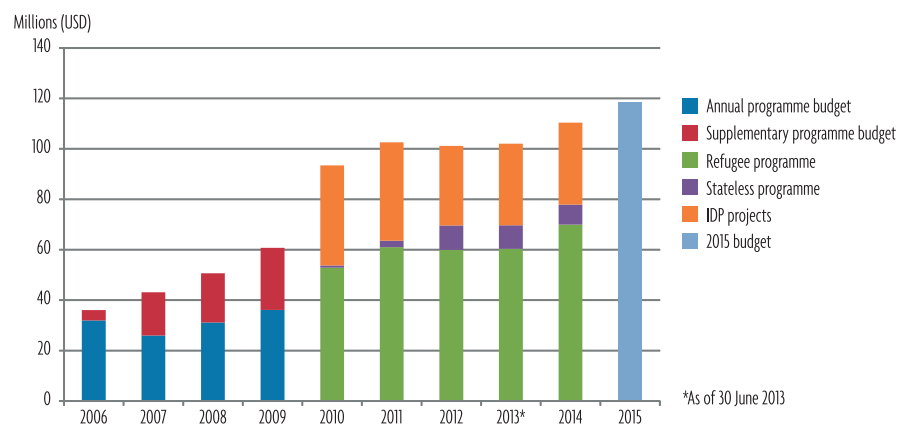
portion of a much bigger need. In the Colombia situation countries, opportunities may arise for more innovative solutions, including protection-sensitive migration solutions within existing regional legal frameworks for easing human mobility. But this would require an adequate level of resources.

Violence and the criminal activities of illegal non-state actors in Central America and Mexico endanger the lives of people of concern to UNHCR and are at the root of displacement.

Xenophobia and discrimination, in particular against Colombian and Haitian refugees and other people of concern of Haitian descent, continue to affect the protection environment, hampering advances in advocacy for rights.

Protection in mixed migration movements in the Caribbean is extremely complex and assuring asylum safeguards in the context of interception and rescue at sea remains a challenge. ■

Budgets for the Americas | 2006-2015



BUDGETS FOR THE AMERICAS | USD

Operation	2013	2014			Total	2015
	Revised budget (as of 30 June 2013)	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 4 IDP projects		
NORTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN						
Canada	1,708,715	1,990,548	51,512	0	2,042,060	2,042,060
United States of America Regional Office	18,891,967	7,715,714	7,397,189	3,270,295	18,383,198	20,100,001
Subtotal	20,600,682	9,706,262	7,448,701	3,270,295	20,425,258	22,142,061
LATIN AMERICA						
Argentina Regional Office	4,390,969	4,249,321	55,315	0	4,304,636	5,165,565
Brazil	5,121,186	8,081,236	115,643	0	8,196,880	9,155,718
Colombia	29,638,631	1,322,458	0	29,177,542	30,500,000	32,130,000
Costa Rica	2,056,514	2,884,871	0	0	2,884,871	2,038,494
Ecuador	21,103,736	20,906,692	0	0	20,906,692	20,500,000
Mexico	3,098,622	2,942,463	0	0	2,942,463	2,682,099
Panama Regional Office	5,882,317	7,979,088	324,599	0	8,303,687	8,695,491
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	9,974,811	10,950,133	0	0	10,950,133	12,045,147
Regional activities ¹	160,744	937,000	0	0	937,000	3,840,534
Subtotal	81,427,530	60,253,261	495,557	29,177,542	89,926,361	96,253,047
Total	102,028,211	69,959,523	7,944,258	32,447,837	110,351,619	118,395,108

¹ Regional activities cover the entire Americas region