



**Regional Office Canberra, 10 May 2013** - The UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, has today welcomed the announcement of New Zealand's \$5.5 million rebuild and expansion of Mangere Refugee Centre in Auckland. Mangere is the first port of call for refugees arriving under the quota programme, where they spend six weeks' orientation to prepare for life in New Zealand.

"These first steps of a refugee's new life are vital ones, in particular the provision of language training, psycho-social support, and cultural orientation," UNHCR Regional Representative Richard Towle said today.

"We are pleased that New Zealand is investing to ensure the facilities continue to meet the needs of refugees well into the future."

"The expansion of Mangere to accommodate almost 200 people is also welcome, particularly if New Zealand chooses to increase its quota in the future."

"UNHCR looks forward to continuing its close cooperation with New Zealand as the Mangere rebuild progresses and the National Refugee Resettlement Strategy rolls out," Mr Towle said.