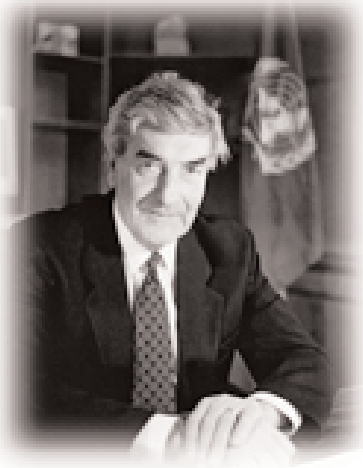


FOREWORD

by the High Commissioner for Refugees



The 2000 Global Report provides a comprehensive and accessible review of UNHCR programmes and activities funded through last year's Global Appeal. This is the first Global Report issued during my tenure as High Commissioner, but it covers the final year of Mrs. Sadako Ogata's remarkable decade at the helm of UNHCR. For this reason, I see the 2000 Global Report and the achievements it reflects as another tribute to the energy, creativity and dedication she brought to the refugee cause.

UNHCR marked its 50th Anniversary in 2000, naturally with a focus on refugees. The highlight was a musical event, *Refugee Voices*, held in Geneva on December 14th, that showcased the immense talent and potential of refugees. That evening, UNHCR also launched the RESPECT public awareness campaign, featuring prominent former refugees, and the Refugee Education Trust, which will be the lasting legacy of UNHCR's 50th Anniversary. The Trust will give refugee children and adolescents in developing countries opportunities for post-primary education.

In September 2000, UNHCR's global family was devastated by the brutal killings of four colleagues in the field – Samson Aregahegn, Carlos Caceres and Pero Simundza in Indonesia and Mensah Kpognon in Guinea. These despicable crimes focused world's attention, if only too briefly, on the extreme peril that humanitarian workers face daily. UNHCR's Inspector General led separate inquiries into these tragic events, which also provided the impetus for a thorough review and recommendations to enhance the Office's security management measures. The other victims of the killings in Indonesia were the refugees themselves, who remained in limbo and no closer to a solution to their plight after UNHCR's withdrawal from West Timor.

Ensuring asylum remained UNHCR's first priority in 2000. In many parts of the world, however, the entanglement of asylum with such complex issues as labour migration and human trafficking continued to undermine support for refugee protection. To address these and other critical challenges, UNHCR launched Global Consultations to revitalise the international protection regime in December. The Consultations will seek to renew the commitment of States to the 1951 Refugee Convention – in its 50th Anniversary year – and also to develop new tools, approaches and standards to ensure its continued vitality and relevance for the future.

UNHCR welcomed positive developments in some vexing regional situations during 2000. Minority returns finally gathered momentum in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, and the democratic transition in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia held the promise of new opportunities to achieve solutions for Europe's largest refugee population. Renewed fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea displaced nearly 1.5 million people early in the year, but intensive international efforts led to a cease-fire in July and the deployment United Nations peacekeepers. Many people were able to return home by year's end, hopefully presaging a broader movement toward durable solutions for refugees and other displaced people in the Horn of Africa. Bhutanese refugees languishing in camps in Nepal were also given new hope when the Governments of Bhutan and Nepal agreed in December to begin a long awaited joint verification exercise.

No major new refugee emergency erupted to capture the headlines in 2000, but the protracted conflicts in Afghanistan, Chechnya in the Russian Federation, Colombia and elsewhere intensified, displacing multitudes of people both internally and across borders as refugees. Fragile peace

processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone failed to move forward, keeping hundreds of thousands of refugees in exile and leaving many more uprooted and vulnerable people in these countries beyond the reach of aid. Attacks in the border areas of Guinea also raised real fears that the conflict in West Africa could spread and cause massive new displacement, which would make the task of UNHCR and the humanitarian community much more difficult. Former President Mandela's efforts to bring peace to Burundi made significant progress, although an impasse in the negotiations left Burundi at a crossroads between peace and more war as the year ended.

With this challenging global environment already on the horizon, my predecessor launched the 2000 Global Appeal with a hope that it would seed greater solidarity and support for refugees. By the time UNHCR's Executive Committee met last October, however, the Office was once again facing a serious financial shortfall. Mrs. Ogata made a strong personal appeal for fresh contributions. I regret to say that her impassioned plea met with only a limited response from our donors.

Continuing funding problems have had a major impact on UNHCR's ability to meet basic needs, such as for shelter in Guinea, Armenia and Rwanda, and to implement fully such core activities as voluntary repatriation to Afghanistan and Liberia. Refugees have suffered, as have UNHCR's relations with governments and our operational partners.

One of my strongest impressions on becoming High Commissioner has been of the great disparity between the responsibilities that the international community entrusts to UNHCR for the world's refugees and the resources it makes available for their needs. Upon my arrival in January, I was astonished to learn that our best projections of donor support for 2001 left us well short of the budgeted needs – a budget approved by the Executive Committee only weeks earlier.

UNHCR is a uniquely mandated international organisation and an essential component of the global governance system for refugees. To fulfil these important responsibilities, my Office must have adequate resources and broad, multilateral support from the international community, not just from a limited "coalition of the willing" that finds our work valuable and interesting. We need governments to recognise their co-ownership of UNHCR and to assume the responsibilities this entails.

I am committed to mobilising the international community to ensure that UNHCR has the resources to do the job. I recognise, of course, that an important part of this effort will be demonstrating our effectiveness and efficiency, as well as our capacity to provide protection in emergencies and longer-term refugee situations.

The Global Report is an important component of our continuing effort to make UNHCR's needs clearer and our operations more transparent. It is also an invitation to dialogue. I look forward to working with our donors and other partners to lay a solid foundation for UNHCR's next fifty years.



Ruud Lubbers