

FOREWORD

FOREWORD BY

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



Mrs Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The 2000 Global Appeal marks the third edition of the annual programme overview of UNHCR. As in past years, the Appeal explains the overall requirements of the Office by countries and regions. Starting this year, UNHCR will introduce a new unified budget presentation. This is a major change, which will provide a more comprehensive overview of our financial needs.

Since the publication of the last Global Appeal, new conflicts and massive displacement of civilians have not decreased despite international efforts. In 2000, my Office will still have to ensure the protection and assistance of some 22 million refugees and displaced people world-wide. New humanitarian crises such as Kosovo and East Timor meant an increase in the needs of the suffering. The international community's response was very swift in both cases. As the emergency phase ends, and more stabilised operations are established, we will require continued support from the international community.

Our greatest needs are still in Africa - the continent with more than six million refugees and displaced persons. Volatile and fragile peace processes provide little hope for its future. Attracting the attention of governments and mobilising resources for protracted programmes is not always easy. Whenever the international attention decreases, the burden falls on the shoulders of the most needy.

UNHCR's protection mandate encompasses a wide aspect of activities, beyond defending and standing for the safeguard of refugees' rights. It also involves meeting their basic material needs; alleviating the suffering of women, children and elderly; encouraging them to take part in community activities; facilitating their self-sufficiency; and helping a smooth re-integration upon return. All require time and resources. I therefore wish to appeal to Governments to provide an early and flexible support to these programmes.

We also need to call for creative approaches in finding support and solutions for refugee problems. My Office will keep working closely with NGOs and other UN agencies. But we must also explore new partnerships, for example with the corporate sector and civil society. I hope that this will allow UNHCR to have access not only to additional resources but also - and more importantly - to fresh ideas, updated technology and innovative management experiences.

However, UNHCR's programmes will continue to depend on voluntary contributions of governments and of course on their crucial political support.

This year, UNHCR will commemorate its 50th anniversary. We want to share with you the positive contributions that refugees can offer to society. Together, we must celebrate refugees. We need to make a difference in the world, so that refugees are no longer perceived as a burden but as useful citizens with a future. I hope the 2000 Global Appeal will seed more solidarity and support for our shared goal.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sadako Ogata". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.