

AG/RES. 1103 (XXI-O/91)

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

(Resolution adopted at the tenth plenary session,
held on June 7, 1991)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

HAVING SEEN the report on the Program for Cooperation between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (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), and AG/RES. 1040 (XX-O/90), the General Assembly expressed its concern for those who, as refugees, repatriated, or displaced persons, have received protection and humanitarian assistance throughout the Americas;

That gradual progress has been seen in the voluntary repatriation of refugees from Central American and other member states, which has helped to alleviate the problem in the hemisphere;

That 1991 marks the fortieth anniversary of the adoption, by the United Nations General Assembly, of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, a universal legal instrument which, together with the 1967 Protocol, sets forth the basic standards for the treatment of refugees, and that forty years since the start of the UNHCR's humanitarian work in aid of refugees are also being celebrated;

That efforts to solve the problem of refugees and displaced persons in various countries of the region continue; in this regard, it should be pointed out that the 1984 Declaration of Cartagena provides guidelines for solving the problem of refugees in the region; mention should also be made of the importance of the Declaration and Plan of Action and practices arising from the 1989 International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA);

That the International Commission for Support and Verification (CIAV), composed of the Secretaries General of the United Nations and the OAS, contributes, through its efforts, to the maintenance of peace in Nicaragua, and to the repatriation and resettlement of persons displaced because of conflicts in the Central American region;

That the OAS/UNHCR Program for Cooperation is of great value and interest for the development of the Law of Refugees at the regional level;

That particular emphasis should be placed on the fourth stage of the joint program linked to the CIREFCA Plan of Action, which includes a study on the legal situation of refugee children in Latin America and the Caribbean; and

That, in that study, the General Secretariat will take into account any work and contributions by the specialized organizations of the inter-American system, and in particular, those that might be coordinated with the Inter-American Children's Institute,

RESOLVES:

1. To express its satisfaction at the goodwill demonstrated by the governments of the region, which have facilitated the voluntary repatriation of thousands of refugees, to express the hope that they may be fully reintegrated into the countries of origin, and to reaffirm the need to forge ahead with efforts to solve continuing problems in that regard.

2. To welcome the endorsement by the member states of the principles for protection set forth in the 1984 Declaration of Cartagena de Indias on Refugees, and to recommend that 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 systems for the protection of refugees.

3. To urge the member states of the Organization of American States to continue to support the Declaration and Plan of Action and the practices resulting from CIREFCA in benefit of the uprooted populations from Central America.

4. To congratulate the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on its work over the past forty years, and to invite the American states that have not yet done so to ratify the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol on the Status of Refugees.

5. To renew its support for the Program for Cooperation that the General Secretariat has been conducting with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and to request that, when preparing the study on the legal status of refugee children in Latin America and the Caribbean, the General Secretariat allow for participation by the inter-American specialized organizations, and the Inter-American Children's Institute, in particular, and that it report on that Program to the General Assembly at its twenty-second regular session.