

AG/RES. 1170 (XXII-O/92)

LEGAL SITUATION OF REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS
IN THE AMERICAN HEMISPHERE

(Resolution adopted at the eighth plenary session,
held on May 23, 1992)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

HAVING SEEN the report on the program of cooperation between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (CAS) (AG/doc.2707/91); and

CONSIDERING:

That through resolutions AG/RES. 774 (XV-O/85), AG/RES. 838 (XVI-O/86), AG/RES. 891 (XVII-O/87), AG/RES. 951 (XVIII-O/88), AG/RES. 1021 (XIX-O/89), AG/RES. 1039 (XX-O/90), AG/RES. 1040 (XX-O/90) and AG/RES. 1103 (XXI-O/91), the General Assembly expressed its concern for those who, as refugees, returnees, or displaced persons, have received protection and humanitarian assistance throughout the Americas;

That voluntary repatriation movements of Central American refugees continued during 1991 and are expected to increase in 1992, as a result, *inter alia*, of the peace agreements signed in El Salvador, an important consequence of the considerable efforts by all concerned to support processes of national reconciliation and democratization in the region;

That in the context of voluntary repatriation movements to El Salvador, the UNHCR has an important protection role in monitoring the well-being of returnees;

That efforts continue to be made to find effective solutions to the problems of refugees and displaced persons in various countries, guided by the principles of the 1984 Declaration of Cartagena de Indias which contains a legal framework for the treatment of refugees in the region;

That the Second International Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA), held in El Salvador, April 7 and 8, 1992, recommended that the CIREFCA process be extended until May 1994, noting its valuable contribution to the consolidation and national reconciliation processes, which makes progress possible and provides a forum that fosters lasting solutions and agreements for the treatment of refugees and displaced people in Central America;

That special attention is being given to displaced and refugee women, notably through CIREFCA's initiatives with the First Regional Forum on Refugee, Displaced and Returnee Women (FOREFEM), held in Guatemala, which considered the special situation of women as regards their return and reintegration and stressed the need for their return to take place in conditions of safety and dignity;

That the voluntary repatriation movement to Suriname began in 1992 and the UNHCR is contributing to the efforts to get these returnees successfully reintegrated in their country of origin;

That the valuable cooperation between the Organization of American States and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has been strengthened through a joint study project on the legal rights of refugee children in Central America and Mexico and in the common efforts to find lasting solutions to refugee problems in the region,

RESOLVES:

1. To express its satisfaction with the strengthening of peace processes and consolidation of democracy through the recent signing of peace accords in El Salvador and the goodwill demonstrated by other governments of the region toward national reconciliation.

2. To underscore the important result achieved through voluntary repatriation movements, urging member states to continue their efforts to create conditions to facilitate voluntary repatriation as well as reintegration of returnees, in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees.

3. To welcome the endorsement of member states of the principles for protection set forth in the 1984 Declaration of Cartagena de Indias on Refugees and to recommend to those member states that have not yet done so that they consider the possibility of adopting measures for the purpose of strengthening the domestic legal system for the protection of refugees.

4. To welcome the ratification by the Government of Honduras to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol on the Status of Refugees and to urge member states that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to these instruments.

5. To urge the member states to address causes of situations of internal displacement to attenuate and prevent human suffering and potential refugee outflows to neighboring member states.

6. To urge the member states to enhance their cooperation in finding solutions, within a regional framework, to refugee problems.

7. To renew its support of the CIREFCA Plan of Action, in particular, efforts to address the special needs of refugee, displaced and returnee women, as well as the search for lasting solutions for the displaced populations.

8. To note with satisfaction progress being made by the Organization of American States and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in their programs to research the legal rights of refugee children in Central America and Mexico.