



UNHCR
Ministerial Conference

Geneva, ~~7~~ – 8 December 2011 *PM.*

Statement
by
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to the United Nations

The Federal Republic of Germany was one of the first six nations to ratify the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and has since been an ardent advocate for refugee rights and a strong supporter of the UNHCR. A lot has been achieved in the past 60 years. The dire situation of millions of refugees today underlines the significance and the indispensability of the convention 6 decades after its adoption. Germany reaffirms its commitment to relieving the fate of refugees and supporting the UNHCR in its mission.

The German Government also ratified the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. This convention has only attracted the small number of 40 accessions so far. Germany, therefore, calls on all other states to sign the convention and help fight statelessness and the avoidable and unnecessary difficulties it causes to the lives of millions of unfortunate people. The deplorable situation of Rohingya boatpeople, pushed around between several countries in SE-Asia, which I had been confronted with personally at my last post, is only but a small example of unnecessary misery inflicted upon people because of statelessness!

One of the most protracted and complex refugee and IDP situations in the world is that of about 3,5 million Afghans who found shelter in Pakistan and Iran or have become internally displaced in their conflict-stricken homeland.

Since 2002, over 5,5 million Afghan refugees have returned home, but 40 percent of these people have not fully reintegrated yet, which – in addition to the 0,5 million IDPs – creates a security issue as well as a humanitarian issue. Sustainable reintegration of these roughly 2,5 million Afghans would have a strong impact on the overall stability of the country.

Despite continued efforts to facilitate voluntary repatriation and to support reintegration initiatives in the sub-region, there are roughly 2 million Afghan refugees in neighbouring Pakistan and more than 1 million Afghan refugees in Iran. Not all of these people are likely to return to their homeland in the face of continued security threats.

Therefore, only a multi-pronged approach can help solve the Afghan refugee situation. Germany is committed to contribute to a durable solution and ready to support UNHCR's efforts as outlined in its "Comprehensive Solutions Strategy for the Afghan Situation (2012 – 2014)". In this spirit, Germany pledges to

- Facilitate and support voluntary repatriation – also by creating better conditions for the return of Afghan refugees and IDPs in the areas where they settle down
- Help lighten the burden of Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan by redoubling Germany's contribution to the UNHCR country programme in Iran and continuing to substantially support programmes in Pakistan, from which Afghan refugees and struggling Pakistani host communities benefit to the same extent
- Continue to fund Germany's highly regarded and very successful Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) and, in this context, consider to increase the number of scholarships for Afghan refugees. Partners who consider to support this attractive programme are cordially welcome.

Germany welcomes UNHCR's recognition of climate change as an additional driver of displacement. The German Government is ready to lend its support to initiatives that contribute to analysing the impact of climate change and finding strategies to curb its effects and help vulnerable populations build up a higher level of resilience. In this regard, Germany explicitly endorses the Swiss-Norwegian pledge.