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PROGRAM

COURSE ON INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE LAW  
[AG/RES. 2402 (XXXVIII-O/08)]

February 19, 2009

Padilha Vidal Room  
Organization of American States  
Washington, D.C.

In resolution AG/RES. 2402 (XXXVIII-O/08), operative paragraph 8, the Permanent Council is instructed to organize, through the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs and with support from the Department of International Law of the General Secretariat and in collaboration with the UNHCR, a course on international refugee law for staff of the permanent missions of member states to the OAS, General Secretariat personnel, and other interested persons.

8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.      Registration

9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.      Opening remarks  
a) Chair of the CAJP, Ambassador María del Luján Flores  
b) Michel Gabaudan, UNHCR Representative in Washington, D.C.  
c) Department of International Law  
c) Brief presentation by the Department of International Law

10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.      FIRST MODULE  
International refugee protection in the Americas: Current situation

Professor: Michel Gabaudan, UNHCR regional representative in Washington, D.C.

Description: The first module will discuss the current situation of refugees in the Hemisphere to describe the context in which international protection is provided in the Americas. Reference will be made to regional statistics on and trends among refugees, asylum seekers, and other persons in need of international protection in the region. It will also discuss contemporary challenges in the international protection of regional and extra-regional refugees, such as mixed migration flows, combating terrorism, and racism and discrimination.

11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. *Questions and comments*

11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. SECOND MODULE

Introduction to international refugee law: legislative and institutional framework. Lasting solutions.

Professor: Grainne O’Hara, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR, Washington, D.C.; and/or Anne Greene, Senior Regional Protection Officer, UNHCR, Washington, D.C.

Description: The second module will address the legal and institutional framework for refugee protection and will emphasize especially the importance of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 protocol thereto, as well as the American Convention on Human Rights. It will include a description of the concept of “international protection” and the history of international refugee protection, the establishment of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and the role of the different players in international refugee protection. Finally, the module will address the subject of lasting solution in the contemporary regional context (voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement).

12:00 p.m. – 12:30 p.m. *Questions and comments*

2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. THIRD MODULE

Principles of international refugee law and the definition of the term “refugee”

Professor: Federico Martínez (Costa Rica), regional legal advisor, UNHCR

Description: The third module will introduce the basic principles of international refugee law and the elements of the definition of the term “refugee.” It will discuss the principle of prohibition of return; the right to asylum; prohibition of penalties for illegal entry; nondiscrimination; and the family unit. The definition of the term “refugee” contained in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees will be introduced, as well as the regional definition contained in the Organization of African Union Convention, and that proposed by the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. The distinction will also be noted between “refugee” and “economic migrant”; “refugee” and “internally-displaced person”; and “refugee” and “natural disaster victim.”

3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. *Questions and comments*

- 3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.      **FOURTH MODULE**  
(1) National application of international refugee law and the role of the OAS
- Professor: Juan Carlos Murillo (Costa Rica), regional legal advisor, UNHCR
- Description: This module will include a comparative analysis of the different implementation models used in countries of the Hemisphere for refugee identification, recognition, and protection, as well as good practices, difficulties, and progress made in the region (procedures for determining refugee status). Reference will also be made to the part played and that may continue to be played by the political organs and human rights entities of the OAS in strengthening refugee protection in the region.
- 4:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.      *Questions and comments*
- 4:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.      (2) Application of the broader definition in determining refugee status.
- Speaker: Gonzalo González, First Secretary of Ecuador's Foreign Service and official in the Directorate General of Refugees, Ecuador
- 5:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.      Closing remarks
- a) Chair of the CAJP, Ambassador María del Luján Flores
  - b) UNHCR representative
  - c) Department of International Law