

**AG/RES. 1971 (XXXIII-O/03)**

**THE PROTECTION OF REFUGEES, RETURNEES, AND STATELESS AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN THE AMERICAS**

(Resolution adopted at the fourth plenary session, held on June 10, 2003)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

RECALLING its resolution AG/RES. 1892 (XXXII-O/02), “The Protection of Refugees, Returnees, and Internally Displaced Persons in the Americas,” and resolutions AG/RES. 774 (XV-O/85), AG/RES. 838 (XVI-O/86), AG/RES. 951 (XVIII-O/88), AG/RES. 1021 (XIX-O/89), AG/RES. 1039 (XX-O/90), AG/RES. 1040 (XX-O/90), AG/RES. 1103 (XXI-O/91), AG/RES. 1170 (XXII-O/92), AG/RES. 1214 (XXIII-O/93), AG/RES. 1273 (XXIV-O/94), AG/RES. 1336 (XXV-O/95), AG/RES. 1416 (XXVI-O/96), AG/RES. 1504 (XXVII-O/97), and AG/RES. 1602 (XXVIII-O/98), in which it has reiterated its concern for persons in the Americas, such as refugees, returnees, stateless persons, and internally displaced persons, who are in need of international protection and/or humanitarian assistance;

NOTING that Canada, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay, and Peru have adopted national legislation on refugees and that various member states are in the process of so doing, in fulfillment of resolutions adopted by this General Assembly, AG/RES. 1693 (XXIX-O/99), AG/RES. 1762 (XXX-O/00), AG/RES. 1832 (XXXI-O/01), and AG/RES. 1892 (XXXII-O/02);

WELCOMING the Declaration adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of States Parties to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, held in Geneva in December 2001 with the participation of 23 OAS member states; and supporting the Agenda for Protection of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which sets out concrete goals and objectives and guides member states, UNHCR, and other pertinent players in strengthening the international protection of asylum-seekers and refugees in the Americas and worldwide;

NOTING THAT next year will be the 20th anniversary of the 1984 Declaration of Cartagena on Refugees;

UNDERSCORING that to promote enhanced protection for refugees, comprehensive strategies are needed that include, among other aspects, voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement, in the context of increasing solidarity and effective cooperation among all states, in keeping with the pertinent international conventions; and

REAFFIRMING that the protection of asylum-seekers, refugees, stateless persons, and internally displaced persons is strengthened through the increasing cooperation between the pertinent organs of the inter-American system and UNHCR and other relevant players, which is reflected in the dialogue held each year in the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs,

RESOLVES:

1. To urge the states parties to fully and effectively implement their obligations under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and/or its 1967 Protocol, in accordance with the intent and purpose of these instruments, by taking or continuing

to take measures to strengthen asylum and render refugee protection more effective, including, *inter alia*, the adoption and implementation of national refugee provisions and procedures for the determination of refugee status and for the treatment of asylum-seekers and refugees, in keeping with international and regional instruments, according special attention to vulnerable groups and to the differentiated protection needs of women, children, and the elderly.

2. To urge those member states that have not yet done so to consider signing, ratifying, or acceding to, as the case may be, the international instruments on refugees and statelessness, or to consider the possibility of withdrawing the reservations entered at the time of ratification or accession, and to consider adopting the procedures and institutional mechanisms necessary for their effective implementation, in keeping with the principles established in international and regional instruments.

3. To urge member states, with a view to promoting the protection of refugees, returnees, and stateless and internally displaced persons in the Americas, as appropriate:

- a. To continue to apply protection measures that are consistent with international principles of international refugee protection, including, *inter alia*, non-refoulement, family unity, and confidentiality in cases of asylum;
- b. To update procedures to identify those persons in need of international protection, in keeping with the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, and with other pertinent international and regional instruments;
- c. To facilitate access to refugee status determination procedures;
- d. To facilitate procedures for processing claims for refuge- and asylum-seekers, taking gender and age into account, and including measures for victims of sexual abuse and trauma, as well as unaccompanied and separated children;
- e. To provide, as appropriate and with the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), adequate training to the appropriate authorities on international refugee law and on the provisions for the treatment of asylum-seekers and refugees; and
- f. To promote public activities and information campaigns to fight racism, discrimination, xenophobia, and intolerance towards refugees, returnees, and stateless and internally displaced persons.

4. To renew its appeal for international and inter-American cooperation in cases of the mass flight of refugees to facilitate their voluntary repatriation and, when appropriate and feasible, the local integration or resettlement of refugees in a third country, in accordance with international standards.

5. To continue and increase the support provided by member states and the organs of the inter-American system to UNHCR.

