

**Informal Record
Constitutive Meeting of the
Core Group on Irregular Secondary Movements
of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers
(Geneva, 11 March 2004)**

I. INTRODUCTION

The first, constitutive meeting of the Core Group of States and interested parties on irregular secondary movements took place in the Palais des Nations on 11 March 2004, co-chaired by Switzerland and South Africa, as facilitating States for this strand within Convention Plus, and UNHCR. The following States and organizations participated in the meeting: Argentina, Australia, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Rights of Non-Citizens, the European Commission, the International Organisation for Migration, International Council of Voluntary Agencies, International Catholic Migration Commission, Jesuit Refugee Service, Amnesty International, World Vision and InterAction. Some members of the Core Group were not able to attend the meeting and it remains open to participation by other States and organisations. The agenda of the meeting and the draft terms of reference of the Core Group are attached as Annex 1 and 2 respectively. UNCHR's Convention Plus "Issues Paper on irregular secondary movements of refugees and asylum-seekers", which was made available in hard copy at the outset of the meeting, will be separately posted on UNHCR's website (www.unhcr.org).

II. OPENING REMARKS

On behalf of UNHCR, Mr. Jean-François Durieux, Head of the Convention Plus Unit, opened the meeting and expressed his gratitude on behalf of UNHCR to Mrs. Anne-Grethe Nielsen, of the Swiss Federal Office for Refugees, and Mrs. Laura Joyce, of the South African Permanent Mission, representing the co-facilitating States for this strand within Convention Plus.

Mrs. Nielsen expressed her appreciation for the broad participation in the Core Group, which, she noted, brings transparency to the process and true involvement of a range of stakeholders to work together to better understand these onward movements and to clarify the roles and responsibilities of States in these situations.

Mrs. Joyce welcomed the participants and in particular those that traveled from capitals.

III. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE CORE GROUP ON IRREGULAR SECONDARY MOVEMENTS

(Agenda item 2)

Following the adoption of the agenda, the UNHCR Co-chair introduced the draft terms of reference of the Core Group.

A number of delegations made suggestions to amend the second paragraph of the draft. It was agreed to change the paragraph as follows¹:

*“The Core Group will (on the basis of the Agenda for Protection, Goal 2, Objective 4) develop a framework of **understandings** related to causes of irregular secondary movements of refugees and asylum-seekers, with a view to addressing them, **particularly those of a protection-related nature, based upon** international solidarity and burden-sharing. Its work will be informed by the (intermediate) findings of (a) caseload-specific survey(s). The Core Group will also be in a position to review progress in carrying out this (these) survey (s)”.*

One delegation stressed that irregular secondary movements of refugees and asylum-seekers cannot be seen in isolation, as they form part of more complex flows also including other types of migrants. The terms of reference were subsequently adopted with one delegation reserving its position on this point.

IV. SURVEY ON SOMALI REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS

(Agenda item 3)

The UNHCR Co-Chair reiterated the purpose of the design workshop on 17 February 2004 in which a proposal of the Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies (SFM) for a survey of onward movements of Somali refugees and asylum-seekers was discussed. Based on the discussion in this workshop, a revised version of this proposal was prepared by the SFM, which South Africa sent out to the Core Group prior to this meeting. The Chair invited the Core Group members again to send written comments on this proposal for finalisation to UNHCR (vaneck@unhcr.org and fellahi@unhcr.org). The Swiss co-Chair then raised the issue of funding for the survey. She explained that Switzerland has a limited, preliminary budget for carrying out part of this survey amounting to 200.000 CHF for 2004 and 2005. This contribution does not suffice to carry out the entire survey, covering approximately only one half to one third of the needs. The proposal of the SFM foresees two options: the minimum option (focusing on 4 countries) costing 400,000 CHF; and a more ambitious option (8 countries) costing 660,000 CHF. Therefore, the Swiss co-Chair invited members of the Core Group to contribute to this survey, either in financial terms or in kind, such as by allocating research teams for carrying out the interviews. As the SFM will co-ordinate the survey, these teams will need to work in close co-operation with the SFM. Other examples of in-kind contributions include the preparation and organisation of workshops or the secondment of staff.

¹ Changes are highlighted in bold.

The European Commission (EC) drew attention to the new EC budget line (Aeneas) under which a submission for funding this survey could be made. On the basis of this budget line, funding may be available in 2005.

Two delegations asked whether the proposal for the survey will be discussed in the next Core Group meeting. The UNHCR Co-chair explained that written comments on the proposal will be welcome, and will be factored into a final draft. This draft will re-submitted to the Core Group before the next meeting. He also highlighted the fact that the survey should be initiated as soon as possible.

One delegation stressed that more than one survey should be carried out to ensure objectivity and enhance its representativeness. She also stated that questions of methodology, criteria and timeframe should be discussed and offered to share existing NGO research, as well as expressed a willingness to pursue additional studies. Further, it was hoped that refugee participation could be included in the methodology.

In response, the UNHCR Co-chair agreed that more than one survey would indeed be preferable, but also reiterated that the funding situation currently does not allow initiating further surveys.

V. INTRODUCTION OF POSSIBLE ELEMENTS OF A MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK

The UNHCR Co-chair presented a Convention Plus document entitled “Issues paper on addressing irregular secondary movements of refugees and asylum-seekers”, submitted by UNHCR. He explained that this paper was not being presented for adoption. Instead, the purpose of the paper is to provide a starting point and general orientation for discussions in the Core Group, while underlining that these discussions will also be informed by the survey. The paper intends to give an overview of the “state of the art” on the issue of irregular secondary movements, including some of the causes of and potential responses to these movements. The UNHCR Co-chair invited Core Group members to reflect on the paper and to share written comments with UNHCR (vaneck@unhcr.org and fellahi@unhcr.org) by 16 April. A French translation will be available in due course and will also be posted on UNHCR’s website.

VI. CLOSING REMARKS

The co-Chairs thanked participants for their interest and inputs, and informed that the next Core Group meeting will be convened in the beginning of May 2004. The UNHCR Co-chair also invited participants to express their views on this topic in the High Commissioner’s Forum scheduled to take place the following day.

ANNEX 1

Convention Plus

**Meeting of the Core Group on addressing irregular secondary
movements of refugees and asylum-seekers**

11 March 2004, 13.00-15.00

Palais des Nations, Geneva

Room XXII

- 1. Welcome by the co-Chairs**
- 2. Adoption of Terms of Reference for the Core Group**
- 3. Follow-up to the Somali survey design workshop, held on 17 February 2004**
- 4. Introduction of possible elements of a multilateral framework**
- 5. Any other business**

ANNEX 2**DRAFT – FOR DISCUSSION****Terms of Reference****Convention Plus Core Group on addressing irregular secondary movements of refugees and asylum-seekers****Composition**

The Core Group is comprised of UNHCR, interested States and other interested institutions and organizations.

Working mandate

The Core Group will (on the basis of the Agenda for Protection, Goal 2, Action 4) develop a framework of undertakings relating to the causes of irregular secondary movements of refugees and asylum-seekers, with a view to addressing them through international co-operation, taking into account international solidarity and burden-sharing. Its work will be informed by the (intermediate) findings of (a) caseload-specific survey (s). The Core Group will also be in a position to review progress in carrying out this (these) survey(s).

Working arrangements

The Core Group will be co-chaired by Switzerland, South Africa and UNHCR. Meetings will normally take place in Geneva. The working languages will be English and French.

The decisions of the Core Group will be taken by consensus. The Core Group will dissolve once its final report has been submitted to the High Commissioner's Forum.

Report to the High Commissioner's Forum

The Core Group will keep Members of the Forum informed of its activities by all appropriate means, including through the UNHCR website.