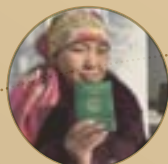


PLEDGES 2011

Ministerial Intergovernmental Event on Refugees and Stateless Persons

(Geneva, Palais des Nations, 7-8 December 2011)



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The UN Refugee Agency

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Ministerial Intergovernmental Event on Refugees and Stateless Persons

UNHCR ministerial meeting to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the 1951 *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* and the 50th anniversary of the 1961 *Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*
(Geneva, Palais des Nations, 7-8 December 2011)



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What I am asking of you here today is not a new convention or an extended mandate for UNHCR. What I am asking is for all of us to assume our shared duty.

Opening remarks by Mr. António Guterres

I am delighted to present in this publication the outcomes of the intergovernmental event at ministerial level of United Nations Member States (Ministerial Intergovernmental Event) that my Office facilitated in December 2011 to mark the anniversaries of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. This landmark event provided a unique opportunity to discuss and shape the evolution of the international protection system over the next decade.

We live in difficult and unpredictable times in which we are witnessing the combination of two very worrying factors. New crises are multiplying and old crises seem never to die. The number of people displaced by conflict, natural disasters and other sources of insecurity and risk is increasing. Moreover, there is growing uncertainty and concern within many societies linked to the global economic crisis and other factors.

In such a fluid global context, the institution of asylum and the obligations enshrined in the international framework for the protection of refugees and stateless persons take on greater significance than ever. The humanitarian community can mitigate the suffering, we can strive to solve the individual problems of the people we serve, but there is no way to find a true solution without the political will of States.

It is against this backdrop that the Ministerial Intergovernmental Event took place. Member States adopted a Ministerial Communiqué on 8 December 2011 – a strong statement of political will – in which they recommit to the principles and values underlying the 1951 Refugee Convention. The Communiqué also recognizes the important standards for the prevention and resolution of statelessness and safeguards for the protection of stateless people that the statelessness instruments provide. This sent out an important message that there are fundamental values which must not be undermined.

Proof of the importance UN Member States continue to attach to the protection of refugees and stateless persons is the fact that more than 150 participated in the meeting – over 75 per cent of all UN Member States – over half of whom were represented at ministerial or equivalent level. Such broad and high-level participation and the substantive outcomes that were

achieved attest to continued robust international commitment to refugees and stateless persons.

In the run-up to the Ministerial Intergovernmental Event, my Office encouraged States to make pledges of changes in policy and legislation at national level to improve the protection of refugees and stateless people.

The pledges presented were extraordinary. Over 90 States made pledges relating to refugees and asylum-seekers, including on the protection of women and children and durable solutions. Moreover, some States signalled their readiness to engage in a timely debate to fill protection gaps emerging from new forms of displacement, especially cross-border displacement linked to environmental change.

I am especially heartened by the real breakthrough – what I would describe as a ‘quantum leap forward’ – in relation to the protection of stateless people. Statelessness was one of the most neglected areas of the global human rights agenda. Thanks to the preparatory process for the Ministerial Intergovernmental Event, which included expert and regional meetings to map and increase knowledge about the extent of the problem, awareness of the problem of statelessness has expanded significantly in all regions, and substantive progress has been made in addressing it.

Over sixty States made statelessness-related pledges. Pledges included accession to one or both Statelessness Conventions, law reform to prevent or reduce statelessness and improvement of civil registration and documentation systems.

At the close of the event, I pledged that my Office would actively engage with all UN Member States in order to support them in enhancing protection to refugees and stateless people and finding solutions to their plight. This publication is intended to capture the legacy of this key event, while assisting UN Member States to track the progress they are making in fulfilling their pledges.

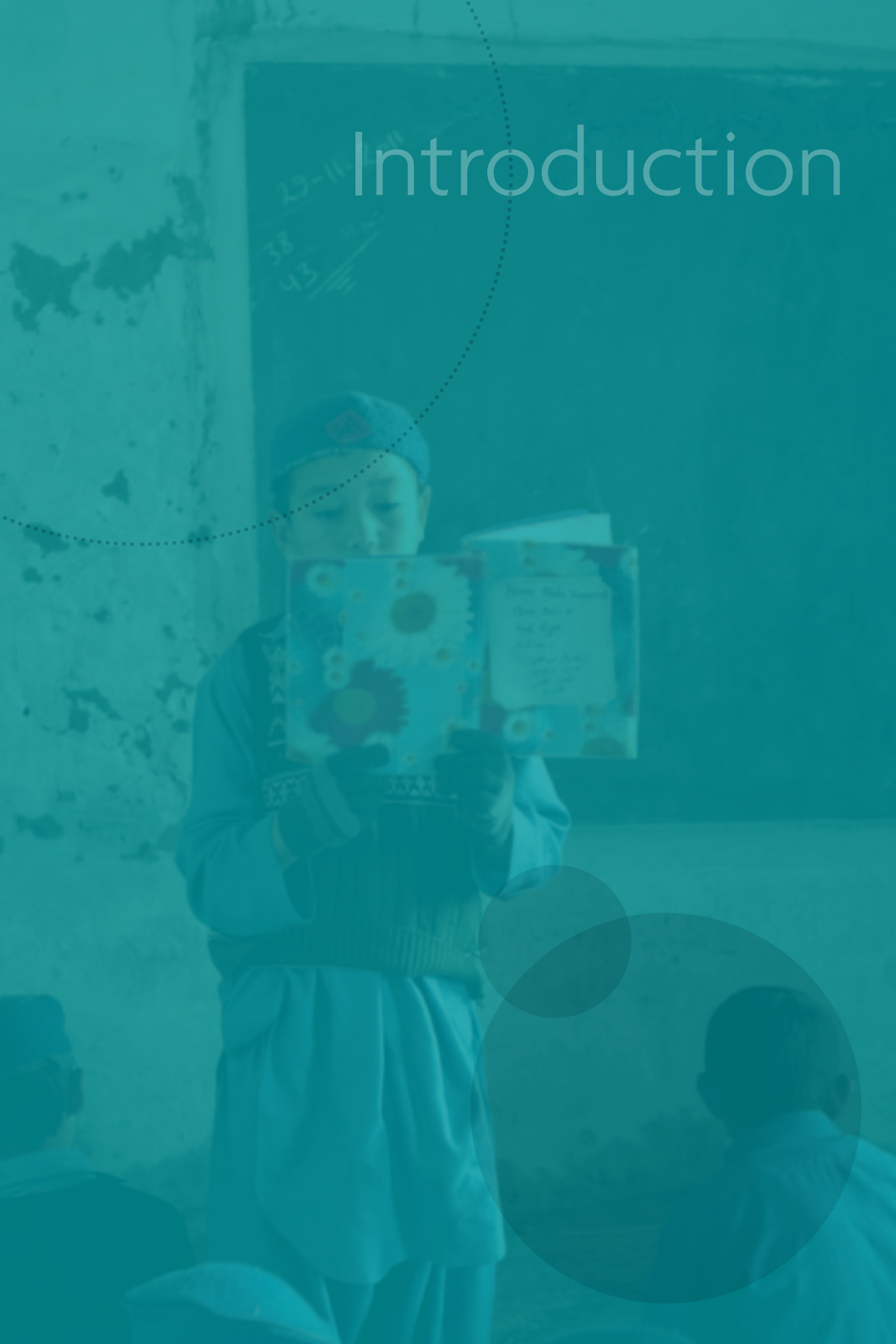
The pledges set out in this document constitute a profound expression of solidarity and commitment. They signal a watershed in the reinforcement of the international protection regime and, once implemented, will lead to tangible improvements in the lives of men, women, boys and girls affected by displacement and statelessness in the decade ahead.



António Guterres
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



Introduction





INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/C.3/65/L.58, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) facilitated a meeting of United Nations Member States to mark the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 50th anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The *Intergovernmental event at ministerial level of United Nations Member States* was held in Geneva on 7 and 8 December 2011 (Ministerial Intergovernmental Event).

Conceived as the culmination of a year-long process to mark these anniversaries, the Ministerial Intergovernmental Event was attended by representatives of over 150 United Nations Member States. Special guests included the President of the Swiss Confederation, Her Excellency Ms. Micheline Calmy-Rey; Nobel peace laureate and former President of Finland, His Excellency Mr. Martti Ahtisaari; the Secretary of State of the United States of America, the Honourable Hillary Rodham Clinton; and Kenya's Minister of State for Immigration and Registration, the Honourable Gerald Otieno Kajwang¹. Chapter IV contains the key statements delivered during the event, a message from United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, as well as the opening and closing remarks of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. António Guterres.

The Ministerial Intergovernmental Event included both plenary and roundtable sessions. Two roundtable sessions provided an opportunity for participants to share their views on key issues. The roundtables addressed the following themes: a) "Protection challenges and opportunities: Where will we be in ten years?" and b) "International cooperation, solidarity and burden sharing, including in protracted refugee situations".

The following Member States of the United Nations participated in the Ministerial Intergovernmental Event:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic (the), Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic (the), Democratic People's Republic of Korea (the), Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic (the), Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia (the), Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon (the), Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands (the), New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines (the), Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea (the), Republic of Moldova (the), Romania, Russian Federation (the), Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan (the), Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic (the), Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates (the), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the), United Republic of Tanzania (the), United States of America (the), Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The following States were represented at ministerial or similar level:

Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Canada, Central African Republic (the), Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic (the), Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Finland, Gambia (the), Georgia, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Mauritania, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands (the), Norway, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea (the), Republic of Moldova (the), Russian Federation (the), Rwanda, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania (the), United States of America (the), Uruguay, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Holy See and Palestine participated as observers, as did the following intergovernmental organizations and other entities:

African Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, Council of Europe, European Union, International Centre for Migration Policy Development, International Committee of the Red Cross, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Organization for Migration, Japan International Cooperation Agency, League of Arab States, International Organization of the Francophonie, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the Sovereign Military Order of Malta.

The United Nations system was represented as follows:

United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Joint Inspection Unit, World Bank, World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

A total of 43 non-governmental organizations were represented as observers.

A number of States took advantage of the Ministerial Intergovernmental Event to voluntarily undertake concrete commitments to improve protection and assistance for refugees and stateless persons, in the form of 'pledges'. At the request of States, UNHCR developed guidance on the form such pledges might take and on possible pledge themes. Several States presented pledges in the run-up to the event, others announced pledges during the event, and a small number did so thereafter. Chapter III contains the pledges presented prior to, during or after the Ministerial Intergovernmental Event. These pledges represent important voluntary expressions of political will. Chapter II summarizes the pledges and analyzes the themes they cover.

The Ministerial Intergovernmental Event included a Special Treaty Event, which enabled States to deposit instruments of accession. During this event, Serbia and Turkmenistan deposited their instruments of accession to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, respectively. At the Special Treaty Event, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees recognized and commended States that had acceded to the Statelessness Conventions in the context of the Commemorations earlier during 2011: namely Croatia, Nigeria, Panama and the Philippines.



Special Treaty Event / UNHCR / Jean-Marc Ferré / 7 December 2011

Prior to the Ministerial Intergovernmental Event, the two Statelessness Conventions had long been under-subscribed and the phenomenon of statelessness had been largely absent from the global human rights agenda. Thanks to the momentum generated by the Ministerial Intergovernmental Event, there has been increased recognition of the need to tackle the world's statelessness problem and a significant increase in the number of States that have acceded to one or both of the conventions. A total of 33 States pledged to accede to one or both of the statelessness instruments, and a number of them implemented their pledges almost immediately after the Ministerial Intergovernmental Event. Over forty States pledged to take other steps to address statelessness, including reform of their nationality laws.

States participating in the Ministerial Intergovernmental Event adopted a Ministerial Communiqué, which is presented in Chapter I. The Communiqué reaffirms that the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol are the foundation of the international refugee protection regime and have enduring value and relevance in the 21st century. It recognizes that the 1961 and 1954 Statelessness Conventions provide important safeguards for the prevention and resolution of statelessness and standards for the protection of stateless people. The Communiqué also recognizes the importance of enhancing international solidarity, strengthening action in accordance with the principles enshrined in applicable instruments and finding durable solutions for the problems of refugees and stateless people.

Ministerial Communiqué



Ministerial Communiqué



MINISTERIAL COMMUNIQUÉ

(Geneva, 8 December 2011)

1. We, the Ministers and representatives of Member States of the United Nations, gathered in Geneva, Switzerland, on 7 and 8 December 2011, for a ministerial-level meeting facilitated by UNHCR to mark the 60th anniversary of the *1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* and the 50th anniversary of the *1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*.
2. We reaffirm that the *1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* and its *1967 Protocol* are the foundation of the international refugee protection regime and have enduring value and relevance in the twenty-first century. We recognize the importance of respecting and upholding the principles and values that underlie these instruments, including the core principle of *non-refoulement*, and where applicable, will consider acceding to these instruments and/or removing reservations.
3. We recognize that the *1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness* and the *1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons* are the principal international statelessness instruments, which provide important standards for the prevention and resolution of statelessness and safeguards for the protection of stateless people. We will consider becoming a party to them, where appropriate, and/or strengthening our policies that prevent and reduce statelessness.
4. We express our concern that millions of people live without a nationality which limits enjoyment of their human rights, and we will work towards addressing statelessness and protecting stateless persons, including, as applicable, through national legislation and strengthening mechanisms for birth registration.
5. We are committed to strengthening and enhancing international protection and assistance to refugees through international cooperation in a spirit of solidarity, responsibility and burden sharing among all States and to improving ways to support countries hosting refugees, including in protracted refugee situations.
6. We commend the countries that host large numbers of refugees for their generosity and acknowledge the security, socio-economic and environmental impact of the presence of large-scale refugee populations on

these countries. We will work alongside these countries to meet the assistance and protection needs of refugees. We will endeavour to promote refugees' self-sufficiency, with the aim of investing in their future durable solutions.

7. We remain deeply concerned that too many refugee situations have become protracted, and will strive to work with UNHCR and development actors, as appropriate, to resolve refugees' plight and realize durable solutions in more effective and comprehensive ways, consistent with international law and relevant UN General Assembly resolutions. We will cooperate with countries of origin to foster conditions for voluntary repatriation, which remains the preferred solution, and pursue resettlement, in tandem with other solutions, and local integration where feasible. In this context, we recognize the need to address the root causes of refugee situations in accordance with international law.
8. We express our appreciation for the leadership shown by UNHCR and commend the Office for its ongoing efforts. We further commend the staff and implementing partners of UNHCR for the competent, courageous and dedicated manner in which they discharge their responsibilities.
9. We, while recalling the global nature of the refugee problem, note the efforts undertaken by UNHCR in partnership and cooperation with international, regional and national stakeholders.
10. We note that today's challenges in providing protection and achieving solutions continue to be serious, interconnected and complex. In this regard, we recognize the importance of enhancing international solidarity, strengthening action in accordance with the principles enshrined in applicable instruments and finding durable solutions. We will reinforce cooperation with each other and work with UNHCR and other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, to deepen our understanding of evolving patterns of displacement and to agree upon ways to respond to the challenges we face in a changing global context.
11. We extend our gratitude to the Government and people of Switzerland for generously hosting the UNHCR ministerial meeting to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the *1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* and the 50th anniversary of the *1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*.

Analysis of Pledges



Pledges Overview



UNHCR MINISTERIAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL EVENT: ANALYSIS OF PLEDGES

In the run-up to the Ministerial Intergovernmental Event, UNHCR encouraged States to use the meeting to make forward-looking and specific commitments to concretely improve protection and assistance for refugees and stateless people. This analysis provides an overview of the pledges made and should be read in conjunction with the texts of pledges contained in Chapter III. It is understood that pledges are not legally binding, but rather voluntary expressions of political will.

States, groups of States and organizations went beyond pledges relating to the protection of refugees and stateless people, including issues such as internal displacement, although IDPs were not within the formal purview of the conference. For the sake of completeness, this analysis summarizes all of the pledge areas in hopes of facilitating robust follow-up.

1. REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS

In total, ninety-two States made pledges relating to refugees and asylum-seekers, including pledges relating to the protection of women and children and durable solutions. Excluding women, children and durable solutions, 73 States and 3 international organizations made pledges relating to refugees and asylum-seekers that are summarized in this first section.

Twenty-four States made pledges to revise or amend national legislation or to adopt new legislation and eleven States pledged to establish or improve an asylum policy. Twenty-four states made pledges relating to the enhancement of their refugee status determination processes. Twenty made pledges relating to the enjoyment of a range of rights by refugees and access to documentation.

Eleven States pledged to improve detention practices or conditions in reception centres and seven states expressed their commitment to ensure that asylum-seekers and refugees have safe access to their territory.

During the Ministerial Intergovernmental Event, numerous States recognized the importance of the *1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* and its 1967 Protocol. States highlighted the continued relevance of these instruments to respond to some of the new challenges. Seven States pledged to withdraw (or review) reservations to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, and Madagascar pledged to consider acceding to the 1967 Protocol.

Sixteen States and three international organizations pledged to enhance regional and international cooperation. Various other States also confirmed their respect for international refugee law principles.

Theme of the Pledge	States/Groups of States/Organizations making a pledge	Example of pledges
<p>Revising and amending national refugee legislation or adopting new laws, to enable better implementation of the 1951 Convention and strengthen protection for asylum-seekers and refugees</p>	<p>Africa: Chad, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Republic of the Congo, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Togo, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia</p> <p>Americas: Argentina and Bolivia (Plurinational State of)</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific: Afghanistan, China, Papua New Guinea and Republic of Korea</p> <p>Europe: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Liechtenstein, Montenegro and the Russian Federation</p> <p>Middle East and North Africa: Yemen</p>	<p>Yemen: “Yemen pledges to develop national legislation addressing refugee affairs in conformity with international standards as stipulated in the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol.”</p>
<p>Establishing/improving national asylum policies</p>	<p>Africa: Angola, Chad, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, South Africa and Togo</p> <p>Americas: Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and the Dominican Republic</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific: Papua New Guinea and the Republic of Korea</p> <p>Europe: Austria</p>	<p>Papua New Guinea: “The Government of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea commits to reviewing all existing domestic legislation and policies relating to refugees with the aim of formulating a comprehensive national refugee policy for Papua New Guinea to effectively address refugee issues in full compliance with the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol.”</p>
<p>Improving detention practices and/or conditions in reception centres</p>	<p>Africa: Togo and Zimbabwe</p> <p>Americas: Mexico and the United States of America</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific: Japan</p> <p>Europe: Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Romania, the Russian Federation and Sweden</p>	<p>Denmark: “Denmark is committed to ensuring reception conditions of asylum-seekers of a continued high standard. Denmark pledges to launch in 2012 a process on the development of a new model for reception conditions for asylum-seekers.”</p>

Theme of the Pledge	States/Groups of States/Organizations making a pledge	Example of pledges
<p>Refugee status determination (RSD), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing an asylum procedure; • Improving the quality, efficiency and/or fairness of the asylum procedure; • Assuming greater responsibility for the asylum procedure. 	<p>Africa: The Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Togo, Uganda and Zimbabwe</p> <p>Americas: Argentina, Canada, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, the United States of America and Uruguay</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific: Afghanistan, Japan and the Republic of Korea</p> <p>Europe: Azerbaijan, Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Greece, Ireland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland</p> <p>Middle East and North Africa: Israel</p>	<p>Mali: <i>"The Government of Mali pledges to improve Refugee Status Determination in Mali (RSD). The Government of Mali pledges to establish an independent appeal committee by the end of 2011 to improve the asylum system in Mali. The new appeals committee will be established by virtue of a decree of the Minister of Territorial Administration and Local Authorities of Mali."</i></p>
<p>Access to the right to work, health, education and/or social welfare for asylum-seekers and refugees</p>	<p>Africa: Kenya, Lesotho and Rwanda</p> <p>Americas: Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Peru and the United States of America</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific: The Republic of Korea and Thailand</p> <p>Europe: Germany</p> <p>Middle East and North Africa: Yemen</p>	<p>Lesotho: <i>"The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho pledges to ensure that refugees in her territory have access to basic services for their welfare and well-being."</i></p>
<p>Improving access to documentation and birth/civil registration for asylum-seekers and refugees, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ID cards for refugees; • Machine-readable travel documents for refugees; • Birth registration for children of asylum-seekers and refugees. 	<p>Africa: Burundi, Chad, Malawi, Sierra Leone and the United Republic of Tanzania</p> <p>Americas: Costa Rica and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific: The Philippines and Thailand</p> <p>Europe: Belarus, France, Montenegro and the Russian Federation</p>	<p>Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of): <i>"Improve the mechanism for issuing documentation to refugees by facilitating the issuance of identity cards in the main cities of (Venezuelan) states on borders."</i></p>

Theme of the Pledge	States/Groups of States/Organizations making a pledge	Example of pledges
Accession to, or taking steps to accede to, the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees	Africa: Madagascar	Madagascar: "It is desirable to consider our accession to the Protocol in order to complete and reaffirm our commitment to refugee protection, together with the international community [...]"
Withdrawal (or review) of reservations to the 1951 and 1967 Protocol	Africa: Burundi and Malawi Americas: Mexico Asia and the Pacific: Papua New Guinea Europe: Denmark, Finland and Sweden	Burundi: " <i>The Government of the Republic of Burundi pledges to initiate the process of withdrawing its reservations to the 1967 Protocol relating to Refugee Status, i.e. its reservations concerning Articles 22, 17, and 26.</i> "
Enhancing regional and international cooperation	Africa: Kenya, Lesotho and South Africa Americas: Bolivia (Plurinational State of) Asia and the Pacific: Australia, China, Indonesia and Thailand Europe: Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Greece, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland International Organizations: African Union, European Union and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation	Australia: " <i>The Government of Australia pledges to enhance regional cooperation and burden-sharing on refugee protection and international migration in the Asia-Pacific by working with our partners in the Bali Process to operationalise the Regional Cooperation Framework, including by working closely with our Bali Process Co-Chair towards the establishment of a Regional Support Office.</i> "
Work against discrimination, racism, xenophobia and related intolerance	Africa: Rwanda Americas: Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Mexico Europe: Greece, Romania and Sweden	Sweden: " <i>The Government of Sweden pledges to continue to combat all forms of racism, discrimination and related intolerance.</i> "

Theme of the Pledge	States/Groups of States/Organizations making a pledge	Example of pledges
Providing safe access to the territory	<p>Africa: Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali and Rwanda</p> <p>Americas: Mexico</p> <p>Europe: Greece and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland</p>	<p>Ethiopia: "Ethiopia is committed to maintain its open-door asylum policy to refugees seeking protection and assistance in its territory."</p>
Respecting international refugee principles	<p>Africa: Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, the Sudan and Uganda</p> <p>Americas: Bolivia (Plurinational State of)</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific: Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan</p> <p>Europe: Belgium, France, Greece and Latvia</p> <p>Middle East and North Africa: Israel, Morocco, Qatar and Tunisia</p> <p>International Organizations: African Union</p>	<p>Kazakhstan: "Kazakhstan is firmly committed to its obligations under the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, it will remain an active partner of the UNHCR in the region and will expand cooperation in order to improve the situation of refugees and stateless persons."</p>
Addressing the needs of urban refugees	<p>Africa: Burundi, Kenya and South Africa</p> <p>Americas: Costa Rica and the United States of America</p>	<p>Burundi: "Take urban refugees into account in urban planning as well as in strategies to reduce poverty and disaster risk."</p>

1.1 Women and children

Particular attention was given to the situation of women and girls. Women and girls, as well as children, are particularly vulnerable in situations of acute crisis. Recognizing the importance of the problem, the High Commissioner António Guterres made the following pledge during the Ministerial Intergovernmental Event:

"I would therefore like to express in this conference a pledge of my own. I will do everything possible to uphold and strengthen UNHCR's corporate commitment to address sexual and gender-based violence and to support States in ensuring access of survivors to justice. In 2012, we will use savings obtained as a result of our internal reform process to launch a series of special projects aiming at reinforcing our efforts to address the specific threats and vulnerabilities faced by the women and girls of concern to UNHCR."

Several countries made pledges to improve the protection of women and children.

Theme of the Pledge	States/Groups of States/Organizations making a pledge	Example of pledges
Responding to the vulnerabilities and particular needs of women refugees and asylum-seekers, particularly in relation to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)	<p>Africa: Rwanda and Zimbabwe</p> <p>Americas: Colombia (<i>women in general</i>), the United States of America and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific: Australia</p> <p>Europe: Belgium and Sweden</p> <p>Middle East and North Africa: Israel</p>	<p>Rwanda: <i>“The Government of Rwanda pledges to improve the implementation of its refugee status determination procedures and ensure efficiency and consistency with high standards. More specifically by ensuring age, gender and diversity sensitivity in the asylum system, [...]”</i></p>
Improving protection for children	<p>Africa: Chad, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Republic of the Congo, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Togo, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia</p> <p>Americas: Argentina, Mexico and the United States of America</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific: Thailand</p> <p>Europe: Belgium, the Czech Republic and Greece</p>	<p>The United States of America: <i>“The U.S. Government pledges to update existing guidance on both procedure and substance for the adjudication of asylum claims brought by children.”</i></p>

1.2 Durable solutions

The ultimate goal of international protection is the re-establishment of a normal life. A durable solutions orientation is inherent in UNHCR’s Statute; the 1951 Refugee Convention’s provisions on naturalization, integration and cessation; as well as a number of Executive Committee Conclusions. Often, a combination of durable solutions, within the framework of a comprehensive solutions approach, is needed to resolve a refugee situation especially when it has become protracted. In this regard, nineteen States and two international organizations pledged to work on enhancing comprehensive solutions and four States to strengthen responsibility and burden sharing.

Eleven States pledged to facilitate voluntary repatriation. Twenty-four States and one international organization pledged to facilitate local solutions for refugees. Due to the complexity of pledges related to resettlement, a subsection has been dedicated to it. Several States noted that for a great number of persons, prospects for solutions are limited. Twenty-six States and one international organization made pledges to work towards resolving protracted refugee situations.

Theme of the Pledge	States/Groups of States/Organizations making a pledge	Example of pledges
Enhancing comprehensive durable solutions	<p>Africa: The Gambia, Rwanda and the Sudan</p> <p>Americas: Canada and Costa Rica</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific: Afghanistan and Australia</p> <p>Europe: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden</p> <p>International organizations: African Union and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation</p>	<p>Rwanda: <i>"The Government of Rwanda pledges to work to support efforts to encourage voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement, whenever feasible, in a comprehensive approach to finding durable solutions. And more specifically by supporting sustainable reintegration of returnees through, for example, access to employment, education and social services."</i></p>
Facilitating voluntary repatriation	<p>Africa: Angola, Guinea, Rwanda and Togo</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific: Nepal and Pakistan</p> <p>Europe: Croatia and Germany</p> <p>Middle East and North Africa: Israel and Mauritania</p>	<p>Angola: <i>"We remain committed to completing the voluntary and organized repatriation of remaining Angolan refugees, and this despite the financial burden borne in supporting this repatriation process."</i></p>

Theme of the Pledge	States/Groups of States/Organizations making a pledge	Example of pledges
<p>Facilitating local solutions for refugees, including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to long-term residence permits, sometimes free of charge; • Access to education, health care, employment, livelihood opportunities and/ or agricultural land; and • Effecting cessation clauses. 	<p>Africa: Angola, the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Malawi, Mali, Sierra Leone, Togo, Uganda and Zambia</p> <p>Americas: Brazil, Costa Rica and Mexico</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific: Papua New Guinea and the Republic of Korea</p> <p>Europe: Austria, Bulgaria, France, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Portugal</p> <p>International organization: African Union</p>	<p>The Gambia: <i>"The Gambian Government pledges to continue its efforts in securing legal status for refugees wishing to locally integrate by the provision of a residence and work permit that allow ceased Liberian refugees to legally reside in the Gambia and to gain employment."</i></p>
<p>Strengthening responsibility and burden sharing</p>	<p>Asia and the Pacific: Australia and Thailand</p> <p>Europe: The Netherlands</p> <p>International organization: African Union</p>	<p>The Netherlands: <i>"The Netherlands pledges to complement the Dutch national asylum system with additional efforts to strengthen protection of people of concern in their regions of origin. This will be done in close cooperation with UNHCR and host Governments. An example of this is the partnership directed towards 'Enhancing asylum conditions of the Somali refugees in Kenya.'"</i></p>

Theme of the Pledge	States/Groups of States/Organizations making a pledge	Example of pledges
<p>Responding to protracted refugee situations, including through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards addressing root causes of displacement; • Linkages to development funding; • Assistance to host countries; • Durable solutions for Afghan refugees; and • Durable solutions to resolve the refugee situation in the Western Balkans 	<p>Africa: Chad, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Uganda, Rwanda and Zimbabwe</p> <p>Americas: Canada and the United States of America</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific: Afghanistan, Australia, China, Indonesia and Japan</p> <p>Europe: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Sweden</p> <p>Middle East and North Africa: Israel</p> <p>International organization: African Union</p>	<p>Montenegro: <i>“The Government of Montenegro pledges to continue its efforts, both at national and regional levels, to support the process of achieving durable solutions and to end the protracted refugee situation of the people displaced from the Former Yugoslavia (1991-1995) and Kosovo (1999) in its territory through the implementation of the National Strategy and its Action Plan (supporting the legal, social and economic integration) and the efficient implementation of the Joint Regional Programme on Durable Solutions for Refugees and Displaced Persons, in a comprehensive and collaborative way with other partner countries in the Region and international donor community (Sarajevo Process).”</i></p>

1.2.1 Resettlement

Throughout 2011, resettlement countries meeting within the framework of the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR) and the Working Group on Resettlement (WGR)¹ considered resettlement-related issues which could be usefully included in pledges for the 2011 Ministerial Intergovernmental Event.

Following on an initiative by the ATCR Chair, resettlement countries agreed to consider a common basis for any pledges related to resettlement. During the Ministerial Intergovernmental Event, a large number of resettlement countries used the common language in their respective individual State pledges. Other States adopted part of the text and supplemented it with additional issues related to resettlement. Moreover, States without an established resettlement program – but having engaged in ad hoc resettlement operations in the recent past – also included resettlement activities as part of their pledges. A total of twenty-six States made substantive references to resettlement in their pledges.

State pledges involving resettlement refer to the continuation of existing quotas and the creation of additional resettlement places, the commitment to engage in cooperation agreements with new resettlement countries (twinning), the implementation of initiatives to improve resettled refugees' integration outcomes, the need for effective management of the resettlement process, support to the UNHCR proposed pool of emergency resettlement places, the expansion of existing emergency transit facilities for resettlement, and responses to the resettlement needs of specific refugee groups.

Pledges relating to resettlement address a wide range of policy, operational and procedural matters, and are aimed at reinforcing State support to UNHCR resettlement activities and coordination efforts, including in the context of emergency resettlement needs, in a manner which is supports to UNHCR's global strategic priorities.

¹ The Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR) and the Working Group on Resettlement (WGR) are the main global fora to review progress and shape joint strategies on resettlement, involving States' representatives from resettlement countries, NGOs involved in refugee resettlement, other international organizations and UNHCR. As part of UNHCR's global strategy to broaden the base on resettlement, the ATCR has been open to observers from States providing Emergency Transit Facilities, potential/emerging resettlement States as well as other States interested in the resettlement process. For more information on the ATCR and WGR process: <http://www.unhcr.org/atcr>

Theme of the Pledge	States/Groups of States/Organizations making a pledge	Example of pledges
<p>Maintaining and expanding the capacity of the global resettlement scheme, <i>inter alia</i> by increasing the number of resettlement places and widening the number of countries with a resettlement programme.</p>	<p>Americas: Brazil, Canada, Paraguay, the United States of America and Uruguay Europe: Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland</p>	<p>The Czech Republic: <i>“The Czech Republic will increase the number of resettled refugees to its territory both through annual programs and resettlement of urgent and emergency cases.”</i></p>
<p>Widening the strategic use of resettlement, in particular in priority situations.</p>	<p>Americas: The United States of America Asia and the Pacific: New Zealand Europe: Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden</p>	<p>New Zealand: <i>“New Zealand pledges to continue including within our annual quota, refugees from the most protracted situations, such as Bhutan and Burma.”</i></p>
<p>Managing resettlement effectively, with due attention to ensuring the integrity of the process and addressing emergency resettlement needs.</p>	<p>Americas: Canada, Europe: Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal and Romania</p>	<p>Portugal: <i>“The Government of Portugal pledges to continue to implement its National Resettlement Programme in close cooperation with the UNHCR and national implementing partners. In this regard, Portugal will seek to contribute to the global efforts being made to address refugee situations by taking, where feasible, the necessary measures to expedite the processing of cases, including in situations of urgent and emergency resettlement.”</i></p>

Theme of the Pledge	States/Groups of States/Organizations making a pledge	Example of pledges
<p>Enhancing capacity for the successful integration of resettled refugees.</p>	<p>Americas: Argentina, The United States of America and Uruguay Asia and the Pacific: Japan and New Zealand Europe: Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania and Sweden</p>	<p>Uruguay: <i>“Thirdly, to complement the solidarity resettlement efforts begun in 2009, Uruguay will launch a resettlement programme in rural settings benefitting refugees with such a profile, in order to boost their potential for local integration and self-reliance.”</i></p>
<p>Addressing the resettlement needs of specific refugee groups.</p>	<p>Americas: Canada and The United States of America Asia and the Pacific: New Zealand</p>	<p>Canada: <i>“Canada pledges to continue to resettle religious minorities and victims of persecution on the grounds of sexual orientation, including those from Iran who have fled to Turkey.”</i></p>
<p>Strengthening cooperation between resettlement countries, and between resettlement countries and UNHCR, through the exchange of information, analysis and good practices, including by twinning arrangements.</p>	<p>Americas: The United States of America Asia and the Pacific: Australia Europe: Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland</p>	<p>Australia: <i>“The Government of Australia pledges to enter into twinning partnerships with emerging resettlement countries to enhance and consolidate their capacity.”</i></p>

Theme of the Pledge	States/Groups of States/Organizations making a pledge	Example of pledges
	Group Pledge: Australia, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United States of America	Basic text: <i>“To enhance the delivery of comprehensive durable solutions, notably in protracted refugee situations, we pledge to work with other Member States, UNHCR and partners to promote increased opportunities for refugee resettlement, the participation of new resettlement countries, improved integration outcomes for resettled refugees, and the strategic use of resettlement to unlock the other durable solutions of voluntary repatriation and local integration.”</i>

2. STATELESSNESS

The Ministerial Intergovernmental Event galvanized an unprecedented commitment to take action to address statelessness, demonstrated by the extraordinary number of statelessness-related pledges made by States from around the world. A total of sixty-two States and one regional body made statelessness-related pledges. Thirty-three States pledged to accede, or to take steps to accede, to one or both of the Statelessness Conventions. Forty-two States and one regional body made statelessness-related pledges in other fields, including:

- Twelve States that pledged to undertake law reform to prevent or reduce statelessness (including removing gender discrimination from their nationality laws);
- Twelve States that pledged to implement better civil registration and documentation systems to prevent and reduce statelessness;

- Ten States that pledged to establish statelessness determination procedures or to take steps towards establishing such procedures;
- Twelve States that pledged to undertake studies, mapping initiatives or undertake awareness-raise campaign to better understand and address statelessness in their countries;
- Four States that pledged to address statelessness through foreign policy initiatives; and
- Eight States that pledged respect for international principles and action on statelessness.

Implementation of these pledges will expedite the prevention and reduction of statelessness and improve the identification and protection of stateless persons globally. For example, implementation of pledges to accede to the *1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*, along with pledges to undertake law reform and improve civil registration and documentation systems to prevent and reduce statelessness, has the potential to resolve the situation of at least 700,000 stateless persons across 45 States. Realisation of pledges to establish, or to take steps to establish, statelessness determination procedures, will more than double the number of States worldwide which currently utilise such mechanisms, which are crucial to ensuring that States meet their obligations towards stateless persons pursuant to the *1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons*. Pledges to undertake mapping of stateless populations, once completed, will contribute to much-needed baseline data relating to the number of stateless persons and the impact of statelessness on their lives. A number of States implemented their pledges almost immediately after the Ministerial Intergovernmental Event. Significantly, Benin, Bulgaria and the Republic of Moldova acceded to both Statelessness Conventions, while Georgia acceded to the 1954 Statelessness Convention.

Theme of the Pledge	States/Groups of States/Organizations making a pledge	Example of pledges
<p>Accession to, or taking steps to accede to, one or both of the Statelessness Conventions or other treaty action</p>	<p>Africa: Benin (both Conventions), Burundi (1961 Convention), the Central African Republic (both Conventions), Côte d'Ivoire (both Conventions), the Gambia (both Conventions), Guinea (1961 Convention), Guinea-Bissau (both Conventions), Madagascar (1961 Convention), Mozambique (both Conventions), Sierra Leone (both Conventions), South Africa (both Conventions), South Sudan (both Conventions), Togo (both Conventions), the United Republic of Tanzania (both Conventions) and Zambia (1961 Convention)</p> <p>Americas: Argentina (1961 Convention), Colombia (1961 Convention), Ecuador (1961 Convention), Haiti (both Conventions), Honduras (both Conventions), Paraguay (both Conventions) and Peru (both Conventions)</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific: The Philippines (1961 Convention)</p> <p>Europe: Belgium (1961 Convention), Bulgaria (both Conventions), Georgia (1954 Convention), Hungary (lifting reservations to the 1954 Convention), Luxembourg (1961 Convention), Portugal (both Conventions), the Republic of Moldova (both Conventions), Spain (1961 Convention), Sweden (lifting reservations to the 1954 Convention), Turkey (both Conventions) and Ukraine (both Conventions)</p> <p>Middle East and North Africa: Yemen (both Conventions)</p>	<p>South Africa: <i>"The Government of South Africa hereby pledges to become a signatory and party to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the subsequent 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness following an internal consultative process."</i></p>

Theme of the Pledge	States/Groups of States/Organizations making a pledge	Example of pledges
Law reform to prevent and reduce statelessness	<p>Africa: Benin, The Central African Republic, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda and Senegal</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific: Thailand</p> <p>Europe: Armenia, Georgia, Montenegro and the Russian Federation</p>	<p>Liberia: <i>“The Government pledges that the 1973 Alien and Nationality Laws will be amended to ensure that nationality is equally transmitted by any of the parents as enshrined in the Organic Law of the land (the Constitution). The present practice of the Alien and Nationality Laws is that only the father can transmit nationality when the child is born outside of Liberia while the Constitution states that one of the parents who is a Liberian citizen can transmit nationality. Indeed, this is a conflict and Liberia has ratified the 1954 and 1961 Conventions on Statelessness.”</i></p>
Civil registration / documentation to prevent and reduce statelessness	<p>Africa: The Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Namibia, Rwanda and Somalia</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific: Thailand and the Philippines</p> <p>Europe: Croatia, Georgia, Montenegro and the Russian Federation</p>	<p>Thailand: <i>“The Government of Thailand pledges [...] to provide greater access to birth registration and individual documentation services, including late birth registration, to build on Thailand's progress in reducing vulnerability to statelessness.”</i></p>
Establishment of statelessness determination procedures or status or taking measures to consider establishing a statelessness determination procedure	<p>Americas: Brazil, Costa Rica, Peru, the United States of America and Uruguay</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific: Australia and the Philippines</p> <p>Europe: Belgium, Georgia, Hungary (to improve procedures) and the Republic of Moldova</p>	<p>Brazil: <i>“In 2012, a Bill establishing a mechanism for the determination of stateless status in Brazil will be sent to Parliament.”</i></p>

Theme of the Pledge	States/Groups of States/Organizations making a pledge	Example of pledges
Studies / awareness campaigns	<p>Africa: Benin, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda and Zambia</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific: Kyrgyzstan and the Philippines</p> <p>Europe: Azerbaijan, Croatia and the Republic of Moldova</p>	<p>The Republic of Moldova: <i>"The Government of Moldova pledges to map and gather information on stateless persons in Moldova with a view to finding a solution for their predicament."</i></p>
Addressing statelessness through foreign policy initiatives	<p>Africa: South Africa</p> <p>America: The United States of America</p> <p>Europe: Hungary and Sweden</p>	<p>The United States of America: <i>"Focus U.S. diplomacy on preventing and resolving statelessness among women and children, including efforts to raise global awareness about discrimination against women in nationality laws and to mobilize governments to repeal nationality laws that discriminate against women."</i></p>
General pledges on respect for international principles and action on statelessness	<p>Africa: Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria</p> <p>Americas: Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Mexico and Panama</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific: Kyrgyzstan</p> <p>Europe: Belarus, Croatia, Denmark, France, Liechtenstein, Montenegro and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland</p> <p>International organization: African Union</p>	<p>African Union: <i>"The African Union Commission therefore pledges to work with UNHCR to raise awareness and foster common understanding about statelessness, and to urge the remaining African states that are yet to sign and or ratify the Convention to do so at the earliest opportunity. In this regard, the Africa Union Commission will bring the issue of statelessness and the determination of nationality to the attention of the AU member states, with a view to adopting a common position on the two issues as well as adopt continental guidelines on elements for the determination of nationality."</i></p>

3. INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

Ten States in Africa pledged to ratify and/or incorporate the Kampala Convention for the Protection and Assistance of IDPs into national law and policy. The Kampala Convention is the first binding instrument in the world on the protection and assistance of IDPs. It was adopted in October 2009 and will enter into force and become legally binding when it has been ratified by 15 countries.

Theme of the Pledge	States/Groups of States/Organizations making a pledge	Example of pledges
In Africa, several countries pledged to ratify and/or incorporate into national law/policy the Kampala Convention	Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Somalia, South Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania	Nigeria: <i>"The Federal Executive Council in furtherance of its commitment approved the ratification of the Kampala Convention and the Government of Nigeria pledges to ratify and domesticate the Kampala Convention."</i>
Protection for internally displaced	Africa: Guinea-Bissau Americas: Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia and the United States of America Asia and the Pacific: Japan, Indonesia and the Philippines Europe: Armenia, Azerbaijan (also public awareness), Georgia, Germany (Afghans IDPs), Liechtenstein and Montenegro (protection of IDPs in general)	Colombia: <i>"The Government of Colombia is committed to the implementation of the Law for Victims and Land Restitution with adequate protection measures and the search for the solutions of return, rural resettlement and local integration for the displaced population."</i>

4. OTHER FORMS OF DISPLACEMENT

Displacement is becoming more complex. Recognizing the complexity of the phenomenon, ten States pledged to address dimensions of mixed migration, such as human trafficking and smuggling. Not all refugees are victims of trafficking, however, numerous refugees become more vulnerable to smugglers or traffickers during their flight. Other victims of trafficking may become refugees due to the fear of being stigmatized for their forced participation in sex work once returned to their countries, or to the risk of being re-trafficked.

Theme of the Pledge	States/Groups of States/Organizations making a pledge	Example of pledges
Addressing dimensions of mixed migration: human trafficking and smuggling	<p>Africa: Kenya</p> <p>Americas: Costa Rica, Mexico and Panama</p> <p>Asia and the Pacific: Australia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, the Philippines and Thailand,</p> <p>Middle East and North Africa: Israel and Yemen</p>	<p>Costa Rica: <i>“The Government of Costa Rica pledges to promote a comprehensive approach at the regional level to assist persons involved in mixed migration flows.”</i></p>
Humanitarian assistance	<p>America: Argentina and Panama</p>	<p>Argentina: <i>“The Argentine Republic will strengthen the implementation of those mechanisms that have been adopted to cope with new situations that are not envisaged in the international instruments for refugee protection, including the application of criterion for temporary residence on humanitarian grounds [...]”</i></p>
People displaced across borders owing to sudden-onset disasters linked to climate change	<p>Group pledge: Norway and Switzerland with Costa Rica, Germany and Mexico</p>	<p>Basic text: <i>“A more coherent and consistent approach at the international level is needed to meet the protection needs of people displaced externally owing to sudden-onset disasters, including where climate change plays a role. We therefore pledge to cooperate with interested states, UNHCR and other relevant actors with the aim of obtaining a better understanding of such cross border movements at relevant regional and sub-regional levels, identifying best practices and developing consensus on how best to assist and protect the affected people.”</i></p>

5. COOPERATION WITH UNHCR

UNHCR works with a wide range of partners, including Governments, NGOs, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and regional organizations. Twenty-two States and three international organizations pledged to cooperate with UNHCR.

Theme of the Pledge	States/Groups of States/Organizations making a pledge	Example of pledges
<p>Cooperation with UNHCR by supporting projects, continuing or increasing funding and by building or expanding partnerships</p>	<p>Africa: Ethiopia and Ghana Americas: The Dominican Republic and the United States of America Asia and the Pacific: Australia, China, Kazakhstan and the Philippines Europe: Austria, Finland, France, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Middle East and North Africa: Israel, Qatar and Yemen International Organizations: African Union, European Union and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation</p>	<p>Finland: <i>"Finland is a reliable donor to UNHCR and pledges to provide UNHCR unearmarked core funding of seven million euro according to our multi-year commitment. In addition, Finland continues to provide UNHCR with additional funding in response to emergencies and protracted needs. All Finnish funding is subject to parliamentary approval."</i></p>



Pledges



AFGHANISTAN

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan pledges to establish – with the assistance of UNHCR – a national refugee legislation in accordance to best international practice and fully compliant with the 1951 Convention and other international norms. This national refugee legislation will, in addition to a national Refugee Law, also include procedures to implement the aforementioned international instruments and to fulfill the obligations of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan with regard to the 1951 Convention.

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

More than 5.7 million Afghans have returned home since the fall of the Taliban government in 2001. Most of them with the assistance of the international community, in particular UNHCR. My Government is most grateful for this assistance and hopes that it will continue unwaveringly until the refugee crises has been solved completely. In other words, whilst this repatriation resulted in Afghanistan's population increasing by nearly a quarter, there are still some three million Afghans living as refugees outside our country. Refugees for whom the sustainability of their voluntary return to villages and cities is increasingly challenging because of scarce jobs, food, shelter and, unfortunately, because of a deteriorating security situation in some parts of our country.

Internal displacement and outward migration are also increasing. Sustainable reintegration is imperative as it has a direct impact on the overall stability of Afghanistan, and the ongoing engagement and support of the international community to these Afghan refugees is essential. But it is also important that the Government of Afghanistan, together with the Governments of the two main countries of asylum, Iran and Pakistan, create an integrated, holistic approach for helping these refugees.

Thus, I am pleased to announce that these three governments (Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan) are now engaged in the very first quadripartite consultative process, together with UNHCR, to develop a multi-year solutions strategy for Afghan refugees. This strategy will be presented to the international community at a stakeholders' conference in May 2012.





AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

PLEDGE FORM

The African Union Commission congratulates the High Commissioner for Refugees on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 50th Anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The African Union Commission seizes this occasion to renew its commitment to the notion of protection of displaced persons and to underscore the importance of the values of solidarity, cooperation and burden sharing in and amongst state parties and non-state parties.

The African Union Commission notes that with regard to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, 26 of its Member States have so far ratified the convention.

Taking into account the correlation between the incidence of statelessness and the determination of nationality, the African Union Commission therefore pledges to work with UNHCR to raise awareness and foster common understanding about statelessness, and to urge the remaining African states that are yet to sign and or ratify the Convention to do so at the earliest opportunity. In this regard, the African Union Commission will bring the issue of statelessness and the determination of nationality to the attention of the AU member states, with a view to adopting a common position on the two issues as well as continental guidelines on elements for the determination of nationality.

The African Union Commission also renews its commitment and support to displaced persons and in particular, to refugees, and reaffirms the fundamental principles of the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, as well as the 1969 OAU Convention governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. While upholding these principles, specific emphasis is placed on changed conditions requiring objective assessment of political and social changes in countries of origin. These conditions are critical in determining the implementation of cessation clauses in given refugee situations.

The African Union Commission pledges to link this to the notion of durable solutions as an effective and integral part of integration and repatriation programmes in ending any given refugee situation.

Overall, whilst continuously engaging in advocating and facilitating durable solutions, the African Union Commission is committed and pledges to work towards preventing further displacement and to address its root causes on the continent through implementation of the Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and Common African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) amongst other

AU instruments such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the establishment of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.

The African Union Commission further pledges to work alongside the international community to assist countries that host large numbers of refugees to meet their protection and assistance needs.

Finally, the African Union Commission pledges to assist UNHCR in monitoring the pledges made on this occasion by African Union Member States.

ALGERIA



EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

Loyal to its tradition of hospitality, Algeria has since its independence hosted thousands of refugees fleeing persecution and foreign occupation.

Algeria has initiated the process of updating its immigration policy (entry and stay) for asylum-seekers, refugees and stateless persons to ensure better protection of these vulnerable people.

ANGOLA



EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

The Government of Angola, in partnership with UNHCR, continues to work on reforming its policies for granting asylum and protecting refugees in compliance with international humanitarian law and the 1951 Convention.

We remain committed to completing the voluntary and organized repatriation of remaining Angolan refugees, and this despite the financial burden borne in supporting this repatriation process.

In order to allow all Angolan citizens who enjoy refugee status to join the process of return to Angola, the Government of Angola has extended the voluntary repatriation operation until June 2012, after which UNHCR will invoke the cessation clause for the refugee status of Angolans.



ARGENTINA

PLEDGE FORM

1. Statelessness

As a point of departure, I would like to mention that the Argentine Republic understands that the right to nationality is a fundamental human right and, as such, is enshrined in the major international human rights instruments to which it is a party. Several of these instruments that enshrine the right to nationality have constitutional status.

In this regard, the corresponding administrative procedures are being completed so that the National Executive Power can refer to the Honorable National Congress a Bill approving the International Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. On this point, I wish to clarify that the approval of international treaties by the National Congress is an essential requirement for the State to express its consent to be bound by them. Therefore, once the Bill is approved, the Executive shall accede to the Convention in the shortest possible delay.

2. Regulation of the General Law on Recognition of and Protection to Refugees

For its part, the Argentine Republic wishes to announce that during the course of 2012 it will complete the task of promulgating regulations for the General Law on Recognition of and Protection to Refugees (Law 26.165) that was enacted in 2006.

The said Law stipulates in its Article 1 that the protection of refugees will be governed by provisions of international human rights law applicable in the Argentine Republic, in addition to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.

The provisions of this article imply, on the one hand, that the obligations assumed by Argentina with respect to the major international human rights instruments - which include promoting, respecting and guaranteeing the human rights of all persons within its jurisdiction, without discrimination on any grounds - also extend to asylum-seekers and refugees.

On the other hand, the human rights treaties in force in our country also set standards governing the determination of refugee status. This protection standard established by our law goes beyond what is stipulated in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Thus, while the Convention requires States to guarantee certain rights to refugees under the same conditions as aliens, the provisions of the National Constitution and the observance of international human rights instruments in the Argentine Republic recognize to asylum-seekers and refugees rights equal to nationals.

In this regard, the Argentine Republic is pleased to announce that during 2011, with the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, it has completed the ratification of all international treaties on human rights negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations.

3. Complementary Protection Mechanisms

In addition, the Argentine Republic will strengthen the implementation of those mechanisms that have been adopted to cope with new situations that are not envisaged in the international instruments for refugee protection, including the application of criterion for temporary residence on humanitarian grounds (art. 23, sub-paragraph *m*, Migration Law No. 25.871) pursuant to the regulations established in the Regulatory Decree of the Migration Act (Decree 616/2010), which envisages the situation of people who, notwithstanding the fact that they are not refugees, have international protection needs; and the criterion of special temporary settlement (art. 24, sub-paragraph *h*, Law No. 25.871) whose regulations include the situation of those people who “despite not requiring international protection, are temporarily unable to return to their countries of origin due to the prevailing humanitarian conditions or owing to the consequences generated by natural disasters or man-made environmental disasters”, and may take into account non-return advisories issued by UNHCR.

Argentina considers that this is an important development that is unprecedented in the region. In this regard, the CONARE will continue consolidating the practice of recommending to the National Direction for Migration cases of people whose applications for refugee status have been denied whenever their situation meets the above-mentioned criteria; as has been done, for example, in cases of unaccompanied children.

Likewise, the Argentine Republic pledges to share this public policy with countries in the region with the aim of maintaining the high standards achieved by members of the MERCOSUR.

4. Refugee Resettlement Programme

The “Regional Solidarity Resettlement Programme” for Latin America, enshrined in the Mexico Plan of Action, has been a firm commitment assumed by the Argentine Republic with the understanding that it constitutes a durable solution for a number of refugees for whom neither repatriation nor local integration in the first country of asylum is possible.

In this regard, in the context of the “Programme of Solidarity Cities and Provinces”, the CONARE will, to the extent possible, endeavor to replicate in other provinces of Argentina the model and the good practices relating to resettlement adopted by the Province of Cordoba, which *inter alia* grants funding for housing for refugees.

5. Special Protection Needs: Situation of Unaccompanied or Separated Children

In another vein, I am pleased to announce that CONARE has developed a “Protocol for the protection, assistance and search for durable solutions for unaccompanied or separated children seeking asylum”, together with the UNHCR Regional Office, UNICEF, IOM, the National Ombudsman, other national and local Government entities and civil society organisations, that was approved this year.

In this context, the CONARE pledges to advance and deepen the implementation of all aspects of the Protocol in coordination with all national and local Government actors, and to promote and to secure the support of all competent provincial and local Governments.

The Protocol includes special measures and procedures aimed at the immediate identification of unaccompanied children and of special protection needs, be it as an asylum-seeker, as a possible victim of human trafficking, someone with medical needs, etc.

Application of the aforementioned Protocol will no doubt lead to an improvement in the comprehensive protection of refugee children and constitute an effective tool to achieve immediate assistance and the most appropriate integration solutions that are sensitive to their age and cultural diversity.

6. Legal Assistance for Asylum-Seekers

Finally, I am pleased to announce that last August, an agreement was signed between the CONARE, the UNHCR Regional Office for South America and my country's National Ombudsman creating the “Programme of Legal Assistance and Representation for Refugees and Asylum-Seekers” within the scope of the National Ombudsman Office, which will begin functioning in February 2012.

The aforementioned Programme will guarantee legal advice and representation, when necessary, to any asylum-seeker that so requires it.

In this context, CONARE pledges to implement effective information and referral mechanisms so that the right to have effective, public and free legal representation by the National Ombudsman can be known and effectively exercised by any asylum-seeker; and to ensure that those people who do not apply for refugee protection are also properly guided and referred to the protection mechanisms that they may require.

ARMENIA

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of the Republic of Armenia pledges:

1. To continue efforts aimed at solving social-economic issues of the remaining Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan, in order to finding a final solution to their problems.
2. To urgently address, with the support of donor governments and development organizations, the dire housing needs of Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan, as well as internally displaced persons.
3. To improve the Law on Refugees and Asylum to ensure its full conformity with agreed international standards for the protection of refugees.
4. To amend the provisions of the citizenship law that may cause statelessness.



AUSTRALIA

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Australia pledges to implement legislation to grant complementary forms of protection to persons who are outside the scope of refugee protection instruments. In recent months, we have passed legislation through the Parliament to make this possible and we are working to ensure it will come into effect in the first quarter of 2012.

The Government of Australia pledges to better identify stateless persons and assess their claims. Australia is committed to minimising the incidence of statelessness and to ensuring that stateless persons are treated no less favourably than people with an identified nationality. Australia will continue to work with UNHCR, civil society and interested parties to progress this pledge.

The Government of Australia pledges to enhance the delivery of comprehensive durable solutions, particularly for protracted refugee situations. Through our work with UNHCR, other resettlement States and partners we pledge to promote increased opportunities for refugee resettlement and the participation of new resettlement countries. We also pledge to focus on improved integration outcomes for resettled refugees and the strategic use of resettlement to unlock the other durable solutions of voluntary repatriation and local integration. (*Group Pledge*)



The Government of Australia pledges to enter into twinning partnerships with emerging resettlement countries to enhance and consolidate their capacity.

The Government of Australia pledges to continue to prioritise the protection of women and girls. We will work with UNHCR to ensure adequate resources are allocated to delivering on UNHCR's updated sexual and gender-based violence strategy, and the recommendations contained in the report from the Regional Dialogues with refugee women and girls. Recognising the root causes of gender-based violence, we pledge to promote the empowerment of women and girls to enhance their protection. In particular, Australia's newly appointed Global Ambassador for Women and Girls will engage with UNHCR and refugee groups on these issues.

The Government of Australia pledges to enhance regional cooperation and burden-sharing on refugee protection and international migration in the Asia-Pacific by working with our partners in the Bali Process to operationalise the Regional Cooperation Framework, including by working closely with our Bali Process Co-Chair towards the establishment of a Regional Support Office.

The Government of Australia pledges to continue our long-standing support for UNHCR's mandate and operations through the provision of core and unearmarked funding. We recognise that humanitarian funding that is both predictable and flexible best enables UNHCR to plan, prioritise and program critical protection work. We also recognise that humanitarian funding alone will not resolve protracted refugee situations, and pledge to continue our efforts to support durable solutions for refugees through enhanced linkages between humanitarian assistance, early recovery and development programming.



AUSTRIA

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Austria pledges to conclude negotiations on a Memorandum of Understanding between the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior and the UNHCR Office in Austria.

The cooperation between the UNHCR Office in Vienna and the Ministry of the Interior has proven to be very efficient and productive over the past years. Therefore it is intended to sign a Memorandum of Understanding

reflecting the existing cooperation and showing ways for further cooperation in all areas covered by the mandate of the UNHCR.

First of all, the Memorandum includes a strong commitment of Austria to the 1951 Convention and the protection of those in need. More precisely, the Memorandum will refer to a number of measures in order to safeguard the high quality of the Austrian asylum system, in particular the standards for asylum procedures as well as the reception system. Furthermore, in brief, the following actions are foreseen in the Memorandum:

- Introduction of a coordination mechanism
- Periodic meetings between UNHCR and the MOI
- Cooperation to safeguard the quality of asylum procedures
- Cooperation to safeguard the quality of reception conditions
- Cooperation in the field of integration of persons found to be in need of international protection
- Cooperation in the field of aliens police matters as far as the mandate of UNHCR is concerned
- Austria will be ready to review her implementation of the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons on the basis of the guidelines which are currently being elaborated by UNHCR
- Cooperation in the field of human trafficking as far as the mandate of UNHCR is concerned

The Government of Austria pledges to intensify efforts in order to guarantee the best possible integration of those in need of international protection.

In the wide field of integration, persons with international protection status are of particular importance. Therefore the Federal Ministry of the Interior is fully committed to focusing its integration efforts also on this particularly sensitive group. In this regard, there will be an in-depth cooperation with the UNHCR Office when it comes to the establishment of integration measures for refugees and persons with subsidiary protection status.

The following concrete integration measures, which are also open for refugees, are and will be established:

- Language Courses
- Financial support for participation in school events
- Stipend for highly talented students
- Courses facilitating access to the labor market
- Facilitation of the recognition process
- Support for the founding of new enterprises

- Support for participation in public life, such as membership in associations
- Establishment of other integration projects

Furthermore UNHCR was granted observer status in the newly established advisory board for integration matters.



AZERBAIJAN

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan pledges:

1. To participate in making amendments and additions to the relevant legislative acts in order to improve the procedure for considering applications of persons seeking refugee status;
2. To participate in the preparation and adoption of the international document concerning the protection of rights and freedoms of internally displaced persons; and
3. To contribute to increasing, on the global scale, public awareness of the problems faced by internally displaced persons.

Additionally, the delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan stated its intention to continue the close cooperation with UNHCR for the elimination of the protection gaps, strengthening the protection regime and asylum system, the thorough study and analysis of statelessness in the country, as well as in the field of regulation of participation of refugees in the labor market.



BELARUS

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

Belarus is committed to the purposes and principles of the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, including such fundamental principles as access to the territory by asylum-seekers, conducting a fair refugee status determination procedure, as well as of *non-refoulement*.

By the end of next year we plan to begin the process of granting recognized refugees with machine-readable travel documents, which are designed in accordance with the 1951 Convention and the documents of the International Civil Aviation Organization. This measure is aimed at providing addi-

tional guarantees of freedom of movement for persons who were granted refugee status in the Republic of Belarus.

This year, is launched the National Programme of Demographic Security for 2011-2015, which sets a strategy for the near future, including the integration of migrants and refugees in the Belarusian society. Priority attention is given to teaching refugees the state languages, carrying out information campaigns, and adopting legal and organizational, socio-economic and various other measures for their integration.

In our country, concrete measures are being taken to reduce statelessness, including legislative measures, allowing the creation of a steady trend of reducing the number of stateless persons permanently residing in the country. By the end of 2013, we expect that this trend will be strengthened through the implementation of measures aimed at facilitating the acquisition of Belarusian citizenship by this category of individuals.

BELGIUM

PLEDGE FORM

Belgium will maintain and further develop its solid asylum system, which is built on high standards of quality and efficiency. The asylum system guarantees full and effective access to those wishing to apply for international protection.

We will further work on minimising delays by a thorough investigation of the asylum process in order to streamline the process. This must result in faster decision-making without sacrificing our high quality standards.

Belgium has a well-developed research centre for country of origin information and will further professionalize its functioning, e.g. by increasing transparency in the future and increasing access to the information used by the general public, including asylum-seekers.

Belgium developed in the past a system that gives special attention to gender-based files, e.g. by creating a gender unit. Similarly, special assistance is given to unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers. In this context, Belgium pledges to take further measures to limit the detention of this group.

Belgium will also further invest in training programmes on issues such as gender, unaccompanied minors and credibility assessment, notably by further implementing the training modules of the European Asylum Curriculum, recently taken over by the European Asylum Support Office.



Belgium will continue its efforts to achieve the establishment of a Common European Asylum System (CEAS) based on high standards of protection and will strive for the best level of harmonization.

Belgium pledges to accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness in the near future. In addition, the new coalition agreement also provides for the introduction of a new procedure for the recognition of statelessness to be conducted by the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons.

Belgium also acknowledges the importance of the external dimension of the asylum policy and pledges to increase its resettlement efforts in the near future, in close collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Belgium is involved in small projects for capacity building in non EU-countries, e.g. in Burundi, where public servants of the asylum authority are trained by experienced staff from Belgium. Belgium will, to the extent possible, further participate in such projects.



BENIN

PLEDGE FORM

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs, for African Integration, for Francophonie and Beninese Abroad offers its compliments to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva and has the honour of referring to the Convention of 28 September 1954 relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and to the Convention of 30 August 1961 on the Reduction of Statelessness.

In compliance with the provisions of the Constitution of 11 December 1990, the Government of Benin is anxious to protect, defend and promote human rights. It considers that, whatever their circumstances, human beings enjoy rights that must be recognized and protected. It is in this perspective that, on 4 November 2011, the National Assembly debated and adopted Law No. 2011-32 which authorises the Republic of Benin to accede to both conventions.

In compliance with the internal ratification process, the President of the Republic will issue a decree of accession in the next few days. Thereafter, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will take the necessary measures to draw up the instruments of accession and deposit them with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The Government of Benin wishes to reiterate here its full accession to both conventions. The Ministry can count on the support of UNHCR in the do-

mestic implementation of the above-mentioned conventions, including by updating the 1965 Nationality Code, which is still in force.

The Ministry will be sure to seek the assistance of UNHCR as regards the technical details of this process of updating the Nationality Code.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs, for African Integration, for Francophonie and Beninese Abroad thanks the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva for his kind cooperation and takes this opportunity to renew the assurances of its high esteem.

EXCERPT FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

The work to be done for Benin to implement both conventions on statelessness will include conducting a full-scale sociological study combined with the general census of population and housing, planned for 2012, in order to have reliable data on stateless persons or people at risk of statelessness living in Benin.

BOLIVIA (PLURINATIONAL STATE OF)



EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

Voluntary commitments of the Plurinational State of Bolivia:

- To strengthen national legislation to achieve full compliance with the commitments assumed as a State Party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, through the adoption of a 'National Law on the Protection of Refugees'.
- To continue with and multiply training on the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers for government officials working on the subject.
- To continue providing refugees and asylum-seekers access to the same basic services enjoyed by Bolivian citizens, that allows them to enjoy their economic, social and cultural rights.
- To ensure implementation of the 'National law against racism and all forms of discrimination', in force since October 2010 and which protects every inhabitant of the country against discrimination and does not recognize any immunity, exemptions or privileges.

- To continue strengthening the integration between countries of the Latin American continent, as well as the coordination of policies on the protection of refugees and stateless persons.
- To continue promoting values of solidarity, respect, tolerance and multiculturalism, stressing the non-political and humanitarian nature of the protection of refugees, IDPs and stateless persons, while recognizing their rights and obligations as well as their positive contribution to society.



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

In keeping with our commitment to the plight of refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons, BiH officials recently participated in two important regional conferences that produced conclusions and recommendations that would strengthen international protection further in the region. The first was the *Conference on the Provision of Civil Status Documentation and Registration in South-Eastern Europe*, held in Zagreb in October 2011. The second was a *Ministerial Review Conference on Solving the Refugee Situation in the Western Balkans*, held in Belgrade at the beginning of November 2011, which reaffirmed the principles enshrined in the January 2005 Sarajevo Declaration.

As part of our ongoing efforts to find durable and sustainable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons nationally and regionally, Bosnia and Herzegovina established close cooperation with the governments of Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia; and with the guidance and support of UNHCR, our cooperation is starting to yield results. Next year in April, at a Donors' Conference to be organized in Sarajevo, our governments will present a joint Regional Program that we have collectively developed.



BRAZIL

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Brazil pledges to:

Pledge No. 1 - Stateless Determination Procedure

In 2012, a Bill establishing a mechanism for the determination of stateless status in Brazil will be sent to Parliament. The Federative Republic of Brazil has already asked for UNHCR's contribution in drafting a suitable text that

will implement the provisions of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.

Pledge No. 2 – Enhanced refugee integration

Within the framework of the 2004 Mexico Action Plan and the 2010 Brasilia Declaration, the Brazilian Government will continue its efforts to ensure the local integration of the refugees living in its territory.

Pledge No. 3 – Solidarity Resettlement Program

Brazil will continue offering its territory for the resettlement of refugees, especially to those coming from Latin America, always in very close action and collaboration with UNHCR and Brazilian civil society.

BULGARIA



EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

Preliminary work for the accession of Bulgaria to the 1954 United Nations Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons and 1961 United Nations Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness has been completed, including proposals for changing the legal framework guaranteeing the implementation of our commitments under the Conventions.

Bulgaria is not seriously affected by refugee problems. Nevertheless, we are committed to implement an effective national refugee integration policy by further improving some internal procedures and developing a National Programme for Integration of Refugees.

Bulgaria is fully committed to the development of the Common European Asylum System, an important component of which is resettlement. It is also a significant international protection tool and a durable solution for refugees as well as an important way to show solidarity with third countries. In this context, we are developing a pilot programme for resettlement of a number of persons in Bulgaria, recognized as refugees in third countries under the UNHCR mandate and in need of this form of protection. The programme is due to begin in 2013. Furthermore, guided by the understanding of the burden-sharing solidarity with countries suffering an excessive influx of asylum-seekers, Bulgaria has joined the second phase of the EUREMA project by sending a proposal to relocate four persons recognized as refugees in Malta.

We firmly believe that finding durable solutions for vulnerable groups of refugees - unaccompanied minors, young mothers and victims of trafficking - should remain as an important element of the cooperation between the Bulgarian government and the NGOs.



BURUNDI

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of the Republic of Burundi pledges to:

1. Initiate the process of withdrawing its reservations to the 1967 Protocol relating to Refugee Status, i.e. its reservations concerning Articles 22, 17, and 26.
2. Implement as of next year the provisions of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees concerning the issuance of travel documents to recognised refugees in Burundi and meeting the requirements of Document 9303 by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), thereby guaranteeing full freedom of movement for refugees.
3. Take urban refugees into account in urban planning as well as in strategies to reduce poverty and disaster risk.
4. Accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and to continue the process of ratifying the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, signed by Burundi in October 2009.
5. Carry out in the shortest possible time and with the support of UNHCR the detailed profiling of people who are at risk of statelessness in Burundi, and to authorize their stay on Burundi's territory during the profiling operation and the establishment and implementation of a strategy relating to the risks they face.



CANADA

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Canada has made a commitment to resettle 20,000 Iraqi refugees. We pledge to continue our Iraqi resettlement efforts in the Middle East region through 2015.

As part of efforts to reform Canada's asylum system, Canada pledges to establish an appeal mechanism on the merits of a claim. Canada also pledges to increase the number of refugees we resettle by 20%. The number of refugees resettled through the Government-Assisted Refugees Program will be increased by up to 500 people, and a further 2,000 resettlement spaces will be added to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program. These spaces will be phased in by 2013.

Government-assisted refugees are provided with essential services and income support through Canada's Resettlement Assistance Program. To help these refugees adjust to their new life in Canada, the Government of Canada reaffirms its commitment to increase funding for this program by 20 percent, to a total of \$58 million.

Canada pledges to create an Office of Religious Freedom. The office will advocate for the protection of religious minorities and promote the pluralism that is essential to the development of free and democratic societies. In addition, Canada pledges to continue to resettle religious minorities and victims of persecution on the grounds of sexual orientation, including those from Iran who have fled to Turkey.

Canada pledges to use its resettlement program flexibly to respond to the protection needs of victims of sexual violence in Haiti. To this end, we pledge to resettle 40 victims of sexual violence and their dependants, identified by UNHCR as being in need of protection.

Canada pledges that, for each of the next 5 years, 200 of our resettlement spaces will be available for emergency situations and, thus, identified as available as part of an international pool.

Canada jointly pledges that the delivery of comprehensive durable solutions, notably in protracted refugee situations, requires collaboration with other Member States, UNHCR and other partners. We must all promote opportunities for refugee resettlement and encourage more countries to engage in resettlement.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (THE)



PLEDGE FORM

I – First pledge: Preventing statelessness by providing documentation to the population

The political and security instability that has reigned in the Central African Republic for more than a decade has resulted in the emergence of armed groups in the north and south-east of the country, whose activities have often caused deep distress as a result of serious violations of human rights and, above all, the massive destruction of infrastructure, including that housing decentralised State services, thereby considerably limiting their capacity to provide minimum basic services.

The civilian population has paid a high price and has repeatedly been displaced in the bush or towards neighbouring countries. Today around 192,000 people are displaced internally and 136,000 people have sought refuge in neighbouring countries.

Numerous efforts have been made to create a political environment favourable for national reconciliation with a view to establishing a lasting peace. With the national policy of decentralisation, local authorities are on duty and many services have been re-established.

The majority of the population, and in particular those who are displaced, have lost all forms of civil documentation (birth certificate, identity card, etc.). This deprives them of some of their fundamental rights. This situation is made even more difficult by repeated forced displacements, the acute destitution of the population, insecurity, the distance and precariousness of administrative centres, and the financial cost of processing their cases.

Nomadic peoples and persons whose names are not typical of the Central African Republic have systematically been denied nationality because of practices and considerations not based in law. A large number of displaced people are therefore at risk of statelessness.

As a party to the 28 September 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and to the 30 August 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, the Government of Central African Republic pledges to take all necessary and appropriate measures to:

1. Proceed to ratify the aforementioned conventions as soon as possible;
2. Continue its current efforts which should enable the delivery of birth certificates and national identity cards to all people affected by the conflicts, with a particular attention to people at risk of statelessness, such as Peulhs/Mbororos;
3. Continue its initiatives to complete ongoing work on the reform of the Nationality Code as well as to better manage migratory flows.

II – Second pledge: Improve the protection of long-standing refugees

Since 1963, the Central African Republic has hosted on its territory asylum-seekers and refugees in search of international protection. Despite multiple setbacks owing to its own internal conflicts and in spite of huge security and economic challenges faced by this country until recently, the Central African Republic has remained faithful to its ideal of being a welcoming and hospitable land. It has therefore maintained a generous open-door policy for decades, which has allowed for the reception and settlement of numerous populations arriving in successive waves, including from the Sudan, Chad, Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Even at the

height of recurrent crises – each as tragic as the other in terms of loss of human life and destruction – that have shaken the States of the sub-region, the Central African Republic has had to shelter up to more than 50,000 refugees.

The countries of origin of the refugees living in the Central African Republic have in the meantime enjoyed civil peace and relative calm following major positive developments, particularly at the political and security levels. This positive environment has enabled a large return movement, with the repatriation of the great majority of refugee populations – a period which ended in 2007.

The refugee population in the Central African Republic is currently around 20,000 people. Apart from refugee groups recently arrived as a result of the conflicts in Darfur in 2007, in the Equateur province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the activities of the LRA in 2009, the capital of the Central African Republic hosts a population of 5,564 so-called urban refugees of a range of nationalities. They are long-standing refugees, whose average stay in the Central African Republic is estimated at 15 or more years, and who in 2007 had already opted for local integration. An analysis of the family circumstances and profiles revealed that refugee status has spread over several generations, even though the objective grounds that motivated flight have ceased to exist.

Moreover, these refugee populations, owing to their extended stay, speak the national language of the Central African Republic perfectly, and have maintained harmonious relations with the Central African people, thanks to historical, cultural, and social solidarity.

Taking all of the above into account, the Government of the Central African Republic pledges, on the occasion of the anniversary of the Refugee Convention, to take all necessary and appropriate measures to give these populations who have decided to settle in the Central African Republic the means for their complete self-fulfilment and thereby give full expression and content to their choices. This specific pledge includes:

1. The adoption of guarantees to permit these refugees to enjoy socio-economic rights on the same basis as Central African citizens, including by granting easier access to land ownership, employment and money-making activities;
2. The establishment of a mechanism to acquire an alternative or intermediate status for which there will be no charge, including as regards the initial issuance of a resident permit which will be for the maximum authorized period of validity;
3. The implementation of a mechanism to make procedures easier for refugees seeking naturalization.



CHAD

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

On the occasion of the anniversaries of the conventions, the Republic of Chad pledges to make the following arrangements to further enhance the protection of refugees and of asylum-seekers on its territory:

1. To adopt a national bill on asylum in 2012 and ensure its compliance with international and regional standards and instruments on refugee protection.
2. To find within six months an effective solution to all refugee issues linked to the search for durable solutions.
3. To deliver birth certificates to refugee children: for which a coordinated decision will be taken once the new bill for a Nationality Code in Chad is adopted.
4. To develop jointly with UNHCR in the first three months of 2012, a holistic strategy for the self-sufficiency of the refugees from the Central African Republic, which includes a significant legal basis to support the current programme.
5. And finally, to start issuing and delivering machine-readable travel documents to refugees by the second quarter of 2012, in compliance with the international standards adopted by the International Civil Aviation Organization, on the basis of the 1944 Chicago Convention.



CHINA

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of China pledges to:

Firstly, as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and the largest developing country, China will actively engage in settling international “hot issues”, promoting dialogues, facilitating reconciliations and preventing conflicts. China will also endeavor to promote the sustainable development of the world economy so as to achieve common prosperity and create a favorable environment for tackling international refugee issues and their root causes.

Secondly, China will continue to participate constructively in international dialogues on refugee issues and enhance international exchanges and cooperation, and promote durable solution to refugee issues.

Thirdly, China will continue to create favorable conditions for development of the Indochinese refugees staying in China and endeavor to finally settle the Indochinese refugee issue at an early date.

Fourthly, China will speed up the legislation process relating to refugees in light of China's national conditions and legislative process.

Fifthly, China will continue to support the work of UNHCR and gradually increase, within its capacity and in various forms, donations or other forms of support to UNHCR.

Sixthly, China will share its experiences with other members of the international community in the field of disaster relief, mitigation and preparation, and enhance our cooperation with UNHCR to jointly tackle the international humanitarian crises.

COLOMBIA



PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Colombia is committed to:

1. The implementation of the Law for Victims and Land Restitution with adequate protection measures and the search for the solutions of return, rural resettlement and local integration for the displaced population.
2. The process of approval by Congress of the law for the ratification of the 1961 Convention.
3. Promote actions and policies to combat gender-based violence, through the formulation of public policies that protect women (and girls) from all forms of violence and discrimination.

CONGO



PLEDGE FORM

1. The Republic of the Congo has welcomed many refugees on its territory, most of whom come from its immediate neighbour, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as a result of frequent upheavals which this country has known, in particular the armed hostilities which erupted in 2009 between different ethnic groups in the Equateur Province. These refugees have been recognised on a

prima facie basis. Moreover, since 2002, the Republic of the Congo has had a mechanism in place for individual determination of refugee status, comprising an eligibility commission and an appeals commission. The National Committee for Assistance to Refugees (CNAR - *Comité National d'Assistance aux Réfugiés*) is the government body that receives asylum claims and prepares the files to be submitted to the two above-mentioned commissions. The Republic of the Congo has signed the most relevant international and regional legal instruments regulating the protection of refugees. At the national level, the country has constitutional and regulatory measures (one decree and two orders) as well as general principles of law. The Republic of the Congo has nevertheless not been able to finalise its draft national law on refugees, despite positive steps made on this portfolio. The Republic of the Congo therefore pledges to complete the drafting of the national bill on refugees in 2012, so that international standards regarding the treatment of refugees to which the Congolese State has subscribed are transposed into national law. To this end, the country is determined to make the necessary efforts to complete this project, but will need the technical support and expertise of UNHCR.

2. In ratifying of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, the Republic of the Congo has committed itself to adopt and implement the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The Government of the Republic of the Congo pledges to ratify the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) and to adopt legislation for its implementation at the national level by 2013.



COSTA RICA

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Costa Rica pledges to:

1. Strengthen the Refugee Status Determination Procedure by promoting a comprehensive approach.
2. Improve the quality and access to documentation issued for asylum-seekers and refugees, while improving the registration system.
3. Promote the local integration of refugees in an urban context: access to work, health, education, housing, justice, culture and community participation.

4. Adopt a statelessness determination procedure to duly implement the provisions of both international instruments on statelessness signed by Costa Rica:
 - a. 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons; and
 - b. 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.
5. Ensure a differentiated approach for the protection of refugees with special needs because of their gender, age, diversity and vulnerable situation.
6. Promote a comprehensive approach at the regional level to assist persons involved in mixed migration flows.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Côte d'Ivoire will:

1. Ensure the local integration of Liberian and Rwandan refugees affected by the cessation clause, for which the Government seeks the support of the international community.
2. Find solutions to help Ivorians to obtain documents proving their nationality.
3. Ratify:
 - the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) of 22 October 2009;
 - the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons;
 - the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

CROATIA

PLEDGE FORM

The Republic of Croatia pledges the following:

Taking into account fundamental human rights obligations and relevant international instruments on statelessness and in the light of our recent accession to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, Croatia will continue to prevent possible cases of statelessness through our national legislation. This has been re-confirmed by the adoption of the Zagreb Declaration of October 2011, whereby Croatia committed itself



that at the local level, Croatia will facilitate access to civil registration and documentation with the final aim to reduce number of stateless persons and particular attention in this process will be given to the Roma. In this vein, we plan to strengthen relevant municipal services, in particular that of civil registration and social welfare centers to identify and address registration and documentation issues. Croatia plans to further enhance cooperation at the regional level particularly to encourage the reciprocal recognition of documents, conduct awareness raising activities amongst potential target groups and stakeholders and cooperate with other countries in the region with a view to establishing adequate, accelerated and facilitated procedures to assist civil documentation and registration. In this context, cooperation and exchange of information among stakeholders, including responsible authorities and civil society representatives, shall be ensured.

With a view to ensuring sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons, Croatia will actively and decisively further implement the Housing Programme for the Returnees-Former Tenancy Rights Holders. An important step in this context is also the extension of the deadline for submission of applications in relation to housing requests outside the areas of special state concern (war-affected areas). At the regional level, we will, together with our regional and international partners, undertake, on the basis of the successful outcome of the international Donor Conference in April 2012, the activities aimed at the implementation of the Regional Programme on Durable Solutions for Refugees and Displaced Persons agreed upon by four countries of the region - Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. In this vein, we will continue working towards the closure of the situation of refugees and displaced persons in South East Europe and finding durable solutions for the remaining vulnerable refugees and displaced persons in need.

CYPRUS

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

Cyprus reiterates its commitment to work towards the completion of the Common European Asylum System based on high protection standards combined with fair and effective procedures, a goal which is high on the agenda of the forthcoming Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU during the second half of 2012.

We remain committed to the granting of international protection to persons in accordance with the fundamental principles and values that govern this protection. We reaffirm our commitment to continue improving the



quality of asylum procedures, reception conditions and to enhance integration of beneficiaries of international protection in the Cypriot society.

CZECH REPUBLIC (THE)



PLEDGE FORM

The Government of the Czech Republic pledges to:

1. Improve conditions for families with minor children in detention centers:

The Czech Republic will improve, through both legal and practical measures, conditions for families with minor children in detention centers, mainly through equipment of the detention centers and reduction of the detention period to the minimal possible duration. In the case of asylum-seekers, the detention will be in a reception center where conditions for the stay of minor children are more appropriate.

2. Further improve conditions in refugee facilities, especially with respect to vulnerable categories:

The Czech Republic will further improve conditions in refugee facilities, especially with respect to vulnerable groups (minor children, women, medical cases, elderly persons, victims of torture, etc.), particularly by tailor-made free-time activities and workshops, sport and cultural activities and relevant equipment of refugee facilities.

3. Enhancement of resettlement activities:

The Czech Republic will increase the number of resettled refugees to its territory both through annual programs and resettlement of urgent and emergency cases.

4. Enhancement of active participation in international cooperation in the field of asylum and migration:

- a) The Czech Republic will contribute to successful continuation of the European Asylum Curriculum Training under European Asylum Support Office by assigning 8 experts to 'Content Expert Pool' and a 'Trainers Pool'.
- b) The Czech Republic will actively contribute to the development of asylum capacities in partner countries, particularly through implementation of the asylum/international protection component of the Action Plan of the Prague Process adopted in April 2009 in Poland.

5. Enhance qualification of staff:

The Czech Republic will enhance the quality of staff dealing with asylum-seekers and refugees, mainly through implementation of European Asylum Curriculum Training on national level.



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (THE)

PLEDGE FORM

- I. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo pledges to support the legal, social and economic integration of Angolan refugees into the host community, including by facilitating access to agricultural land, employment opportunities, education and/or long-term residency status.
- II. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo pledges to take initiatives such as:
Identifying cases of statelessness on its national territory; preventing statelessness by setting up national mechanisms in compliance with its national legislation and through registering children by the Registrar of Civil Status, encouraging civil marriage, and applying the provisions of law No. 04/024 of 12/11/2004 on Congolese nationality.
- III. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo pledges and confirms that it is party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.



DENMARK

PLEDGE FORM

1. Denmark maintains one reservation to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Denmark pledges that it will conduct a review process in 2012 on the necessity of maintaining this reservation.
2. Denmark is committed to ensuring reception conditions of asylum-seekers of a continued high standard. Denmark pledges to launch in 2012 a process on the development of a new model for reception conditions for asylum-seekers.
3. Denmark pledges to work with other Member States, UNHCR and partners to enhance the delivery of comprehensive durable solutions, notably in protracted refugee situations, to promote increased opportunities for refugee resettlement, the participation of new resettlement countries, improved integration outcomes for resettled refugees, and support the use of resettlement to unlock the other durable solutions of voluntary repatriation and local integration.

4. In the context of the incoming Danish Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2012, Denmark pledges to further the discussions within EU on how to ensure effective solidarity with persons in need of international protection as well as between Member States and with regions of origin, in particular through the EU's Global Approach to Migration, including through promoting capacity-building initiatives and Protection in the Region programmes.
5. In the context of the incoming Danish Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2012, Denmark pledges to further the negotiations of the development of the Common European Asylum System based on high protection standards combined with fair and effective procedures as a priority. Denmark will furthermore promote the issue of resettlement within the EU cooperation.
6. Denmark recognizes the overall importance of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and pledges to continue its efforts for the general avoidance of statelessness.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (THE)



PLEDGE FORM

The Dominican Republic is committed to strengthening the work of the National Commission for Refugees (CONARE), in order to improve and streamline refugee status determination procedures in pending and future cases.

In addition, it will continue the joint work with UNHCR, facilitating its collaboration with the CONARE in order to achieve the objectives of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

ECUADOR



EXCERPT FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

The Government of the Republic of Ecuador renews its commitment to conclude as soon as possible the internal regulatory process for ratification of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.



EGYPT

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

As an active member in the international community, Egypt will not fail in carrying out its responsibilities. Experience has proven that the Egyptian people and government do not hesitate to provide assistance and protection, despite all the challenges and difficulties they face. You may recall Egypt's position during the Libyan crises, when it received more than half a million persons, and its collaboration with the international organizations, primarily UNHCR, to secure the return of those people to their home countries, or for any other purposes.

From now on, Egypt will accept nothing less than being the most interactive with all aspects of humanitarian causes, hoping that our world would become free from refugees and all forms of humanitarian suffering.



ETHIOPIA

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

Ethiopia is committed to maintain its open-door asylum policy to refugees seeking protection and assistance in its territory.

Ethiopia is committed to continue its close cooperation with UNHCR and with the international community in finding durable solutions to the emerging refugee and displacement problems.

Ethiopia pledges to continue the faithful implementation of the 1951 Convention and contributing to global efforts to this end.

Ethiopia will continue scrupulously enforcing the national Refugee Proclamation as the necessary domestic framework.



EUROPEAN UNION

EXCERPTS FROM THE JOINT STATEMENT

The European Union and its Member States have a long history of concern for the fate of refugees, as millions of our citizens are descendants of refugee grandparents. The territory of the European Union is today a safe haven for those forced to flee violence, persecution and discrimination.

We are proud of our hospitality and we will continue to consolidate the international refugee protection regime in full compliance with the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol and in accordance with the values of dignity, equality and respect on which the EU is founded. In this regard, we are advancing with the development of a common migration policy and towards the establishment of the Common European Asylum System by 2012.

We are committed to support UNHCR efforts and to prevent and end statelessness in compliance with the principles of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

In October this year, the Council of European Union adopted the European Union Declaration on the 60th Anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, in which the European Union reaffirms its strong commitment to assist and protect, in accordance with international obligations, all those men, women and children, who are compelled against their will to leave their homes and their countries in order to escape fear of persecution.

FINLAND



PLEDGE FORM

Finland maintains two reservations to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Finland pledges that it will launch a review process in 2012 on whether these two reservations are still necessary or whether they can be considered outdated and consequently lifted.

Finland commits itself to strengthening the efforts for municipal placement for the refugees to be resettled. Finland pledges to carry out dialogue activities with the municipalities in order to improve and speed up the placement process.

Finland is a reliable donor to UNHCR and pledges to provide UNHCR un-earmarked core funding of seven million euro according to our multi-year commitment. In addition, Finland continues to provide UNHCR with additional funding in response to emergencies and protracted needs. All Finnish funding is subject to parliamentary approval.

Finland is in favour of the collective resettlement pledge of the UNHCR's Working Group on Resettlement (WGR) to enhance the delivery of comprehensive durable solutions, notably in protracted refugee situations. We pledge to work with other Member States, UNHCR and partners to promote increased opportunities for refugee resettlement, the participation of

new resettlement countries, improved integration outcomes for resettled refugees, and the strategic use of resettlement to unlock the other durable solutions of voluntary repatriation and local integration. (*Group Pledge*)



FRANCE

PLEDGE FORM

France makes the following pledges:

1. To continue to uphold, in compliance with its international commitments and European obligations, high protection standards as well as to implement refugee status determination procedures that are efficient and respectful of rights, to ensure the integration in France of refugees and stateless persons under its protection, and to cooperate with UNHCR with a view to seeking durable solutions for refugees;
2. To modernize the travel documents issued to refugees, stateless persons as well as to beneficiaries of subsidiary protection who reside in France. The aim is to issue documents in conformity with the most recent international requirements in order to enable the holders to travel easily;
3. To reinforce the language training given to refugees and their family members hosted in France. The aim is to facilitate integration into French society of people aspiring to remain in France on a durable basis and who, because of their personal history and experiences, need specific support;
4. To actively support the efforts of the countries from the South of the Mediterranean with partnership agreements with the European Union to build their national asylum and protection systems notably within the framework of regional protection programmes.



GAMBIA (THE)

PLEDGE FORM

The Gambia hosts a population of 9,390 rural Senegalese refugees and 1,061 urban refugees and asylum-seekers from Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Togo, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Cameroon.

The Government of Gambia pledges to:

1. The Government of Gambia established the Gambia Refugee Commission serving to assess international protection needs for asylum-seekers in the Gambia. The Government of Gambia is thankful to UNHCR for its commitment in providing capacity building and logistical support for the setting up of the commission and asks UNHCR to continue its efforts on capacity building activities for the staff members of the Commission on Refugee Law and International Protection to refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR. At the same time, the Government recognizes that the appointment of its president/chair-person and board members is yet to take place. The government of Gambia therefore pledges to ensure its continuous commitment to expedite the full establishment of the Refugee Board which will serve as the basis for the establishment of a fair and efficient asylum system.
2. The Government of Gambia's ratification of the Kampala Convention for IDPs in 2011 through both houses of the Gambia National Assembly marks the importance placed by the Government on the issue of internally displaced persons. The Government of Gambia pledges to continue lobbying in parliament for a similar adoption and ratification of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, to which it is not yet a party.
3. Liberian refugees (713 as of 30 September 2011) constitute the second largest refugee group following Senegalese refugees in the Gambia. In light of the upcoming cessation clause, the Government of Gambia will together with UNHCR continue to work towards finding durable solutions through the implementation of a comprehensive strategy for Liberian refugees. Following the Sierra Leone cessation and local integration process, the Government of Gambia is well conversant with the cessation process and is fully supportive of any plans UNHCR may have for facilitating Liberian refugees' legal integration. The Gambian Government pledges to continue its efforts to secure legal status for refugees wishing to locally integrate by the provision of a residence and work permit that allow ceased Liberian refugees to legally reside in the Gambia and to gain employment.



GEORGIA

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Georgia pledges to:

- Ratify the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons of 1954 and to carry out relevant legislative activities with a view to full harmonization of its legislation with the Convention. These activities, among others, include elaboration of a detailed procedure for determination of the status of a stateless person, which will secure to the stateless person the possibility to enjoy his/her rights and benefits in the future.
- Continue creating safeguards for the protection of the rights of Stateless persons and to take relevant measures, including:
 - Identification and registration of stateless persons, which basically implies the determination of the status of stateless persons and entry into the electronic database of the registry of stateless persons and the relevant information about such persons;
 - Documentation of stateless persons - issuance of ID papers to the stateless persons, which implies issuance of biometrical passports and electronic residence permits under the most simplified procedure.
- Fully implement the new Law of Refugees and Humanitarian Status, adopted last week, in the spirit of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugee and its 1967 Protocol, giving due consideration to the positions and advice offered by UNHCR.
- Increasingly take over responsibilities related to the accommodation of and assistance to asylum-seekers.
- Continue efforts towards the full integration of refugees.

EXCERPT FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

We pledge to continue our efforts to address the challenges of displacement and to protect and promote rights of individuals affected by displacement.

GERMANY



PLEDGE FORM

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 per cent of these people have not yet fully reintegrated, 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 about 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 issues there and considering the long span of time they have already spent abroad.

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 increasing the number of scholarships for Afghan refugees.

Furthermore, Germany pledges to:

- Establish a permanent resettlement programme for refugees in co-operation with the UNHCR.
- Resettle to Germany 300 refugees per annum from 2012 to 2014.

Germany welcomes UNHCR's recognition of climate change as an additional trigger of displacement. The German Government is ready to lend its support to initiatives that contribute to analyzing 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. (*Group pledge with Mexico, Norway and Switzerland*).



GHANA

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of the Republic of Ghana pledges its continued support to UNHCR as well as its readiness to work in accordance with the Ministerial Communiqué adopted at the UNHCR Intergovernmental event at the ministerial level held in Geneva on 7-8 December 2011.



GREECE

PLEDGE FORM

It has generally been acknowledged that Greece faces a particularly strong mixed migratory pressure, due to its geographic position at the external border of the EU, its extensive land and sea borders and its proximity with main countries of origin and transit of irregular migrants and asylum-seekers.

Despite this overwhelming situation, Greece considers the effective management of migration as a matter of highest priority and, in this respect, reaffirms its commitment to international cooperation for the protection of refugees. International and regional cooperation, solidarity and burden sharing are the only way to tackle effectively all consequences caused by increased migration and refugee movements due to recent humanitarian crises in different areas of the world.

Greece pledges to:

- Work closely along with its partners in the European Union, the UNHCR and the United Nations, as well as third countries of origin and transit, to strengthen cooperation in the area of refugee protection, including in emergency situations, such as the displacement caused by recent events in North Africa and the Middle East. In this context, it will work together with other EU member states towards a Common European Asylum System in the framework of the Stockholm Programme.
- Fully cooperate with neighbouring states and international and regional organizations to assist and provide shelter to asylum-seekers and refugees.
- Continue to ensure the full and inclusive interpretation of the 1951 Convention refugee definition, in particular by increasing the capacity and expertise of the administration to undertake quality refugee status determination and by issuing policy guidance to asylum adjudicators.
- Continue to respect the principle of *non-refoulement*, including by ensuring that persons in need of international protection and other groups with specific needs are identified and granted access to the territory where their needs can be assessed and addressed.
- Continue to grant to all minor refugees access to education and the national health system.
- Continue to ensure that refugees who are victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance have access to an effective remedy (including legal assistance).
- Remedy the weaknesses of the asylum management system and the reception conditions, caused by the constant mixed migration flows, through the implementation of a three-year National Action Plan in close cooperation with the European Commission, the EU partners, EASO and international stakeholders such as UNHCR, IOM and NGOs. The components of the Action Plan, which aims at easing pressure on the overburdened asylum system and improving the condition of irregular migrants and asylum-seekers, include:
 - Reform of asylum procedures and creation of a new professional specially trained and skilled Asylum Service. The creation of a flexible administrative mechanism, decentralized throughout the country, assists the rapid review of asylum requests. As a result the international protection recognition rate, which was extremely low in the past, has already reached an average of 12.35%. Additionally, the backlog of some 46,000 asylum requests pending for years at the second instance has already been reduced to 38,000.

- Establishment of initial reception services, improving reception conditions and treatment for irregular migrants and asylum-seekers, especially for those belonging to vulnerable groups.
- Improvement of facilities in reception centers for asylum applicants/vulnerable groups and minors.
- Provision of medical and psychological support services, legal aid support, translation services, etc.
- Implementation of an extended return policy that includes a voluntary return programme, followed by reintegration measures (organized by the competent authorities with the cooperation of the IOM).

The above-mentioned pledges and measures indicate the determination of Greece to improve the reception conditions and the asylum procedures for applicants for international protection, despite the current financial constraints. However none of the national measures is sufficient if not combined with initiatives at the European level and close cooperation with the third countries of origin and transit. The creation of a Common European Asylum System and the effective recast of the Dublin II Regulation as stated in the past by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is in the right direction. Furthermore, the signing and implementation of readmission agreements is an effective tool to prevent irregular migration with respect to the human rights and the dignity of the migrants as stated by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants in the recent interactive dialogue with the EU Member States.



GUINEA

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

Today, my Government is delighted with the climate of peace that now reigns in the neighbouring countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire, thus facilitating the return of refugees to their countries of origin.

In agreement with UNHCR and Governments of the countries of origin, the Government of Guinea pledges to promote the voluntary return of refugees and to provide its assistance to facilitate voluntary repatriation operations.

As for refugees who have voluntarily chosen or in future voluntarily choose to live in Guinea, my Government pledges to do everything it can to facilitate their harmonious and durable local integration into Guinean society,

to grant them asylum, protection and the rights enshrined in Guinean law as well as in international legal instruments.

Despite the situation, the Government of Guinea through my statement today firmly and solemnly pledges to:

1. Ensure that the future National Assembly adopts as a matter of priority the law on refugee status and asylum.
2. Accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness as well as to the Kampala Convention on the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons.

The Government of Guinea will pay particular attention to statelessness, and will specifically ensure the elimination and the prevention of any and all forms of discrimination in administrative and judicial practices and procedures that are liable to lead to statelessness or to the risk of statelessness in my country.

GUINEA-BISSAU



PLEDGE FORM

Pledges relating to asylum-seekers and refugees

The Government of Guinea-Bissau pledges to:

1. Grant residence permits free of charge to refugees who have opted for local integration after the cessation clause has been invoked.
2. Facilitate, to the extent possible, rural refugees' access to land for farming.
3. Favourably consider applications for naturalization by refugees and submit them to the competent Government departments.
4. Provide facilities to enable asylum-seekers to apply free of charge to the executive secretariat for a certificate authorising temporary stay.

Pledges relating to statelessness

The Government of Guinea-Bissau pledges to:

Continue to work towards ratification with a view to formalizing accession to the legal instruments concerning stateless persons: the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Pledges in other areas

The Government of Guinea-Bissau pledges to:

1. Complete within a short time ratification of the 2009 African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention). This Convention has already been approved by Parliament and promulgated by the President of the Republic. All that remains to be done is publication in the Official Gazette and the last step – transmission of the instrument of ratification to the depositary.
2. Review Law No. 06/2008 of 27 May, which approves the status of refugees and internally displaced persons, and creates the National Commission for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons.
3. Establish the internal regulation of the National Commission for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons.

HAITI**PLEDGE FORM**

The Government of the Republic of Haiti pledges to accede to the 1954 and 1961 Conventions relating to the status of stateless persons and the prevention and reduction of statelessness. The Government is requiring that both ratifications be done in French.

HONDURAS**PLEDGE FORM**

The Government of Honduras:

Announces the finalization of the ratification process for the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness by the National Congress.

HUNGARY

PLEDGE FORM



The Government of the Republic of Hungary pledges to initiate the legislative procedure aimed at modifying Act II of 2002, promulgating the 1954 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons. This modification will create the possibility for Hungary to withdraw the declaration made to Articles 23 and 24 of the 1954 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, thus ensuring the full enjoyment of the rights contained in those articles to all stateless recognized by the Republic of Hungary. The Republic of Hungary believes that this withdrawal enables the possibility to better ensure the rights of more stateless people in need of protection.

The Government of the Republic of Hungary pledges to continue the promotion of the United Nations Conventions relating to the status of stateless persons (1954) and on the reduction of statelessness (1961). Hungary is one of the handful states in the world, which are not only parties to both UN Conventions on statelessness but also have a formalized and operational statelessness determination procedure. This year not only do we celebrate the anniversary of the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention but also the 1961 Convention. Statelessness is a global phenomenon which States strive to combat but the battle is long and challenging. As Hungary has gathered significant knowledge and expertise in this field, we wish to pledge these best practices and experiences. In this context the Republic of Hungary pledges to share its best practices, tools and experiences with all interested States in the framework of seminars or study visits.

The Government of the Republic of Hungary hereby pledges to work together with UNHCR in order to create and establish a quality assurance mechanism in the statelessness determination procedure. We will carry out this task in very close cooperation with UNHCR, building on the experiences and best practices of the projects “Asylum Quality Assurance and Evaluation Mechanism” and “Further Developing Quality”. This will create a new and unique mechanism and as a novelty it will hopefully be a potential best practice in the future for other States as well.

In autumn 2010, a governmental decision was made on Hungary’s launching a national resettlement programme. The legal basis for resettlement already exists in the Hungarian Asylum Act. In response to the “Arab spring” this year a Governmental Decision (No. 1139/2011) was adopted on the launch of an asylum solidarity programme in relation to the situation in the North African area. On the basis of this Decision, Hungary shall focus its resettlement commitment on the North African region. As a first national resettlement operation, it is considered a pilot programme. The outcome

will be assessed as well as the whole process (from the beginning until the end, including integration) in order to develop a good model programme on the basis of which we will be hopefully able to extend our resettlement efforts in the future. We will closely cooperate with UNHCR in developing and conducting this pilot resettlement programme. Taking into account the pilot nature of our first resettlement programme and the recent economic situation, as well as the limited capacities of Hungary, the Republic of Hungary pledges to continue the implementation of the resettlement programme in the framework of the asylum solidarity programme aiming at resettling one family in 2012-2013.

Furthermore the Republic of Hungary pledges to enhance the delivery of comprehensive durable solutions, notably in protracted refugee situations, working with other Member States, UNHCR and partners to promote increased opportunities for refugee resettlement, the participation of new resettlement countries, improved integration outcomes for resettled refugees, and the strategic use of resettlement to unlock other durable solutions such as voluntary repatriation and local integration. (*Group Pledge*)



INDONESIA

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

To address the need for a regional structure, the 4th Bali Regional Ministerial Conference, held in March 2011, agreed on an inclusive but non-binding Regional Cooperation Framework (RCF) to cooperate in reducing irregular movements throughout the region. The RCF will work under the oversight of Australia and Indonesia as the Co-Chairs, in consultation with UNHCR and IOM.

Indonesia will continue to prioritize migration issues, specifically where these relate to the protection of refugees, IDPs, stateless persons and others of concern to the UNHCR, and to focus on the issue of irregular migration in particular.

IRAQ

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

The Government of Iraq considers among its priorities the problem of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). It has taken a number of steps, both practical and legal, to limit the root causes of these negative phenomena, taken into special consideration the prevailing security situation in the country and the challenging problems it faces caused by years of war and economic sanctions. The steps it has taken provided the ground for the return of a large number of Iraqi IDPs to their area of origin as well as the voluntary return of a large number of Iraqi refugees. The Government provided and continues to provide financial, material and food assistance to returnees and Iraqi refugees; this is in addition to special assistance to vulnerable returnees and refugees returning from neighbouring countries. Such assistance is provided in close coordination with international organizations including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which has been active in providing low-cost accommodation to a number of IDPs.

The Republic of Iraq continues to host a large number of refugees, which has increased sharply following the on-going events in the Syrian Arab Republic. The refugees originate mainly from neighbouring countries. Some of these refugees have been hosted at refugee camps in accordance with international standards.

IRELAND

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

Ireland is fully committed to the 1951 Convention, and to the promotion of its universal adoption.

Guided by its principles, we have worked recently to further refine our practices in the area of asylum and to comprehensively reform and simplify our refugee status determination process through the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill 2010, which is currently before the Irish Parliament. This bill proposes the introduction of a single procedure for the investigation of all grounds for protection and any other reasons which an applicant presents for seeking to remain in the State, removing the sequential processes associated with the existing system and allowing an applicant to receive a final decision in a more efficient and timely manner. This is an outcome which can only be in the interests of the applicant and indeed the integrity of the refugee status determination process. Ac-



cordingly, today the Government of Ireland pledges to introduce a single protection procedure through the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill 2010, to determine applications for protection and other reasons to remain in the State.

Ireland is fully cognisant of the need to work, in particular in the context of protracted refugee crises, towards the provision of durable solutions which recognise the legitimate aspirations of refugees themselves. One of the manifestations of Ireland's commitment to international solidarity in this area comes through the operation of our national resettlement programme, in partnership with UNHCR. This programme has allowed us to play a part in facilitating solutions for refugees displaced by both protracted and acute crises, including a number requiring resettlement as a result of the crisis in North Africa earlier this year. Today, the Government of Ireland pledges to continue to operate a UNHCR-led resettlement programme for refugees.



ISRAEL

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

Israel is committed to continue expanding Government capacity and refugee status determination expertise;

To assuming greater responsibility for refugee status determination;

To reaffirm our commitment to the internationally recognized principle of *non-refoulement*;

To provide the necessary assistance and medical care to victims of human trafficking, among them many women who, on their way to Israel, were kidnapped, tortured and raped.

We are committed to continue our policy of encouraging voluntary-returns through incentives and professional training that will enable the returnees to rebuild their future and to start a new life with better tools at their disposal.

I am happy to report that Israel will increase our annual contribution to UNHCR.

And finally, we offer UNHCR the use of Israel's expertise and to work together, through MASHAV - Israel's International Development Agency - to create and implement professional and vocational training programs in mu-

tually agreed locations of UNHCR's refugee camps around the world, with the aim of uplifting the refugees' standard of living and helping them to obtain a better future. We stand ready to start a dialogue with UNHCR on this matter as soon as possible.

JAPAN

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Japan hereby pledges to:

1. Play a leading role and continue to actively support UNHCR in the protection of refugees and internally displaced persons around the world towards achieving a durable solution to refugee issues.
2. Improve Refugee Status Determination (RSD) procedures by
 - a. enhancing training of refugee status inspectors;
 - b. both publicizing and enhancing data collection concerning refugees' countries of origin and refugee-producing situations throughout the world;
 - c. accelerating the RSD procedures for early stabilization of legal status of those who are to be recognized as refugee;
 - d. providing information on RSD procedures to asylum-seekers; and
 - e. solving issues related to detention during the RSD process.
3. Improve and enrich the support program for resettled refugees in Japan, aiming for the success of the pilot project for resettlement currently underway.

JORDAN

EXCERPT FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

My country has worked on continually sending medical and food aid to stricken areas as part of its pioneering role in offering a helping hand to refugees and displaced wherever they may be in the world. Jordan will continue its efforts within this context and in line with its deep faith in the noble principles and values that the work of the UNHCR embodies.*

* The statement of the Government of Jordan describes the humanitarian activities that Jordan has voluntarily taken upon itself to shoulder its ethical duties towards the international community.





KAZAKHSTAN

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

Problems of migration are soluble and the key to success lies in the development of an open dialogue, in the strengthening of cooperation and of coordination on bilateral, regional and global levels.

In that context it is essential to develop cooperation among the states of the region within the framework of already existing integration entities like CIS, EurAsEc, CSTO, SCO, CICA.

Within the context of the regional cooperation it is worth noting the successful organization of a Regional Conference on Protection of Refugees and on International Migration that was held in Almaty on 15-16 March, 2011, in close collaboration with UNHCR and IOM.

The Conference adopted a Declaration that envisages the creation of a Regional Framework Structure uniting under its umbrella all stake-holders: Governments, international organizations and NGOs.

In this regard, as a practical follow-up to the agreements achieved at the Conference we propose to convene a meeting in Astana on the level of diplomatic missions representing the states of the region in order to discuss further steps in establishing the Framework Structure.

We hope that UNHCR could play a role of a mediator and coordinator of necessary efforts using its extensive experience and potential.

Kazakhstan is firmly committed to its obligations under the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, it will remain an active partner of the UNHCR in the region and will expand cooperation in order to improve the situation of refugees and stateless persons.

KENYA



PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Kenya pledges to fulfil its international obligation of refugee protection and management in the following areas:

I. Provide land and other natural resources to host refugee camps

Kenya hosts the largest refugee camp in the world – the Dadaab Complex. Kenya allocated over 50 square kilometres of land for refugee settlement. Refugees share all natural resources such as water, firewood, building materials, pasture, etc. with the host community.

II. Refugee and statelessness conventions

Kenya has ratified and acceded to 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. True to this international obligation, Kenya receives and hosts refugees from nine different countries where the majority of them have been living in Kenya for over two decades. Kenya does not return asylum-seekers to places they fled from owing to a well-founded fear of persecution.

The constitution of Kenya and the recently enacted Citizenship and Immigration Act contain provisions that allow stateless persons to apply for citizenship by registration.

III. Refugee registration and status determination

Kenya took over reception and registration of refugees from UNHCR in March 2011. We are currently conducting refugee status determination in conjunction with UNHCR. The takeover of the refugee admission process by the government not only boosted ownership by the authorities but greatly improved refugee protection through better legal documentation.

IV. Treatment of asylum-seekers

Kenya observes standards of treatment of refugees in accordance with 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Refugees are allowed to access basic services such as free primary education. Kenya facilitates national and international partners to provide life-saving relief services to refugees.

A limited number of refugees access work permits through a two-year entry permit.

V. Urban refugee situation

Kenya hosts about 100,000 refugees in the urban areas. Urban refugees are allowed to engage in income-generating activities and access all amenities available in the urban areas.

VI. Durable solutions

Kenya strives find a lasting solution to the refugee problem through repatriation, resettlement and local integration. Repatriation has been largely successful especially for South Sudanese, Rwandan, and Ethiopian refugees.

VII. Protracted refugee situation

Protracted refugee situations remain a major concern for Kenya. It is evident that no single country can achieve solutions alone. However, Kenya is taking a bold effort to stabilize Somalia with aim of preventing refugee influx and enabling refugees currently living in Kenya to return.

VIII. Mixed migration

Kenya pledges to give a window of opportunity for mixed migration cases to access its asylum system. Indeed Kenya gave asylum to numerous mixed migration caseloads and access to its asylum system. An example of such a group is one rescued at sea by the American Navy who was admitted to Kakuma refugee camp.

IX. International cooperation

Kenya pledges to remain committed to fostering international cooperation and burden sharing to assist and protect refugees and statelessness persons.

KYRGYZSTAN**PLEDGE FORM**

The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic pledges:

1. To continue efforts aimed at the resolution of social-economic issues of the refugees on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic.
2. To continue activities aimed at strengthening commitments to provide asylum in accordance with the obligation at the constitutional level resulting from adoption of the new Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic in June 2010 (article 19).
3. To undertake a comprehensive survey of the number and situation of stateless persons residing in the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic.



4. To uphold policy of prevention and reduction of statelessness and continue actively working in that direction, in accordance with the National Action Plan on Reduction and Prevention of Statelessness.
5. To actively participate in regional processes on the regulation of mixed-migration flows.

LATVIA

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

After the restoration of its independence, Latvia acceded to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and, furthermore, implemented all the provisions in close co-operation with UNHCR. I would like to express Latvia's full commitment to the spirit and provisions of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, together with its 1967 Protocol. We consider it as a fundamental and vital international legal instrument which continues to provide the basis for international protection to asylum-seekers and refugees.

The 1951 Refugee Convention has proved to be an important instrument in addressing the problems of millions of people who have left their countries owing to wars and persecutions. The 60th anniversary of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees is a time for a serious reflection, not only on past achievements, but on the work needed to ensure the relevance of the refugee protection regime in the future. We believe that, in this regard, a serious consideration should be given to the consequences of global climate change.

LESOTHO

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho pledges to:

1. Support asylum-seekers and refugees, as well as stateless persons, in accordance with the objectives laid down in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.
2. Cooperate with State Parties to the above-referred Conventions for the attainment of durable solutions in favour of refugees and stateless persons at regional, continental and global levels.
3. Ensure that refugees in her territory have access to basic services for their welfare and well-being.

EXCERPT FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

Lesotho, therefore, is committed to promoting humanitarian Conventions at regional, continental or global levels. For Lesotho the implementation of these Conventions, shall remain a priority. To this end, Lesotho will, henceforth, continue to raise awareness among her citizenry of the critical importance of the Conventions.


LIBERIA
PLEDGE FORM

Three pledges that the Government is committed to accomplish in 2012 regarding Refugee Protection, Statelessness and the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons (Kampala Convention).

The Liberia Refugee Act (Refugee Protection)

1. The Liberia Refugee Act is styled and known as the LRA. The Liberia Refugee Act has undergone a series of discussions among key line Ministries and Agencies during the last two years. The objective of these interactive discussions was basically to make amendments in the refugee law so that it conforms with international best practices, regional perspective and today's realities. The Proposed amended LRA will be submitted to the 53rd Legislature in 2012 for passage into law taking into consideration the processes of making laws in our jurisdiction.

Some of the key proposed amendment issues are as follows:

- a. Government's ownership of the LRA;
- b. Full operationalization of the Act;
- c. Expeditious adjudication of asylum claims through standard Refugee Status Determination proceedings (hearing);
- d. Protection of National Security interest;
- e. Judicial review responsibility shifting from the Supreme Court to the Circuit Court;
- f. Recognition of June 20th as World Refugee Day to be proclaimed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a working holiday (Highlighting the plight of refugees around the world with the appropriate Theme from UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva);

- g. Harmonization of the LRA with the Alien and Nationality Laws and the Labor Laws of Liberia;
- h. UNHCR, in addition to its statutory function as a non-voting member of the Commission, shall also serve in an advisory capacity;
- i. The Vice Chairmanship of Board of Commissioners now shifts from the Ministry of Planning to the Ministry of Justice.

Statelessness

2. The issue of conflict of laws with the Constitution and the Alien and Nationality Laws of Liberia with particular emphasis on article 28 of the Constitution and article 20.1 of the Alien and Nationality Laws of Liberia regarding the nationality of children born outside Liberia by either parents of Liberian descent (transmitting Nationality to Children) will be amended to reflect international best practices and as much as possible reduce statelessness. This issue of conflict could discriminate between men and women and lead to statelessness. The Government pledges that the 1973 Alien and Nationality Laws will be amended to ensure that nationality is equally transmitted by any of the parents as enshrined in the Organic Law of the land (the Constitution). The Government will do everything possible to ensure the amendments reflect the vision of the framers of the Constitution, which is the supreme law of the State.

The present practice of the Alien and Nationality Laws is that only the father can transmit nationality when the child is born outside of Liberia while the Constitution states that one of the parents who is a Liberian citizen can transmit nationality. Indeed, this is a conflict and Liberia has ratified the 1954 and 1961 Conventions on Statelessness.

The Kampala Convention

3. The African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced persons (IDPs) is known as and styled the Kampala Convention.

The Liberian Government participated in all deliberations that formulated the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons. The Liberian Government's representatives participated in the adoption of the Convention and signed the Convention on October 22, 2009, during a Special Summit of the African Union held in Kampala, Uganda. The office of the President of Liberia has forwarded the Convention to the National Legislature for ratification. The Liberian Government pledges that the Convention will be ratified in 2012.



LIECHTENSTEIN

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein pledges to:

1. Implement the new asylum law - currently under discussion in the Liechtenstein Parliament - in the spirit of the Geneva Convention and in close cooperation with UNHCR, including the protection of refugees from prosecution by non-state players.
2. Create the necessary framework with a view to resettling refugees in protracted refugee situations, as provided for under the bill for the new refugee law.
3. Assume its responsibility to reduce statelessness by applying its national legislation in the spirit of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and in close cooperation with UNHCR.
4. Maintain its support of UNHCR as one of its main partners within International Humanitarian Cooperation and Development, especially with regard to the protection of internally displaced persons and with regard to forgotten conflicts.



LUXEMBOURG

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Grand Duchy of Luxembourg pledges to accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The procedures for accession are being started at the national level.



MADAGASCAR

PLEDGE FORM

Regarding the accession of Madagascar to the 1967 Protocol to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, Madagascar is a party to the latter since 18 December 1967, despite reservations lodged at the time of accession.

It is desirable to consider our accession to the Protocol in order to complete and reaffirm our commitment to refugee protection, together with the international community, even though we will have to reiterate the reservations previously made upon acceding to the 1951 Convention or even to make an interpretative declaration regarding certain provisions of the Protocol.

With regard to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, which provides specific and detailed safeguards to be implemented by States in order to prevent and reduce statelessness, our countries' national legislation more or less conforms to it.

The guarantees envisaged in the 1961 Convention notably aim:

- To avoid statelessness among children by providing that States must grant nationality to children with whom they have links and who would otherwise be stateless, either because they were born in their territories (*jus soli*) or because they are the offspring of a parent who is a national of the State concerned (*jus sanguinis*); relevant provisions are found in articles 9, 10 and 11 of the Malagasy Nationality Law;
- To avoid statelessness due to the loss or renunciation of nationality; relevant provisions are found in articles 42 and following of the Malagasy Nationality Law;
- To avoid statelessness owing to the deprivation of nationality; relevant provisions are found in articles 50 and following of the Malagasy Nationality Law;

Given the above, the Department of Justice considers that Malagasy accession to this legal instrument will be greatly facilitated and it will constitute no more than a mere formality.

MALAWI

PLEDGE FORM

A. Pledges relating to asylum-seekers and refugees

The Government of the Republic of Malawi pledges to:

1. Continue admitting and extending assistance to foreign nationals whose countries of origin cannot provide protection and have fled to and are compelled to remain in the country for reasons and circumstances recognized under national and international refugee and humanitarian law;
2. Establish mechanisms to ensure that asylum-seekers and refugees are expeditiously registered and documented by authorized officers in a humane and dignified manner. Related documents are to be completed at the entry points where preliminary interviews will be held;



3. Facilitate local acceptance of refugees and harmony between refugees and local population by advocacy and introducing projects beneficial to the two groups;
4. To facilitate freedom of external movement through issuance of travel documents recognized by the International Civil Aviation Association by early 2012; and
5. To promote self reliance among refugees through facilitating income-generating activities in designated areas, employment of rarely skilled refugees and issuing of Business Residence Permits authorizing refugees to operate businesses outside designated areas in accordance with the trade laws.

B. Pledges relating to the withdrawal of reservations

The Government of the Republic of Malawi pledges to:

1. Revisit and, if necessary, withdraw its reservations entered on certain articles in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees on:

1.1 Article 22 Public education

The reservation on this article is only on paper.

- a. Refugee children pay no school fees from grade one to grade eight as is the case with nationals;
- b. Refugee Secondary School Students are treated as their Malawian counterparts. Refugee students do not pay more than nationals; and
- c. Only in higher education are refugees students treated as foreign nationals, due to limited space.

1.2 Article 26 Choice of residence and freedom of movement

The reservation on choice of residence and freedom of movement will be revisited in the light of the following:

- a. The designated area is an open camp. Refugees are allowed to leave the camp with permits from the Camp Administrator or from the Ministry Headquarters;
- b. Some refugees with rare skills like Doctors, Nurses, University Lecturers, Secondary School Teachers and Engineers, etc., are allowed to reside outside designated area.

MALI

PLEDGE FORM

Mali hosted a population of 14,758 refugees as of 30 June 2011, of which there were 11,514 persons from Mauritania, 2,187 persons from Côte d'Ivoire and the remainder from different countries.

The number of asylum-seekers was 2,501 as of 30 June 2011, of which there were 2,016 persons from Côte d'Ivoire, 143 persons from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the remainder of various nationalities.

The Government of Mali pledges to:

1. Continue ensuring that all persons seeking international protection can access its territory.
2. Improve Refugee Status Determination in Mali (RSD).

The Government of Mali pledges to establish an independent appeals committee by the end of 2011 to improve the asylum system in Mali. The new appeals committee will be established by virtue of a decree of the Minister of Territorial Administration and Local Authorities of Mali.

3. Provide local integration opportunities for Mauritanian and Ivorian refugees who cannot return, in particular by facilitating long-term residency status and access to agricultural land and livelihood opportunities.

MAURITANIA

EXCERPT FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania solemnly pledges, through my statement today, to bring to a successful conclusion the repatriation operation for the last contingent of Mauritanian refugees in Senegal, as identified by UNHCR, in full compliance with the terms of the Tripartite Agreement.





MEXICO

PLEDGE FORM

1. The Mexican Government pledges to review the reservations formulated upon its accession to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.
2. The Mexican Government pledges to continue working to ensure that, within the context of migration flows, asylum-seekers are adequately identified and that the protection-sensitive entry systems are reinforced with differentiated procedures and processes (particularly regarding victims of trafficking and unaccompanied girls, boys and adolescents).
3. The Mexican Government, in close cooperation with UNHCR, pledges to work to guarantee that the procedure for refugee status determination is in accordance with the highest international protection standards.
4. The Mexican Government pledges to continue working to guarantee that asylum-seekers in a vulnerable situation, particularly unaccompanied or separated children, have access to alternatives to detention while the procedure for status determination takes place.
5. The Mexican Government will strive to adopt measures for the local integration of those persons who receive complementary protection and will aid them to have access to education and social security.
6. The Mexican Government pledges to continue to carry out campaigns promoting and defending human rights and condemning racism, xenophobia and intolerance.
7. The Mexican Government pledges to continue promoting national mechanisms for the determination of the status of stateless persons.
8. A more coherent and consistent approach at the international level is needed to meet the protection needs of people displaced externally owing to sudden-onset disasters. The Mexican Government therefore pledges to cooperate with interested states and other relevant actors with the aim of obtaining a better understanding of such cross border movements at relevant regional and sub-regional levels, identifying best practices and developing consensus on how best to assist and protect the affected people. *(Group pledge with Germany, Norway and Switzerland)*

MONTENEGRO



PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Montenegro pledges to:

1. Be fully committed to the highest principles of international protection, support and help for refugees and stateless persons.
2. Continue its efforts, both at national and regional levels, to support the process of achieving durable solutions and to end the protracted refugee situation of the people displaced from the Former Yugoslavia (1991-1995) and Kosovo (1999) in its territory through the implementation of the National Strategy and its Action Plan (supporting the legal, social and economic integration) and the efficient implementation of the Joint Regional Programme on Durable Solutions for Refugees and Displaced Persons, in a comprehensive and collaborative way with other partner countries in the Region and international donor community (Sarajevo Process).
3. Facilitate and accelerate procedures for obtaining civil documentation, both at the national level and in cooperation with countries of origin, in order to regulate the legal status of all refugees, DPs and IDPs now residing in Montenegro, enabling them to fully and effectively enjoy their rights and minimizing the possibility of statelessness and deprivation of any rights they may enjoy;
4. Proceed with harmonization of national legislation and procedures related to refugees and statelessness with the corresponding international standards and to actively co-operate with other countries in order to ensure reduction of statelessness.

MOROCCO



EXCERPT FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

This Conference offers the Kingdom of Morocco an important opportunity to reiterate its commitment to humanitarian causes in general and refugee protection in particular.



MOZAMBIQUE

EXCERPT FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

Mozambique is in the advanced stages of acceding to the conventions related to statelessness, whose principles and practice are already enshrined in our law.



NAMIBIA

PLEDGE FORM

Pledge 1

The Government of the Republic of Namibia pledges to carry out awareness campaigns on statelessness and to educate the government machinery and the general public on matters of statelessness. Namibia will further improve birth registration from the current percentage of 67 per cent taking cognizance of the fact that poor birth registration could contribute to statelessness. The Government of the Republic of Namibia further pledges to increase registration points in the country, by opening more registration centres in the regions, cities and towns to enable all migrants entering the country to be registered in order to determine their origins. Namibia is not yet ready to accede to the two Conventions on statelessness.

Pledge 2

With regard to Article 26 of 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the Government of the Republic of Namibia is not yet in position to remove that reservation.



NETHERLANDS (THE)

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands is pleased to present its voluntary pledges on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the fiftieth anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

The Netherlands recognizes the enduring relevance and value of these Conventions and would like to reaffirm the values and principles that underpin them. The Conventions are a cornerstone of the Netherlands asylum system. In addition, the Conventions are essential for the life-saving work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The Netherlands pledges to continue to finance the work of UNHCR primarily in an un-earmarked way and will keep on encouraging other donors to do the same.

Development cooperation and reconstruction assistance can contribute to make people of concern economically independent, strengthening local infrastructure and benefitting refugees and local populations alike. The Netherlands pledges to continue to strive for closer involvement of multilateral development actors such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank to solve refugee situations. The Netherlands, in this light, endorses the joint UNHCR, UNDP and World Bank Transitional Solutions Initiative (TSI). The Netherlands has an interest in being involved in the further development of the TSI, and pledges to contribute actively. At field level, the Netherlands will also remain active to bridge the gap between humanitarian aid and development assistance.

To enhance the delivery of comprehensive durable solutions, notably in protracted refugee situations, the Netherlands pledges to work with other Member States, UNHCR and partners to promote increased opportunities for refugee resettlement, amongst others, through the participation of new resettlement countries, improved integration outcomes for resettled refugees, and the strategic use of resettlement to unlock the other durable solutions of voluntary repatriation and local integration. (*Group pledge*)

The Netherlands pledges to complement the Dutch national asylum system with additional efforts to strengthen protection of people of concern in their regions of origin. This will be done in close cooperation with UNHCR and host Governments. An example of this is the partnership directed towards 'Enhancing asylum conditions of the Somali refugees in Kenya'.

The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to strengthen cooperation and intensify mutual knowledge exchange in several fields, such as the application of the exclusion grounds of the 1951 Convention. In addition, the Netherlands will strengthen the protection regime by providing training in identifying and countering document fraud.

The Netherlands hopes to deepen its valuable partnership with UNHCR in order to help generate a vision for addressing forced displacement and statelessness in the years to come.



NEW ZEALAND

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

New Zealand pledges four concrete measures to improve the settlement of refugees. New Zealand commits to implementing a new whole-of-government Refugee Resettlement Strategy to deliver improved refugee resettlement outcomes within existing reprioritised baseline funding. It will help ensure more refugees become self-sufficient at the earliest opportunity, and live independently of state support.

The Refugee Resettlement Strategy identifies five key outcome areas to improve integration of refugees in New Zealand. These are Self Sufficiency, Participation, Education, Health and Wellbeing and Housing. Success indicators have been developed for each outcome area which will be used to prioritise and coordinate services on a targeted basis. Targets will also be agreed for each of the outcomes.

New Zealand recognises the need to ensure that we play our part in the resettlement of the most susceptible groups. New Zealand pledges to continue including within our annual quota, refugees from the most protracted situations, such as Bhutan and Burma. We commit equally to include an allocated proportion of our quota for vulnerable groups such as women-at-risk and disabled cases.

New Zealand welcomed the opportunity at the recent Working Group on Resettlement to present on the potential for the Strategic Resettlement of Colombian Nationals. This proposal is a promising step towards a comprehensive response to the resettlement of Colombian refugees. New Zealand commits to jointly coordinating the proposed working group, in conjunction with other resettlement countries.

New Zealand takes this opportunity, on the occasion of their respective anniversaries, to reiterate our firm commitment to the 1951 Refugee Convention, and to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. New Zealand remains a firm supporter of UNHCR and its core mandate. It is through continued adherence to the core mandate that we can remain optimistic that progress can be made on UNHCR's ultimate goal of finding solutions for forced displacement and statelessness.

NIGERIA

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Nigeria has ratified and domesticated refugee-related international conventions including the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, and the 1969 O.A.U. Convention governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. Through this legal framework, Nigeria has provided a favourable protection space for the benefit of refugees and all persons of concern, which ensures access to enjoyment of basic rights in the country.

1. The Government of Nigeria in furtherance of its commitment to international protection and human rights on 20 September 2011 deposited the instruments of accession for the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The Government of Nigeria pledges to domesticate the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.
2. Furthermore, the Government of Nigeria fully participated in the drafting and adoption of the 2009 African Union Kampala Convention on the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, which it signed in October 2009. This was in recognition of the ongoing challenges of internal displacement and the desire to provide a legal framework to address the challenges of effective protection, assistance and durable solutions for IDPs. The Federal Executive Council in furtherance of its commitment approved the ratification of the Kampala Convention and the Government of Nigeria pledges to ratify and domesticate the Kampala Convention.

NORWAY

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

Protracted refugee situations may represent a stalemate for entire generations of people. They are a drain of human and financial resources. Currently, a number of promising initiatives aim at unlocking longstanding situations and finding durable solutions. The High Commissioner's leadership in this is much appreciated.

Norway therefore, together with a number of other states, pledges to enhance the delivery of comprehensive durable solutions, notably in protracted refugee situations. We pledge to work with other Member States, UNHCR and partners to promote increased opportunities for refugee resettlement, the participation of new resettlement countries, improved integration outcomes for resettled refugees, and the strategic use of resettlement. (*Group Pledge*)

The Norwegian Government will make sure that all unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers are entitled to a legal guardian to secure and promote their rights in general, and in the asylum procedure in particular. To this effect, Norway pledges to introduce a new system that will better address the unaccompanied minors' specific needs for a guardian. The new system will ensure official standards for recruitment, training and monitoring of the guardians. It will take effect tentatively in July 2013.

There is no time to be complaisant as we celebrate the Refugee Convention. It is our responsibility to also look to the future. We are already witnessing evolving patterns of displacement to which traditional approaches might prove insufficient. We must rise to the challenge. We must educate ourselves and engage in a debate on the most appropriate responses to new challenges. These matters were addressed at the “Nansen Conference on Climate Change and Displacement in the 21st Century”, held in Oslo this summer.

Based on the conclusions of that conference, the so called Nansen principles, the Norwegian Government calls for a more coherent and consistent approach at the international level to meet the protection needs of people displaced externally owing to sudden-onset disasters, including where climate change plays a role. We therefore pledge, along with the Swiss Government, to cooperate with interested states and other relevant actors, including UNHCR, with the aim of obtaining a better understanding of such cross border movements at relevant regional and sub-regional levels, identifying best practices and developing consensus on how best to assist and protect the affected people. (*Group Pledge with Germany, Mexico and Switzerland*)

ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION



EXCERPT FROM STATEMENT

The OIC reaffirms its willingness to work with its traditional partners, such as UNHCR, in order to find together viable and durable solutions for the situation of refugees in its member countries, since it fully appreciates the impact of the burden of refugees and displaced in those countries.

PAKISTAN



EXCERPT FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

Over the last 30 years, millions of Afghans have returned home but still around three million live in Pakistan in a situation of temporary asylum. They constitute the largest refugee population in the world. We consider the Afghan refugee problem is one of the most pressing and difficult refugee problems of today. We work with UNHCR to assist and support these refugees. Together, we aspire a shared vision to see their dignified and voluntary return to Afghanistan.

PANAMA



EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

The Government of Panama pledges to:

Ensure protection in its territory to stateless persons, so they can live in safety and dignity, and to put an end to this condition, as stated in its new rules on statelessness (Law No. 28 and Law No. 29, both Laws of the Republic of 30 March 2011).

Rigorously implement Law 79 of 9 November 2011 “On Trafficking in Persons and Related Activities”, a legal instrument to address international organized crime offences in which migrants and those seeking international protection become entangled, mainly women and children.

The National Assembly passed on 27 October 2011 the Law “establishing, on an exceptional basis, the requirements to enable foreigners under Temporary Humanitarian Protection Status to apply for the migratory status of permanent resident in the Republic of Panama”, which pending a process of

consultation by the Executive will be enacted as a Law of the Republic and, as a commitment, will be implemented effectively.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

PLEDGE FORM

1. The Government of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea pledges to honor the noble values of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol and confirms that it has concluded the formal administrative process to lift the seven (7) reservations Papua New Guinea made when it signed the Refugee Convention in 1986. A submission is now before the Cabinet for approval so that the normative framework is aligned with and fully supports current government policy and practice towards refugees. Steps will also be taken in parallel and at a first available opportunity to seek the Parliament's approval for the seven reservations to the Refugee Convention to be lifted through a Private Member's Bill.
2. The Government of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea commits to reviewing all existing domestic legislation and policies relating to refugees with the aim of formulating a comprehensive national refugee policy for Papua New Guinea to effectively address refugee issues in full compliance with the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol.
3. The Government of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea further commits to facilitating access to naturalization of West Papuan and other refugees by either waiving all fees or introducing a nominal fee only for applications for citizenship by refugees.

PARAGUAY

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Paraguay pledges to:

Accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, once approved by the National Congress.

Considering the positive results obtained with the Solidarity Resettlement Programme in Paraguay, the Government is committed to increase the number of refugees resettled in the country.

PERU



PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Peru pledges to:

1. Accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.
2. Encourage the development of a draft national law that enables the necessary regulation of statelessness issues.
3. Create conditions to facilitate employment possibilities for asylum-seekers through the regularization in the Ministry of Labour of a procedure for approving working contracts and the establishment of a procedure allowing the issuance of driver's licenses.
4. Generate the channels needed to facilitate access to the public health system (*SIS – Sistemas públicos de salud*) for refugees and asylum-seekers.

PHILIPPINES (THE)



PLEDGE FORM

The Government of the Republic of the Philippines pledges to:

1. Continue to develop the policy and operational framework to address statelessness after the ratification of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and to strengthen implementation of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, with the support of, and in cooperation with, UNHCR.
2. Issue machine readable travel documents to refugees and stateless persons in accordance with Philippine law.
3. Continue the study of statelessness in the Philippines and among its nationals that are at risk of statelessness, in continuation of efforts initiated in 2011.
4. Initiate the process of accession to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

5. Continue leadership in ASEAN in the development of a human rights framework dealing with issues relating to migrants, trafficked persons, refugees and stateless persons; and
6. Increase the Philippines' contribution for 2012 to USD 100,000, in support of UNHCR programmes.



PORTUGAL

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Portugal pledges to continue to promote the integration of refugees and resettled refugees in Portugal. We remain committed to improving the overall living conditions of the refugees, including through the facilitation of access to employment and education opportunities as well as to health care and other social services.

In order to further support the integration of refugees and resettled refugees, Portugal pledges to explore the feasibility of introducing administrative measures aimed at facilitating the overall coordination between National Entities responsible for their integration.

Portugal is firmly committed to respect international humanitarian law, human rights and refugee law. Portugal is determined to ensure the protection of the rights of Stateless Persons.

Therefore, the Government of Portugal pledges to continue to work towards accession to both the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

The Government of Portugal pledges to continue to implement its National Resettlement Programme in close cooperation with the UNHCR and national implementing partners. In this regard, Portugal will seek to contribute to the global efforts being made to address refugee situations by taking, where feasible, the necessary measures to expedite the processing of cases, including in situations of urgent and emergency resettlement.

QATAR

EXCERPT FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

We renew the State of Qatar's commitment to the noble humanitarian principles of the UNHCR and its pledge to continue providing necessary support to UNHCR's different activities to ensure a dignified life for all.



REPUBLIC OF KOREA (THE)

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of the Republic of Korea pledges to:

- Work with relevant actors towards the adoption of legislation that promotes the rights and protection of refugees and asylum-seekers such as “The Bill on the Status and Treatment of Refugees and Others” introduced by Member of National Assembly Hwang, Woo Yea, and currently pending at the Legislation and Judiciary Committee of the National Assembly.
- Address language barriers of asylum-seekers and ensure fair assessment of their cases by improving interpretation support service during refugee status determination interviews through the build-up of an interpreter roster for over 30 different languages.
- Provide basic subsistence support to asylum-seekers and assist in the integration of refugees into Korean society through the Refugee Reception Center due to be established in Incheon by June 2013.
- Ensure asylum-seekers and refugees are provided improved education, health and social welfare services through strengthened partnership with relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations.
- Improve on governmental institutions responsible for refugee status determination and asylum policy such as the creation of an independent Refugee Division at Seoul Immigration Office, with the aim to better address the needs of an increasing number of asylum-seekers.
- Strengthen the capacity of asylum adjudicators by providing more comprehensive and ongoing professional training on such areas as asylum law and country of origin information analysis.





REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA (THE)

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of the Republic of Moldova pledges to:

1. Accede to the two United Nations conventions on statelessness (the 1954 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 United Nations Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness).
2. Amend its domestic legislation in order to establish a statelessness determination procedure.
3. Map and gather information on stateless persons in Moldova with a view to finding a solution for their predicament.
4. Continue to ensure observance of the principle of *non-refoulement* for asylum-seekers and refugees.
5. Elaborate the legislation on integration of foreigners. This law will cover the integration of all foreigners, including refugees and beneficiaries of humanitarian protection.
6. Improve the quality of the refugee status determination procedure.



ROMANIA

PLEDGE FORM

Pledges by the Government of Romania:

- Romania reinforces its commitment to ensure durable solutions for persons in need of international protection. Romania will continue its efforts to make use of resettlement and to improve its integration programmes. Romania will consider the adoption of a bill to approve a new national resettlement programme.
- Romania remains committed to the concept of emergency transit operations for refugees. In this regard Romania pledges to continue to manage, together with UNHCR and IOM, the first Emergency Transit Centre in the world and to build upon the experiences gained so far.
- Romania will further work towards improving the quality of the asylum procedure by, *inter alia*, implementing the UNHCR-EU Quality Initiative project, as well as by promoting its results at international level.
- Romania will strive for better reception conditions of asylum-seekers and for further defining and implementing its asylum policies, taking into consideration the situation of vulnerable groups.

- As a State Party to both the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, Romania reaffirms their importance for the protection of stateless persons and will continue to actively support UNHCR's efforts in promoting wide accession to these legal instruments.
- As part of its commitment to uphold international law and advance the highest human rights standards, Romania will continue to work against discrimination, racism, xenophobia and related intolerance, including with regard to refugees, asylum-seekers or other vulnerable categories.
- Romania commends the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and expresses its commitment to continue to work in partnership with UNHCR for the fulfillment of its mandate. In this regard, Romania pledges to continue to financially support the work of UNHCR, primarily with un-earmarked contributions.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION (THE)



PLEDGE FORM

The Government of the Russian Federation pledges to:

- Improve national refugee legislation as well as applicable status determination procedures for asylum-seekers in the Russian Federation.
- Develop a network of temporary accommodation centers for asylum-seekers and improve their conditions of stay in these centers.
- Improve the mechanism for the documentation of asylum-seekers in the Russian Federation as well as for stateless persons.
- Introduce additional simplifications in the procedure for acquiring citizenship of the Russian Federation or residency permits for certain categories of stateless persons.

RWANDA



PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Rwanda,

Reaffirming its commitment to the internationally recognized principle of *non-refoulement* and access of all refugees to asylum procedures,

Recalling its adoption of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness,

Pledges to:

1. Improve the entry systems to allow refugees, asylum-seekers and other groups with specific needs to be identified and granted access to the national territory by:
 - a) building the capacity of border officials,
 - b) creating exceptional procedures for large-scale influx for ensuring the admission of refugees and asylum-seekers and providing protection in accordance with fundamental principles.
2. Improve the implementation of its refugee status determination procedures and ensure efficiency and consistency with high standards. More specifically by:
 - a) ensuring age, gender and diversity sensitivity in the asylum system,
 - b) lifting language barriers during hearings and interviews,
 - c) focusing on refugee status determination expertise,
 - d) assuming greater responsibility for refugee status determination.
3. Ensuring security for all Rwandan citizens including all Rwandan refugees who remain in exile and encouraging them to return home so that they can participate in the development of their country, utilizing the skills they have gained in the various Countries of Asylum and thus enjoying the privilege that is being offered to all citizens.
4. Improve the extent to which asylum-seekers, refugees and stateless people, especially women and girls, have access to their rights and enjoy protection and assistance by:
 - a) clarifying for asylum adjudicators that gender-related forms of persecution are recognized grounds for refugee status,
 - b) providing access for victims of discrimination, violence, harassment, rape and sexual abuse, to effective complaints mechanisms and legal remedies, including legal counselling and psychosocial support,
 - c) prosecuting perpetrators of violence, sexual abuse and rape,
 - d) increasing the involvement and the capacity of service-providers, in particular the police, in preventing, investigating and dealing with violence, sexual abuse and rape,
 - e) facilitating greater involvement of the police in child protection,
 - f) developing specific programmes for victims of Gender-Based Violence and survival sex including protection, assistance and access to lawful employment.
5. Take specific measures to protect all refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons, including women, girls and people with disabilities, against all forms of discrimination or related intolerance.

6. Work to support efforts to encourage voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement, whenever feasible, in a comprehensive approach to finding durable solutions. And more specifically by supporting sustainable reintegration of returnees through, for example, access to employment, education and social services.
7. Take necessary measures at all levels to enable asylum-seekers/refugees to access basic services and enjoy their economic, social and cultural rights including free and fair access to the national labour market, the recognition of refugees' school and vocational diplomas, access to durable residence status, and the development of literacy programmes and adult education opportunities.
8. Prevent statelessness by reviewing nationality laws and procedures relating to the acquisition of nationality in line with the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and other internationally recognized documentation, and compile data on the number of stateless persons within the country during the next population census due in 2012.
9. Take all measures to ensure a lawful birth registration for all children of refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons.

SENEGAL



PLEGE FORM

The Government of the Republic of Senegal pledges to:

1. Correct gender discrimination in its nationality law in order to enable Senegalese women to transmit their nationality to their foreign spouse and to their children born of a foreign father;
2. Reform law No. 1968-27 on refugee status in order to better comply with new international norms regarding refugees.

SIERRA LEONE



PLEDGE FORM

Pledges relating to asylum-seekers and refugees

As of 1 January 2011, Sierra Leone was hosting 8,573 Persons of Concern, of which 8,363 were refugees and 210 asylum-seekers. Of the refugees, 8,341 were Liberian, 16 Ivorian, while 6 were of other nationalities.

The Government of Sierra Leone pledges to:

- 1) Issue ID cards to all refugees in Sierra Leone. Discussions for the issuance of identity cards are ongoing between the National Refugee Authority, National Registration Secretariat and UNHCR Freetown.
- 2) Revise the land agreement signed in 2010 to facilitate the construction of shelters for refugees integrating locally in rural communities. The revision will better define its scope and improve areas of contention in the original draft.
- 3) Issue proper land documentation for refugees who opt for local integration in urban areas. The National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) will follow-up with the Ministry of Lands for the provision of such documentation to NaCSA as the custodian, with a view to developing a framework for the eventual handing over of these land documents to the beneficiaries.
- 4) Review and amend the Refugee Protection Act of 2007 to ensure effective implementation of the Act.

Pledges relating to statelessness

The Government of Sierra Leone pledges to:

Examine the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions in light of the several amendments to its citizenship law, with a view to signing the Conventions as soon as possible.

SOMALIA

PLEDGE FORM

In today's commemorations of the United Nations conventions related to the protection of refugees and stateless persons, Somalia is expressing gratitude to those countries that have offered international protection and assistance to its citizens forced to cross Somali borders due to persisting fighting in some parts of the country.

Ravaged by two decades of conflict, the current fighting continues to take a heavy toll on the civilian population that remains in the country. There are approximately 1.4 million internally displaced persons inside Somalia who have been forced to flee their homes because of violence and insecurity, and who are currently in dire need of humanitarian assistance, including durable solutions to their plight.

Somalia welcomes the adoption of the Kampala Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa and is pleased to inform the audience that the country ratified this instrument on 15 March 2011. With a view to allowing the Convention to be fully implemented in the Somalia context, the country commits to adopting a national IDP policy.

By mean of this statement, I also wish to call – on behalf of my Government – the non-State actors to take concrete and immediate measures to lessen the impact of the ongoing armed conflict on civilians by complying with international humanitarian law.

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

My Government makes the pledge of putting in place a system to register all new-born babies inside and outside Somalia as a means to guarantee their citizenship. I count on the support of the International Community to make this happen effectively and efficiently.

On behalf of my Government I would also like to reiterate the commitment made by the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) leaders to the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to halt the recruitment of child soldiers into its forces. This pledge was made during the visits of the Special Representative to Mogadishu which took place in November 2010 and November 2011.

Nevertheless, the recruitment of child soldiers into armed forces by non-State actors remains a major problem.

By mean of this statement, I also wish to call – on behalf of my Government – the non-State actors to take concrete and immediate measures to lessen the impact of the ongoing armed conflict on civilians by complying with the international humanitarian law.

My Government at national and sub-national levels is committed to effectively engage with the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, who is due to visit my beloved country for the first time next week.



SOUTH AFRICA

PLEDGE FORM

Pledge on the protection of refugees and the status and reduction of statelessness

The Government of the Republic of South Africa pledges to remain unwavering and steadfast in its commitment to the protection of refugees.

The Republic of South Africa has identified a number of areas that need strengthening in relation to the reception of asylum-seekers, the determination of status, and the treatment and integration of refugees. The Government has initiated a number of legal, administrative and institutional measures in this regard that will enable the security and other needs of refugees to be met more effectively.

The reception of asylum-seekers

- Given that South Africa is a major destination of choice of asylum-seekers, the Government is actively exploring ways of dealing with this unprecedented demand for asylum within the context of regional cooperation and domestic legislation. A large number of those applying for asylum are economic migrants and this is impacting negatively on the processing of persons who have a well-founded fear of persecution as defined in the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Determining refugee status

- The efficiency of adjudicating the status of those who seek asylum is being addressed through a number of initiatives, including the amending of legislation and improving structures and processes. These measures will serve to deal with backlogs while establishing efficient adjudication systems that will benefit refugees. An important part of this process will be strengthening regional cooperation and the partnership between the South African Government and UNHCR.

Treatment and integration of refugees

- The security and welfare of persons accorded refugee status will be improved by strengthening cooperation between spheres of government, between government departments, and between Government, UNHCR and civil society stakeholders. The approach will enable the complexities of the urban environment characterising South Africa to be managed effectively. The special needs of refugees, such as more vulnerable groups, will be addressed through strengthening partnerships with UNHCR and a range of NGOs.

- The Government is committed to the principle of working systematically and effectively with local community structures and forums, and with structures established by refugees themselves. The principle is to build relationships that can benefit all parties until a lasting solution to the situation of the refugees is found.
- The Government is prioritising the gathering and effective use of accurate data on refugees to enable it to plan effectively and respond to security and other needs at national, provincial and local levels.

Regional and international cooperation

- South Africa will further build bilateral and multilateral cooperation on asylum-seeker and refugee matters with other States and regional and international bodies. Areas of common interest that are being considered include burden-sharing, the sharing of data, systems integration and capacity development. Such cooperation is in keeping with the spirit of the African Group Statement.

The Government of South Africa declares its support for the principles and spirit of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the subsequent 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. These principles find expression in the South African Constitution and law.

The Government of South Africa hereby pledges to become a signatory and party to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the subsequent 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, following the completion of an internal consultative process. The Government is committed to contributing to a world where no peoples are left stateless through the redefinition of political borders or non-registration of children at birth or indeed the repudiation or non-recognition of citizenship of groups of peoples. An important element in this regard is clarifying the respective roles and responsibilities of the South African Government and relevant international organisations, including UNHCR.

Statelessness is a global challenge and South Africa will renew its efforts to work regionally and internationally towards the important goal of the prevention and reduction of statelessness. An important mechanism which will prevent statelessness is the incorporation of National Population Registers in countries where these do not exist or are incomplete. In this regard, South Africa will next year be hosting the Second Conference of Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics for 2012, under the theme: "Improving CRVS Institutional and Human Infrastructure."



SOUTH SUDAN

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

We are concerned about the difficulties that refugees face, and conscious that these problems may escalate further due to the increasing number of large-scale movements of population in surrounding countries. Therefore, the Government of South Sudan is dedicated to enacting, by the end of this year, its Refugee Bill that will deal with the following: [1] to provide for reception into South Sudan of asylum-seekers; [2] to regulate applications for recognition of refugee status; and [3] to provide rights and obligations flowing from the status. On the adoption of the Refugee Bill, we shall nominate three Commissioners for Refugees who shall be deployed to the most sensitive States of the country where refugee influx is highest, namely Upper Nile, Unity, and Western Equatoria States.

Pledges relating to statelessness

The Republic of South Sudan, as the world's newest independent country, is facing multifaceted priorities. However, among all the issues demanding the attention of the Government, there is no greater priority than to prevent statelessness, since citizenship is a fundamental right for everybody.

Acknowledging the importance of developing a comprehensive strategy to prevent and address statelessness in the country, the Government of South Sudan has already enacted a National Bill that entered into force on July 07, 2011, that should protect people from statelessness.

The importance of documentation demonstrating citizenship is also key, both in terms of basic human rights, but also with regards to feelings of inclusion, maintaining allegiance to the nation and preserving stability and the rule of law. In its efforts to elaborate and implement a strong human rights-oriented nationality legislation, the Government of South Sudan is determined to comply with the best practices in that matter, and aspires to accede and ratify, in the near future, the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Pledges in other areas

The Republic of South Sudan is recovering from a 22-year devastating civil war, during which over 2.5 million South Sudanese perished, and over 4 million were displaced, making the plague of internal displacement one of the most critical issues to address. To date, there is only one binding legal instrument in the world which promotes and strengthens regional and national measures to prevent or mitigate, prohibit and eliminate root causes of internal displacement, as well as to provide for durable solutions.

The Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) adopted in Kampala, Uganda, on 22 October 2009, demonstrates that African leaders are conscious of the difficulties that IDPs experience and poised and committed to put an end to the suffering of the IDPs. The Republic of South Sudan, as the 54th State in Africa, pledges to accede to and ratify this convention and to develop the related domestic legal framework so as to give this treaty full effect in the country.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I say the Declaration of Independence of my country affirms that we undertake our international obligations and, specifically, the United Nations Charter seriously. South Sudan seeks to provide for all its citizens the highest living standards, and shall continue to develop public institutions committed to good governance and accountability.

SPAIN

EXCERPT FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

Without doubt, statelessness is one of the greatest “forgotten problems” of our time, affecting millions of people who are in this extremely vulnerable situation. As is known, the right to a nationality and the right not to be arbitrarily deprived of nationality are set out in article 15 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Faced with this reality, Spain has been adapting its national legislation in order to give a satisfactory answer to the problem of statelessness, gathering for years practically all the provisions set out in the 1961 Convention. For this reason, I have the honour to announce that Spain has initiated internal procedures to accede to this convention.

SUDAN (THE)

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

I wish to take this rare opportunity on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 50th of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness to renew before you and confirm my country's commitment and respect and implementation of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol.



We renew our commitment to the humanitarian principles of receiving and protecting asylum-seekers and seek at the same time to form suitable, active partnerships for burden sharing in a just manner.

We support on this occasion the idea of setting up a comprehensive regional framework backed up by international support to benefit from our past experiences in the early 1980s when the international conference for Africa refugee assistance was convened (ICARA I and II).



SWEDEN

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Sweden pledges to:

- Review the reservations that Sweden has to both the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons with the intention of withdrawing the reservations that are possible. The formal process for this is currently under way.
- Intensify its efforts for the avoidance of statelessness at both the national and the international level.
- Continue to combat all forms of racism, discrimination and related intolerance.
- Continue to improve the national asylum process in order to uphold a humane, legally secure and effective system.
- Continue to keep the duration of detention as short as possible; and to a minimum when it comes to detention of children.
- Continue to ensure that the return of all who have been refused asylum in Sweden to their country of origin is made in a humane and dignified manner.
- Continue to work within the European Union for a Common European Asylum Policy that is humane, legally secure and effective in order to ensure that access to asylum procedures is guaranteed and that the assessment is conducted in an equal manner regardless of which European Union Member State is responsible for the asylum application.
- Continue to provide resettlement to Sweden in close cooperation with UNHCR in order to solve protracted refugee situations. Sweden will continue to seek ways to improve cooperation between resettlement countries and countries of destination with large refugee situations e.g. through the Contact Group for Resettlement of Afghan Refugees in Iran.

- Continue to work within the European Union in order to encourage more EU Member States to start, on a voluntary basis, resettlement programs and to increase the overall number of resettlement places within the EU.
- Work to enhance the delivery of comprehensive solutions, notably in protracted refugee situations, with other Member States, UNHCR and partners to promote increased opportunities for refugee resettlement, the participation of new resettlement countries, improved outcomes for resettled refugees, and the strategic use of resettlement to unlock the other durable solutions of voluntary repatriation and local integration. (*Group pledge*)
- Continue its strong financial support for UNHCR. The Swedish Government's suggested core contribution to the UNHCR for 2012 amounts to SEK 613 million. The decision is subject to Parliamentary approval. In addition to the core contribution, Sweden will make a biennial contribution towards the biennial UNHCR Global Appeal including geographical and regional support. A biennial contribution will give UNHCR predictable, rapid and flexible financing and promotes a long-term perspective and operational flexibility in UNHCR operations.
- Support the implementation of the updated UNHCR strategy for Action against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence.
- Support efforts by UNHCR to facilitate the transition to longer-term development and support global measures for more effective recovery support, such as durable solutions of protracted refugee situations; promote early recovery and self-reliance for refugees and IDPs; and promote the link between UNHCR's humanitarian assistance and development cooperation as well as strengthen its coordination mechanisms.

SWITZERLAND

PLEDGE FORM

A more coherent and consistent approach at the international level is needed to meet the protection needs of people displaced externally owing to sudden-onset disasters, including where climate change plays a role. We therefore pledge to cooperate with interested states, UNHCR and other relevant actors with the aim of obtaining a better understanding of such cross border movements at relevant regional and sub-regional levels, identifying best practices and developing consensus on how best to assist and protect the affected people. (*Group Pledge with Germany, Mexico and Norway*)



EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

The resettlement of refugees as a durable solution is another instrument of international protection, and one which Switzerland sees as having particular relevance. In accordance with its humanitarian tradition, Switzerland is committed to continuing to welcome groups of vulnerable refugees in partnership with UNHCR. In this regard, our collaboration with the High Commissioner will enable us to soon welcome a new group of (resettled) refugees. Moreover, a new procedure for consultation and implementation of Switzerland's resettlement policy is now under preparation.

At this time of financial, food and environmental crises, meeting refugees' needs will require increasing the resources made available to the organisation, as has been highlighted by UNHCR's own global needs assessment. Donors must increase the funding that they provide. In this context, I am pleased to be able to announce that Switzerland has decided to increase its financial contribution to UNHCR for the coming year.

Finally, advocacy in favour of the refugee cause requires sustained support, and my country pledges to continue supporting the Nansen Refugee Award. This distinction is presented each year to a person or an organisation in recognition of extraordinary service to the refugee cause.



THAILAND

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Thailand pledges to:

1. Continue to make progress in further refining and broadening the admission criteria for those displaced persons in the temporary shelter areas, and issue personal documentation for those registered by the Thai authorities concerned;
2. Enhance the provision of training for Thai border and immigration officials to raise their awareness of human rights and the protection needs of those who have been displaced;
3. Continue to broaden education opportunities for those displaced persons living in the temporary shelters as well as other persons of concern in line with the Thai Government's "Education for All" policy;
4. Continue to ensure that all children of displaced persons and those of other persons of concern have non-discriminatory access to protection services under Thailand's Child Protection Act, and

- those born in Thailand are entitled to birth registration and other rights under Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
5. Continue to consider, where appropriate, further amendment of the Nationality Act of Thailand, as well as to provide greater access to birth registration and individual documentation services, including late birth registration, to build on Thailand's progress in reducing vulnerability to statelessness; and,
 6. Continue Thailand's constructive role to promote regional cooperation under the principle of burden-sharing and a more predictable approach to handling humanitarian challenges.

TOGO

PLEDGE FORM



The Government of the Togolese Republic pledges to:

1. Accelerate the process of ratification of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.
2. Amend law No. 019-2000 relating to the status of refugees in Togo in order to incorporate recent developments on the subject.
3. Create an appeals body for asylum-seekers.
4. Collaborate with the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire to organize the voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees living in Togo in the framework of implementation of the tripartite agreement signed by the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, the Togolese Republic and UNHCR on 15 November 2011.
5. Build the capacity of actors working in the area of refugee protection, including staff of CNAR (national coordinating body for assistance to refugees) and the immigration services, judges, magistrates and social services staff (in hospitals and tribunals...), with the support of UNHCR.
6. Seek alternative solutions for refugees who are in detention, in particular for children.
7. Encourage the voluntary repatriation of Togolese refugees still living abroad.
8. Promote the local integration of refugees who are unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin by facilitating their long-term residence in Togo.



TUNISIA

EXCERPT FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

We reaffirm our commitment to respect and uphold the principles and values underlying the international refugee protection regime.



TURKEY

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

Turkey, while reviewing its legislation on migration and asylum in line with the realities of the era, has completed drafting a comprehensive new law, in consideration of the international law principles and jurisprudence (that) will form the basis of our national policy regarding migration and asylum.

I would like to mention that the drafting process of this law has been as exemplary as its content. The draft has been prepared through a transparent and inclusive process where intensive consultations took place.

Taking this occasion, I would like to mention our appreciation of the UNHCR Ankara Office for their valuable contribution and support to the drafting process of this law. We would like to see this draft which is the product of collective wisdom to be adopted in 2012.

Our plans for the future are not limited with this law and I would like to mention another important development: Two draft laws paving the way for Turkey's accession to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons have been approved by the relevant Commissions of the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

I would like to underline that Turkey has decided to accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

I would like to reiterate Turkey's commitment to continue the close, fruitful and satisfactory cooperation with the UNHCR in matters related to asylum.

TURKMENISTAN

EXCERPT FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

As a permanent member of the Executive Committee of UNHCR, Turkmenistan will continue to implement practical measures aimed at protecting and supporting refugees.



UGANDA

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Uganda pledges to continue offering protection to persons of concern and those in need of international protection based on the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention and the Refugee Act of 2006.

The Government of Uganda will continue to offer durable solutions to refugees with further exploring possibilities of naturalization to protracted caseloads.

The Government of Uganda will continue to support offering durable solutions to refugees in need of repatriation especially the Rwandan and Sudanese refugee caseloads in Uganda.

The Government of Uganda will continue supporting efforts geared towards effecting the cessation clause.

We shall ensure continuous implementation, improving and upgrading of the asylum processes to ensure timely protection of refugees. This therefore calls for support to the refugee status determination process.

The Government of Uganda has under the provisions of the Refugee Act of 2006 established the Refugee Appeals Board. It is envisioned that this will go a long way in improving the appeal process and asylum institution.

Uganda is a party to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and therefore the International Humanitarian Law Committee has been set up with the main objective of promoting ratification and domestication of the various treaties to enhance continued quality protection in Uganda.





UKRAINE

EXCERPTS FROM NATIONAL STATEMENT

Today in Ukraine the relevant authorities are actively considering accession to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

In the context of protection the rights of refugees, measures are taken to ensure effective state governance in this area, to harmonize national legislation with international standards, creating conditions for the full implementation of the rights and freedoms of refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as the optimal use of their intellectual and labor potential.



UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND (THE)

PLEDGE FORM

General

The Government of the United Kingdom:

- Notes the continuing need for the work of the UNHCR and restates its commitment to the principles of the 1951 Refugee Convention; noting it is as necessary now as it was 60 years ago.
- Restates its commitment to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and undertakes to review its response to those that fall under that Convention.
- Will continue to provide one of the most compassionate, efficient, dignified asylum systems in the world and will maintain the promise made 60 years ago to provide safety and security to those who are fleeing persecution.

International Responsibility Sharing

- Will continue to be actively involved in seeking concrete and lasting solutions to protracted refugee situations.
- Will continue to demonstrate its firm commitment to the international protection of refugees by providing (through its Gateway Protection Programme) resettlement spaces for those in protracted refugee situations.
- Will continue to offer to share its experience and expertise to any interested countries who intend to set up their own resettlement

- programme; and has specifically committed to UNHCR to twin with the Polish Government to help them develop a programme.
- Will strengthen the international efforts to protect and assist refugees by increasing its donor contributions to UNHCR, which performed well in the UK Multilateral Aid Review.
 - While working to manage and control migration well, will continue to support international efforts that borders are sensitive to protection requirements of refugees and those in need of international protection are able to have access to a safe country in which to claim asylum.

Protection of Refugees in the UK

- Will continue to ensure its asylum and refugee status determination processes are of the highest quality and protect the needs of those genuinely seeking protection in the United Kingdom.
- Will ensure that information, advice and support are made available to, and can be easily accessed by, those seeking protection from persecution. This will result in applicants attaining a greater understanding of the asylum process.
- Will continue work to create an environment where those who wish to register a claim feel safe and more able to disclose sensitive information, thereby improving the interaction between those deciding asylum claims and those accessing its asylum system.
- Will, through the development of a next generation framework for asylum quality, support and facilitate the delivery of quality throughout the asylum system. We will also seek to improve efficiency and productivity. We will do these things by ensuring that work is carried out to a standard, high degree of quality at each stage of the asylum process, by minimising delays and errors and by ensuring that marking standards encourage concise decision-making and give appropriate weight to the critical elements of considerations.
- We will continue to ensure that the performance of the UK's asylum system is transparent and open to scrutiny. In line with the Government's transparency agenda, we have opened up the asylum system so any member of the public can see how we are achieving and hold us to account.
- Will continue work with corporate partners to build on the improvements it has already made to the way in which it takes account of the needs of women going through the asylum process and to its quality of decision making in women's asylum claims. It will deliver a new training package on these issues to all asylum decision makers and will establish a clear baseline of the current position so that future improvements can be monitored.

- Will continue to work with corporate partners to build on the improvements already made to the way in which the Agency manages asylum claims brought on the grounds of sexual orientation. We will continue to work to ensure that such claims are considered in a fair and sensitive way, which enables the applicant to put their case across fully.
- Will continue to provide adequate protection to persons fleeing indiscriminate violence.
- Is committed to creating a more compassionate asylum system and has already fulfilled its commitment to end the detention of children for immigration purposes. We will operate a new Family Returns Process which is practical and fair, and will share best practice as this develops.



UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA (THE)

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania pledges to:

1. Review the National Refugee Policy of 2003.
2. Revise or repeal and replace the Refugee Act of 1998.
3. Ratify and domesticate the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons (Kampala IDP Convention).
4. Ratify and domesticate international instruments on statelessness.
5. Continue registration and documentation of refugees and asylum-seekers.



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (THE)

PLEDGE FORM

1) Asylum, adjudication, detention

Interpretation of the Refugee Definition

The U.S. Government pledges to provide ongoing, comprehensive training to all Immigration Judges and Members of the Board of Immigration Appeals and their legal staff in refugee law and related legal disciplines, as well as in country of origin analysis and application.

Bars to Admissibility and Asylum Eligibility

The U.S. Government pledges to:

- Significantly reduce, through the issuance and application of exemptions to exclusion based on national security grounds, cases that are on hold for a review of eligibility for an exemption to exclusion by the end of fiscal year 2012;
- Undertake a review, to be completed by the end of calendar year 2012, to examine current interpretations of the terms under the national security exclusion grounds, for example, the meaning of material support, to better ensure that those in need of protection retain eligibility for it;
- Work with Congress to eliminate the one-year filing deadline for submission of asylum applications.

Detention

The U.S. Government pledges to:

- Continue to provide UNHCR reasonable access to conduct review of detention and parole decision-making for persons of concern to UNHCR, including parole determinations for arriving asylum-seekers in expedited removal;
- Work with UNHCR and other stakeholders on improved detainee release practices, including consideration of a Detainee Release Notification flier that explains to detainees their legal obligations and provides information on issues such as phone calls, personal property, medical services and community organizations that serve immigrant populations. Review and amend, as necessary, current policies to better ensure that individuals in immigration detention, including asylum-seekers, are released from detention in a safe and responsible manner, time, and place.

Interdiction

The U.S. Government pledges to implement updated training to U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement personnel participating in migrant interdiction operations by the end of calendar year 2012. This training will focus on identifying manifestations of fear by interdicted migrants.

2) Vulnerable populations

Children

The Best Interests of Children

The U.S. Government pledges to:

- Assist UNHCR with the deployment of eight trained and competent staff to conduct Best Interest Determinations in line with UNHCR guidance, subject to applicable laws and regulations;
- Facilitate UNHCR's review of U.S. practices regarding the screening of unaccompanied children at the southwest border during 2012;
- Update existing guidance on both procedure and substance for the adjudication of asylum claims brought by children;
- Promote the availability of pro bono legal counsel for persons of concern to UNHCR – in particular unaccompanied children and those with diminished mental capacity.

Cultural Orientation Curriculum for Youth

The U.S. Government pledges to provide cultural orientation to unaccompanied refugee minors who are preparing to travel to the United States and to encourage the continued use of similar curriculum after arrival in the United States.

Education in Emergencies

The U.S. Government pledges to increase its support to international efforts relating to equitable access to education for youth in crisis and conflict environments and its involvement in shaping the agenda on education of youth in emergencies, particularly through ongoing Women, Peace and Security efforts.

Women

Services for Victims of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

The U.S. Government pledges to provide refugee service providers and mainstream social service programs in the United States with additional training relating to sexual and gender-based violence, including violence that amounts to a form of torture, as well as information on services available to survivors of torture.

Microenterprise Development Opportunities

The U.S. Government pledges to provide refugee women in the United States with training opportunities on how to establish and manage businesses including, home-based childcare services.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Electronic Resource Center

The U.S. Government pledges to develop an electronic resource center that catalogues available community resources and identifies supportive communities for LGBT refugees resettled in the United States.

Provision of Targeted Services

The U.S. Government pledges to add language to one or more grant announcements that identifies LGBT refugees as a vulnerable population in need of targeted services.

Urban Refugees

The U.S. Government pledges to:

- Expand U.S. diplomacy and humanitarian programming to protect and assist refugees in urban areas. In conducting humanitarian diplomacy on behalf of urban refugees, the United States will seek to ensure recognition of refugees' status and legal rights, consistent with obligations and commitments countries have assumed under international human rights and refugee law, and to address practical and administrative obstacles to enjoyment of those rights;
- Develop practical guidance for programming U.S. humanitarian assistance for refugees in urban areas by the end of 2012. This guidance will draw on best practices in order to maximize program effectiveness;
- Support enhancement of UNHCR's institutional capacity to implement its urban refugee policy, including through staff training and other efforts, subject to applicable laws and regulations.

3) Resettlement, protection, integration

Protection and integration

The U.S. Government pledges to:

- Assist UNHCR with the deployment of eight trained and competent staff to conduct Best Interest Determinations in line with UNHCR guidance, subject to applicable laws and regulations;
- Make adjustments to the procedures for determining when an asylum-seeker becomes eligible to apply for work authorization while his or her claim is pending, including the process to re-start the "clock" that determines when an asylum-seeker becomes eligible to work legally.

Strengthening Global Resettlement Capacity

The U.S. Government pledges to:

- Enhance the delivery of comprehensive durable solutions, notably in protracted refugee situations, by working with Member States, UNHCR and other partners to promote increased opportunities for refugee resettlement, the participation of new resettlement countries, improved integration outcomes for resettled refugees, and the strategic use of resettlement to unlock the other durable solutions of voluntary repatriation and local integration (*Group Pledge*);
- Undertake a multi-year twinning program with Uruguay and Bulgaria to strengthen global resettlement capacity.

4) Partnerships, training, capacity-building

The U.S. Government pledges to work with UNHCR in fiscal year 2012 to strengthen local partner capacity, particularly in humanitarian emergencies, through facilitating partnerships between international and national actors.

5) Statelessness

Statelessness among Women and Children

The U.S. Government pledges to:

- Focus U.S. diplomacy on preventing and resolving statelessness among women and children, including efforts to raise global awareness about discrimination against women in nationality laws and to mobilize governments to repeal nationality laws that discriminate against women;
- Promote a child's right to nationality through multilateral and bilateral engagement, including efforts to promote universal birth registration.

Statelessness and Citizenship

The U.S. Government pledges to:

- Actively work with Congress to introduce legislation that provides a mechanism for stateless persons in the United States to obtain permanent residency and eventually citizenship;
- Consider the revision of administrative policies to allow the circumstance of stateless persons to inform decision-making regarding their detention, reporting requirements, and opportunity to apply for work authorization.

URUGUAY

PLEDGE FORM

First, Uruguay will introduce, by the adoption of appropriate legislation, a formal statelessness status determination procedure that grants to the recognized persons a status consistent with international standards.

To make the most of existing institutional capacities in the country, the responsibilities of the Commission for Refugees will be extended to the review of and decisions relating cases of statelessness.

Secondly, Uruguay will build the capacity of the Permanent Secretariat of the Commission for Refugees.

The Permanent Secretariat is the body responsible for processing refugee claims, conducting the first analysis of eligibility and issuing a technical recommendation to the Commission. Its reinforcement, through material and human resources, will strengthen the application and force of international and national standards.

Thirdly, to complement the solidarity resettlement efforts begun in 2009, Uruguay will launch a resettlement programme in rural settings benefitting refugees with such a profile, in order to boost their potential for local integration and self-reliance.

Considering the characteristics of refugees from the region with which Uruguay has worked during the past 3 years, and the infrastructure that Uruguay has in education, health and access to employment, such a programme will enhance the prospects for successful resettlement. This pledge is, at the same time, a significant contribution from Uruguay to the path set by the 2004 Mexico Declaration and Plan of Action.

VENEZUELA (BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF)

PLEDGE FORM

1. Improve the mechanism for issuing documentation to refugees by facilitating the issuance of identity cards in the main cities of (Venezuelan) states on borders.
2. Establish an inter-institutional body for the development and co-ordination of public policies for refugee population.



3. We propose to organize a regional conference on refugees in order to promote the special protection of women, children and adolescents.



YEMEN

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Yemen pledges to:

On advancing protection environment for refugees in Yemen

- The Yemeni Government – in close cooperation with the UNHCR office in Yemen – will capacitate the Bureau for Refugees to be fully operational, looking into all asylum and refuge affairs in Yemen and liaising with different governmental entities to ensure refugees access to basic rights, i.e. health, education and employment.
- The Yemeni Government and the UNHCR office will work together to ensure non-Somali asylum-seekers and refugees are benefiting from the same services availed to Somali refugees, including registration.

On the national framework in Yemen

- The Yemeni Government will be working closely with UNHCR and the Sana'a University Study Centre to develop national legislation addressing refugee affairs in conformity with international standards as stipulated in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.
- The Yemeni Government will take the necessary measures to prevent and respond to cases of statelessness on its territory – including giving consideration to adopting the 1954 and the 1961 conventions on statelessness.

On the mixed migration

- The Yemeni Government will – in cooperation with UNHCR, other international organisations and neighbouring countries – develop a regional strategic plan to combat human trafficking/smuggling.
- The Yemeni Government – in cooperation with UNHCR – will host a regional conference in 2012 on mixed migration challenges with the participation of relevant international organisations, Horn of Africa States and countries from the Arabian Peninsula.

ZAMBIA

PLEDGE FORM

1. First Pledge:

The Government of the Republic of Zambia pledges to repeal and replace the domestic refugee legislation, the 1970 Refugees (Control) Act, in order to bring it more in conformity with the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees to which the state is party.

Background

Over the years, Zambia's practice in the protection of and assistance to refugees has been way beyond provisions in the domestic legislation in many aspects, including refugee status determination procedures. In order to consolidate the legal framework for the protection of refugees in the country, Zambia will amend the domestic refugee legislation to include most of the practices already in place and which are in conformity with provisions of the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. This state action will ensure that the convention is properly implemented in Zambia.

2. Second Pledge:

The Government of the Republic of Zambia pledges to facilitate the securing of a durable solution through local integration for about 10,000 Angolan refugees who have been living in Zambia for over four decades, some of whom have been born and brought up in Zambia as second- or third-generation refugees.

The status to be accorded will be citizenship for those who are the offspring of intermarriages between local Zambians and Angolan refugees. The vast majority will be granted permanent residency permits under the country's Immigration Law, a status which will enable the holders of such permits to eventually qualify for citizenship of Zambia.

Requirements for the implementation of the pledge

For the pledge to be implemented in a manner that will not cause an imbalance in the socio-economic foundation of the local host communities, the Government of the Republic of Zambia will require from UNHCR and the international community, financial support for socio-economic projects to benefit both the local host Zambian communities and the locally integrated former refugees. The projects will be in the following sectors:

- Agriculture production and marketing;
- Upgrading of health facilities;



- Upgrading of education facilities;
- Upgrading of the road infrastructure;
- Upgrading of water and sanitation; and
- Upgrading capacity for generation and distribution of electricity.

3. Third Pledge:

The Government of the Republic of Zambia pledges to take all necessary measures to become party to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Requirements for the implementation of the pledge

To be able to implement this pledge, the Republic of Zambia will require support from UNHCR to conduct an independent study on the issue of statelessness in the country. The results of the study will help the state in action to become party to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness but, even more importantly, the results will help the state to develop a strategy to deal with statelessness in the country either for populations already affected or at risk of becoming stateless.



ZIMBABWE

PLEDGE FORM

The Government of Zimbabwe pledges, as an alternative to detention, to:

1. Work closely with developing partners such as UNHCR, IOM and other stakeholders to establish a reception centre at Nyamapanda Border Post which has become a popular entry point for asylum-seekers from the Horn of Africa, in particular Somalis fleeing from the humanitarian crisis in the country of origin, to reduce and avoid detention of asylum-seekers.
2. Establish an office of the Department of Social Services in particular the Refugee Services Unit at Nyamapanda Border post as it is the one with the mandate and expertise in dealing with refugee and asylum-seeker issues.
3. In collaboration with development partners and well-wishers, provide co-ordinated transport facility to the Tongogara Refugee Camp, the only refugee camp in Zimbabwe, so as to reduce the detention of asylum-seekers.
4. Carry out sensitization, information campaign meetings and training of border control officials on the treatment of asylum-seekers.

The Government of Zimbabwe pledges on determining refugee status

The Government of Zimbabwe reaffirms its commitment to fair and efficient refugee status determination through:

1. Collaboration with developing partners in the training of translators/interpreters, in particular Amharic-speaking personnel to assist asylum-seekers from the Horn of Africa;
2. Engagement of independent translators who are not refugees to avoid bias and prejudice;
3. To work with developing partners and stakeholders in training and capacity building skills on interviewing vulnerable groups, such as unaccompanied minors, the elderly and victims of post-traumatic stress disorder (P.T.S.D.);
4. Carrying out sensitization and campaign meetings on asylum-seeker rights, duties and obligations;
5. Providing training of trainers who would assist on asylum-seeker process and procedures;
6. Collaboration with developing partners with capacity training of Zimbabwe Refugee Committee (ZRC) members on dealing with vulnerable sensitive groups, such as victims of rape and sodomy.



Key statements





Opening Statement

by High Commissioner António Guterres

Distinguished Co-Chairs, Honourable Members of Government, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured and encouraged knowing we have 800 participants – representing some 145 governments and nearly 60 organizations – assembled here today to commemorate with us the anniversaries of the 1951 Refugee Convention, and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. This speaks to the importance which the protection of refugees and stateless persons holds for the international community, and is a signal of our shared desire to reaffirm and reinforce that protection.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dramatic events have forced hundreds of thousands of people to seek refuge across borders in 2011. More than three quarters of a million people became refugees, following upheaval and conflict in Africa and the Middle East. Global forced displacement figures already stood at a 15-year high at the end of 2010, with 43.7 million people uprooted by conflict and persecution worldwide. Recent events indicate that this number is likely to rise again by the end of the year.

These events have amply demonstrated why it is so important to do what we have gathered here to do: to reengage with and recommit to the core values underpinning the entire system of international protection – tolerance, solidarity and respect for human rights and human dignity.

Fortunately, 2011 has shown these values still hold a high place in today's world. Indeed, all countries neighbouring this year's crisis zones are to be commended for keeping their borders open to the massive numbers of people arriving to seek refuge from violence.

But I am aware that we live in difficult times. Political crises are multiplying where we least expect them. Unpredictability became the name of the game. At the same time, the global economic crisis, with high levels of unemployment, is creating widespread uncertainty and anxiety. Populist politicians and irresponsible elements of the media exploit feelings of fear and insecurity to scapegoat foreigners, try to force the adoption of restrictive policies, and actively spread racist and xenophobic sentiments.

Having been in government myself for many years, I know that no state can disregard the security of its citizens, their social and economic well-being and

the cohesion of society. States also have the right to define their own immigration policies; provided they do so in respect for human dignity and basic rights.

But all this can be done, and needs to be done, in ways that ensure protection is granted to those who need it. This means guaranteeing their access to territory, fair treatment of their asylum claims, and adequate integration policies that contribute to social harmony. Governments and mainstream social and political movements must also have the courage to take a strong stance against intolerance, discrimination, racism and xenophobia. Refugees are not a security threat, but the first victims of insecurity.

That is why I am so encouraged by the large number of states that have indicated they will make pledges to improve the protection of refugees and stateless persons, in this conference. I also hope that pledges will be made by groups of states and regional bodies, confirming the paramount role of international cooperation for the protection of those we serve.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sixty years ago, the 1951 Convention was drawn up just a few steps down the hall from here, while the world was still in shock at acts that outraged the conscience of humanity. Today, I see four main challenges to providing the kind of protection it aspired to afford those uprooted by violence and persecution.

First, although the Convention is today among the most widely accepted international human rights instruments, many refugees still do not enjoy the minimum standards it sets out. Many systems continue to be marred by poor quality decision-making, disproportionately low recognition rates or a lack of access to legal services. The routine use of accelerated procedures and rising rates of detention are equally worrying. Detention can have a drastic human impact, including on the physical and mental health of asylum-seekers, which in turn negatively affects their ability to integrate into host communities and societies. In many situations, refugees do also not have freedom of movement, access to social care or the permission to work.

Second, the burden of hosting large refugee populations is borne predominantly by developing countries. They have granted asylum to 80 per cent of the world's refugees, and more than one third of the 20 top refugee-hosting states are Least Developed Countries. As many of these states struggle to provide even basic services to their own populations, the generosity they show towards hundreds of thousands of refugees from neighbouring countries demands an effort that is disproportionate to the resources at their disposal.

Third, durable solutions seem to have become harder to attain than ever before. As new crises emerge, old conflicts linger, leaving millions without a solution for years or even for decades.

Voluntary repatriation has dropped dramatically, from an average of almost a million returnees annually in the past two decades, to around one-fifth that figure in the last two years. Resettlement opportunities also still fall far short of requirements, with spaces available for only ten per cent of the nearly 800,000 refugees needing resettlement worldwide today. The actual number of departures has now declined for the second year in a row.

As a result, more than two thirds of the refugees under UNHCR's mandate - over 7 million people - are now living in protracted situations of exile. And this is more than at any other time during the past decade.

And fourth, displacement continues to become more and more complex. The reasons forcing people to abandon their homes are not solely limited to those set out in the '51 Convention. In an increasingly imbalanced world, displacement is often compounded and reinforced by factors such as the effects of climate change, population growth, food insecurity and water scarcity.

A growing number of people are uprooted by natural disasters or lose their livelihoods to desertification, with climate change now found to be the key factor accelerating all other drivers of forced displacement. Most of the people affected will remain in their own countries. They will be internally displaced. But if they cross a border, they will not be considered refugees. Does it mean they chose to abandon their homes? No. These persons are not truly migrants, in the sense that they did not move voluntarily. As forcibly displaced not covered by the refugee protection regime, they find themselves in a legal void.

So while the nature of forced displacement is rapidly evolving, the responses available to the international community have not kept pace. This has created a number of serious protection gaps, particularly in the context of mixed movements, large-scale complex emergencies and environmentally-related displacement. Whilst some national and regional initiatives have sought to address such gaps, there is no coherent international framework for protecting the rights of persons who are displaced across borders owing to forces other than persecution, serious human rights violations and ongoing conflict.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our discussions during the next two days will allow us to not only focus on these challenges, but also on possible ways to address them. Let me elaborate on some of the avenues that could lead towards solutions.

Meeting the minimum standards set out by the 1951 Convention remains a challenge that is often portrayed as one primarily linked to resources. But in many cases, political will to improve the conditions of refugees is just as important as funding.

More states ought to follow the example of those who have already taken steps to improve their asylum systems. Several countries have engaged with UNHCR's Quality Initiatives for better decision-making in status determination. Others have expanded alternatives to detention, such as community-based supervision programmes, or committed to ending the detention of children. There is increasing evidence that, when given the right to engage in legal employment, refugees are not only empowered to become more self-reliant, but can also make significant contributions to the development of their host countries.

The international community has made great strides over recent years in understanding and addressing the asylum-migration nexus. Many states now appreciate the critical importance of including protection safeguards in their migration management policies, so that those who may be in need of international protection still have access to it, even if they arrive in the context of mixed flows.

Refugees, asylum-seekers, irregular migrants and other groups of people on the move often find themselves using the same routes and means of transport, and many of them are at risk of falling victim to the same human smugglers and traffickers. Especially when travelling by sea, they are exposed to enormous risks, and hundreds of them perish every year in the Gulf of Aden or the Mediterranean. Their fate illustrates the dramatic need for improved international mechanisms for rescue at sea. And the world must become more effective in cracking down on smugglers and traffickers, but also in protecting their victims.

As regards the second challenge, that of the disproportionate burden on developing countries hosting large numbers of refugees, the solution is, quite simply, more international solidarity. I will repeat here a call I have made earlier for a "new deal on burden-sharing". With the vast majority of refugees sheltered by countries neighbouring their own, international cooperation is key to ensuring they can be effectively protected.

This must include broadening development cooperation to target returnee and refugee-hosting areas, to ensure the sustainability of solutions. Making more resettlement places available is another vital form of burden-sharing. And ultimately, such measures could be complemented with mobility through managed migration policies.

Third, durable solutions must be given a higher priority on the international agenda. UNHCR's work cannot be about open-ended provision of assistance and protection, leaving refugees to languish in exile for decades. But solutions are never simply humanitarian. They require political will to prevent conflict, to resolve old crises, to enable the displaced to return, to accept more refugees for resettlement in third countries or to allow them to build a new life by locally integrating into the societies that have hosted them for many years.

UNHCR's mandate is non-political. We can only play a catalytic role to mobilize other actors. And I therefore hope that this meeting will be a landmark on the road to building such political will for solutions.

The fourth challenge I mentioned, that of finding responses to the growing complexity of displacement, is perhaps the one that requires the most creativity and foresight from all of us. We need “to deepen our understanding of evolving patterns of displacement and to agree upon ways to respond to the challenges we face in a changing global context.” The situation today is much more complex than 60 years ago, due to the many factors that combine to provoke, intensify and prolong displacement.

We should be asking ourselves what kind of new tools we, as the international community, need to respond to these new realities. I very much hope that our discussions here and beyond will allow states to come forward with innovative ideas and initiatives on addressing the protection gaps facing today's and tomorrow's forcibly displaced.

Several ideas have been put forward during this commemorations year, including at a series of expert meetings and roundtables. In Amman, participants devised elements of a framework for international cooperation and burden-sharing. At the Djibouti meeting, an operational template was developed for rescue-at-sea operations.

Other possible ways forward could be inspired by the methodology that led to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The Nansen Conference on climate change and displacement in Oslo proposed a set of principles to guide states in addressing the needs of those who cross borders owing to climate change and other environmental hazards. We are ready to work with interested states and other relevant actors to help develop such guiding frameworks.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Turning now to the problem of statelessness, I am particularly heartened with the impact that commemorations activities seem to have had so far on the thinking and practice of states.

An estimated 12 million people live without a nationality worldwide – a number comparable to that of refugees. Many of them are deprived of some of their most basic human rights: they cannot get married legally, go to public schools, enrol in universities, or get a job. They are unable to obtain drivers licenses, birth certificates for their children, or even death certificates when their loved ones pass away.

And despite the millions of persons affected by it, statelessness has long been neglected on the global agenda. But this now seems to be changing. Four

states – Croatia, Nigeria, Panama and the Philippines – have acceded in 2011 to one or both of the two statelessness conventions. Serbia and Turkmenistan will be depositing instruments of accession at the Special Treaty Event this evening. And I am pleased that many more states have indicated their intention to announce their accession during the next two days.

At the same time, several states are already amending their national legislation to prevent and reduce statelessness, for example by allowing both men and women to pass their nationality on to their children. Statelessness is now literally “on the map” everywhere, with no region untouched by progress.

UNHCR is particularly grateful to the many states who have become champions of statelessness, lending their support to our advocacy and allowing us to move forward in this area.

But together we must go beyond acknowledging the problems of stateless people. What they really need are solutions. Solutions that enable them to secure a nationality and enjoy the full rights of citizens.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the recent past, we have held fruitful and positive annual Dialogues with representatives of governments and civil society on asylum and migration, protracted refugee situations, urban refugees and protection gaps. They have shaped UNHCR policy and implementation, and rallied support around these issues by key international actors.

But we still have a long way to go. I will only give you one example, the one which is to me the most distressing and painful.

Over the last twelve months, UNHCR has organized seven regional dialogues with 1,000 refugee, displaced and stateless women from all over the world. You have just seen a film which is the product of that engagement. And the one problem that emerged from all of these discussions is the endemic nature of sexual violence that prevents women and girls and also boys and men from leading normal, productive lives. They are at risk of rape and sexual abuse at home, in public spaces, at work and at school. And perpetrators are rarely prosecuted and punished. Many women are forced into survival sex to provide for their families.

I would therefore like to express in this conference a pledge of my own. I will do everything possible to uphold and strengthen UNHCR's corporate commitment to address sexual and gender-based violence and to support states in ensuring access to justice by survivors. In 2012, we will use savings obtained as a result of our internal reform process to launch a series of special projects aiming at reinforcing our efforts to address the specific threats and vulner-

abilities faced by the women and girls of concern to UNHCR. If we cannot get protection right for them, we won't get it right for anyone.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The problems we are discussing here are of a quintessentially humanitarian nature. This meeting is not a forum for airing political differences or importing extrinsic agendas. Instead, this is a unique opportunity for us all to come together to discuss and shape the evolution of the international protection system over the next decade. The world needs positive messages, and it is our responsibility to give a word of hope to the people we care for, who lost theirs when they were forced to abandon their homes.

What I am asking of you here today is not a new convention, it is not an extended mandate for UNHCR. What I am asking is for all of us to assume our shared duty. To reaffirm and recommit to the values of international protection. To face the new challenges of forced displacement, and find concrete and constructive ways to address them collectively. To open up the way for innovative responses that will help protect people in need, benefit the social cohesion of societies and strengthen global peace and security.

Thank you very much.

Mr. António Guterres
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



Video Message

by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

Distinguished heads of State and government,
Esteemed ministers,
High Commissioner António Guterres,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Today we celebrate two treaties that have helped millions of people around the world.

People forced to flee disasters, war and persecution.

People struggling to survive and rescue their children.

People who crossed borders with nothing... except the dream of a safer future.

These life-saving treaties are based on a simple principle... which is as true today as ever:

- The principle that people should never be forced into harm's way.
- Today you have a chance to help us reduce statelessness... and assist refugees.
- Today you can pledge your support for UNHCR.

Your contributions will help people far from their home countries... struggling against injustice, marginalization and fear.

You can also pledge more than funds. You can commit your solidarity for all refugees in our world.

Earlier this year, I was in Oslo to celebrate the life of Fridtjof Nansen. He was the father of international refugee relief... the first High Commissioner for Refugees at the League of Nations.

Nansen once said that helping people return home is more important for peace than many political moves.

I have seen the truth of these words.

Help refugees. Contribute to peace.

Thank you.

Ban Ki-moon
United Nations Secretary-General

**Statement delivered**

by Ms. Micheline Calmy-Rey,
President of the Swiss Confederation

Mr. President,
Distinguished Ministers,
Mr. High Commissioner,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On 28 July 1951 in Geneva, the United Nations formally adopted the text of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The 26 states which participated in the negotiations on this occasion showed themselves to be both ambitious and far-sighted in their efforts to deal with a tragic problem — the flow of refugees resulting from the Second World War.

It is no coincidence that the final text of the Convention was drawn up in Geneva. In accordance with its humanitarian tradition, this city has on various occasions opened its doors to the victims of war and persecution. Throughout history, refugees, initially from Europe and then from the entire world, have found here a haven from which to begin life anew. With the aid of their own history, culture and experience, they have made major contributions to the social, economic, cultural, religious and scientific life of Geneva and of Switzerland as a whole.

In the present year which marks the 60th anniversary of the Convention, it would be regrettable to fail to be as far-sighted as our predecessors. Let us seize the occasion offered to us here today to reaffirm our commitment with regard to a phenomenon that is more relevant than ever. In recent years, as the High Commissioner has pointed out on several occasions, the number of conflicts, crises and disasters has indeed continued to increase. These new conflicts often exacerbate long-standing conflict situations rendering them, to all appearances, hopelessly unsolvable. Building on one another, such phenomena tend to increase the vulnerability of displaced persons who thus find themselves more than ever in need of protection at the national and international levels.

In this context, Switzerland would like to draw attention to one aspect in particular: external displacements resulting from natural disasters. Since this problem is little understood, Switzerland has commissioned a study, the findings of which are shortly to be published by the UNHCR. We feel that a coherent approach is required at the international level to address the needs of persons moving beyond national boundaries due to a sudden disaster. This approach would also have to take into consideration displacements linked to long-term phenomena, such as climate change. Switzerland together with

Norway is cooperating with other states and interested parties in trying to achieve a better understanding of such cross-border movements. The aim is to identify the best practices and develop a consensus on the best way to assist and protect those concerned. Indeed the challenges facing the international community have altered over the past 60 years, more rapidly sometimes than the international protection regime. This has opened up a gap between existing texts with their strict provisions, and the reality of present day needs. We must make it clear that we have understood the extent of the changes that have taken place in the recent decades by adapting the international protection regime in an appropriate manner.

Mr. President,

Whereas the number of persons registered as refugees has diminished over the past 10 years, this trend has now been reversed, possibly for the foreseeable future. In this context, Switzerland would like to salute the substantial commitment of many host states, including Parties and non-parties to the Convention, who have opened their borders to persons forced to flee their country of origin. In doing so, with the support of the UNHCR, its donors, and its partners, they have provided protection and assistance to several million persons.

The resettling of refugees as a long-term solution is another of the instruments of international protection, and one which Switzerland sees as having particular relevance. In accordance with its humanitarian tradition, Switzerland is committed to continuing to welcome groups of vulnerable refugees in partnership with the UNHCR. As a result of this collaboration with the High Commissioner, we shall soon be welcoming a new group of refugees. Moreover, a new consultation procedure and implementation of Switzerland's resettlement policy is now in preparation.

At this time of crisis in the financial, food, and environmental spheres, meeting refugees' needs will also require increasing the resources made available to the organisation, as has been made clear by the UNHCR's own global analysis. This means donors must increase the funds they provide. In this context, I am pleased to be able to announce that Switzerland has decided to increase its financial contribution to the UNHCR for the coming year.

Finally, refugee protection requires our constant support, and my country intends to continue supporting the Nansen Refugee Award, which is presented each year to a person or an organisation in recognition of exceptional services to the refugee cause.

Mr. President,

At the beginning of my statement I spoke of the ambition and far-sightedness of those who contributed to the adoption of the 1951 Convention on Refugees. In this rapidly changing world, we feel it is necessary to be just as ambi-

tious as our predecessors. Not only do we need to understand what is at stake with today's forced displacements, we also need to improve the implementation of the Convention and its principles. Let us work together in seeking a consensus, giving new life to the instruments of international protection.

Thank you for your attention.

Ms. Micheline Calmy-Rey
President of the Swiss Confederation



Statement delivered

by Former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking UNHCR and High Commissioner António Guterres for the opportunity to address this anniversary meeting commemorating the Refugee Convention.

I speak to you today with a very special frame of mind.

I too was a child affected by war. I too became a refugee in my own country. As a result of great power politics, the Soviet Union attacked Finland in November 1939. At the age of two, with my family, I had to flee my native town of Viipuri, together with hundreds of thousands of fellow Karelians. I became internally displaced, an expression not known at the time. Today I see myself as an eternally displaced person as I will never be able to move back home to Viipuri.

This childhood experience that millions of people have gone through has made me a strong believer in the right of every person to live in peace and dignity. In a world filled with conflicts forcing millions of people to flee, my childhood memories have given me a strong motivation to work for the resolution of conflicts.

The Refugee Convention and UNHCR were born in the aftermath of the Second World War. In Europe alone, millions were displaced, facing a bleak future. Borders have been redrawn, as had happened at Finland's eastern border. Large populations had been moved in what would today be called ethnic cleansing. Most of the refugees had no hope of returning to their homes; many, of course, did not want to. They had to be resettled. This was Europe just a good 60 years ago. The late Tony Judt gave a harrowing account of Europe's plight in his masterwork *Postwar*.

It is good for us all, but as Europeans in particular, to use this UNHCR anniversary to pause and think of what happened in this continent, and how long it has taken us to cope with the aftermath. It should make us all impatient and indignant about the persistent refugee situations UNHCR is dealing with today.

Let me express my profound appreciation and admiration of High Commissioner Guterres and his staff for their invaluable work. Since its creation, UNHCR has helped millions of people around the world. Today alone, there are 34 million persons of concern to the agency, nearly half of them internally displaced. One third are proper refugees, the rest stateless and asylum-seekers.

In the course of more than half a century, the refugee and statelessness conventions have given guidance to governments, international organisations and the civil society to protect the most vulnerable groups of people. The conventions are crucial instruments to safeguard the fundamental rights of refugees and provide standards for their treatment.

There are some 12 million people in the world today without nationality or citizenship. Statelessness is typically the result of protracted conflicts. Stateless people are particularly vulnerable to human rights abuses and marginalization.

The full implementation of these Conventions must remain a priority for the international community. UNHCR plays a unique role in monitoring the implementation of the Conventions.

To do this, we must address the root causes of refugee situations. While natural disasters and the extreme weather phenomena created by climate change account for increasing numbers of displacement, refugeeism is a man-made problem. As much as wars and conflicts are not inevitable, so is not displacement. Somewhere behind most refugee situations, economic and political interests play their role. Those in power can end the plight of refugees. It is a question of will.

All conflicts can be settled. There are no excuses for allowing them to be protracted for ever. It is intolerable that violent conflicts defy resolution for decades causing immeasurable human suffering. They prevent economic and social development. They exacerbate the misery of the most vulnerable of all victims, refugees and displaced people.

In war and conflict, the parties always aim at victory. Building peace must involve everybody: the weak the powerful, the victors and the vanquished, men and women, young and old, and those removed from their homes against their will. In particular, we must fully engage women in efforts to solve refugee situations in a sustainable manner.

We must share the shame and blame of refugees languishing in camps for decades. In some situations, sudden refugee flows may be nearly impossible to avert, but they must not be allowed to persist. We must redouble our efforts to find sustainable solutions to protracted refugee situations.

For good reason, UNHCR has won the Nobel Peace Prize twice: in 1954 and in 1981. It was first awarded for its ground-breaking work in helping the post-war refugees of Europe and in 1981 for what had become worldwide assistance to refugees.

Mr. Chairman,

Armed conflict has always been a major cause for displacement of people. The changing nature of armed conflict in the post-Cold War era has had a significant impact on displacement patterns.

Conflicts have increasingly assumed a domestic or intra-state character, and they increasingly affect civilians. Many conflicts are complex emergencies which lead to large-scale displacement. Internally displaced people have long since outnumbered proper refugees, i.e. those who have moved across international borders. Failed states are not effectively controlling their territory, which has given rise to a multitude of non-state actors, breeding violence and persecution. And finally, instability and armed conflict persist and resist efforts to solve them. Two thirds of refugees globally are in situations of prolonged exile.

With the risk of stating the obvious, it is good to remind ourselves that conflicts of all types force people to move, both as refugees across interstate borders and as internally displaced persons. If we want to seriously address refugee situations, we must be serious about solving and preventing conflicts.

The plight of refugees is enough of a reason to end conflicts and prevent new conflicts from breaking into the open. But we should go beyond seeing refugees as passive objects and victims – we should engage them in peacemaking. People who have to flee from zones of open conflict are usually the most knowledgeable about the root causes of the conflict.

Sustainable solutions to conflicts are not thinkable without the cooperation and engagement of the local populations. Refugees, firstly, can actively and in numerous ways contribute to peace processes, if invited to do so. Second, the right of refugees to return to their homes is always a key element of any successful peace process.

And third, refugees can be important players in transitional networks that bring about trust and confidence and enhance stability.

Why not, then, make refugees part of the solution instead of always thinking of them as part of the problem? Refugees and IDPs should not be marginalized and sidelined. On the contrary, they should be empowered to become agents of change for the positive. They should become peacemakers in their own right.

Offering displaced people the possibility of returning to their homes and of reintegrating into their communities gives them hope and encouragement. Returning refugees and internally displaced persons can help addressing the root causes of conflict. They can be recruited to support the peace process in concrete ways. And, last but not least, they can revitalize economic activity.

Refugees can be a positive force in peace-building, provided that they have been trained to assume important skills and self-reliance while in exile. Their skills, if properly planned, can fill specific gaps in basic services in their own countries. This could mean health and social services and education.

Sustainable solutions to refugee situations and conflicts are not possible without empowerment, ownership and gradually enhanced structures of democracy and good governance. Refugees can participate in peace negotiations, electoral processes and peace-building. More complex issues, too, can benefit from a contribution by displaced people. This could include land and property, shelter, basic services, rule of law, and reconciliation.

We know, however, that refugees may also complicate peace-building efforts. Large-scale repatriation of refugees at an early stage in a peace process may put fragile institutions and services under a heavy stress. Occasionally, almost inevitably, there are “spoilers” amongst refugees, people who want deliberately hamper efforts for peace and a return to normalcy.

We also know that among refugees in exile there is potential for politicization and extremism of various kinds.

At a minimum, peace agreements should always contain provisions concerning displaced populations. These provisions should enumerate the specific rights and obligations of refugees, on the one hand, and of IDPs, on the other. Resettlement is a crucial element in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

Almost all refugee situations are caused by humans. They can and must be solved by humans – by us, by our leaders, by the international community. We should not accept any excuses from those in power. Especially in the aftermath of the Arab Spring the responsibility of the international community to solve the refugee situation should be expanded. We have simply no other choice. The neighbouring countries cannot bear the responsibility alone.

Let us recommit ourselves to seeking lasting solutions to conflicts. Let us see refugees as part of the solution, not part of the problem. Let us involve refugees in peace processes. Peace is always possible, as is the restoration of human dignity to those who have been robbed of it. This is a question of will. When we work together, we will find solutions.

Thank you.

Martti Ahtisaari
Former Finnish President

**Statement delivered**

by U.S. Secretary of State
Hillary Rodham Clinton

Thank you, Mr. High Commissioner.

I am honored to join you for the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 50th anniversary of the Statelessness Convention.

It is a pleasure to stand with all the ministers and other senior government officials to reaffirm our commitment to the principles of the two conventions, and to deliver our pledges to provide protection and assistance for refugees and stateless persons.

Before I continue, I would like to congratulate UNHCR on its own anniversary last year, celebrating more than 60 years of service. UNHCR, its staff and its humanitarian partners help more than 34 million refugees and persons of concern around the world. I know how often their work can be dangerous, as we saw this past October with the tragic shooting deaths of three UNHCR local staff members in Kandahar. We share your sorrow and we honor their sacrifices.

The United States is a nation of immigrants. We are proud to have welcomed to our shores more refugees than any other nation in the world. This year alone, we welcomed more than 56,000 refugees from more than 60 countries. We are equally proud to be UNHCR's largest financial donor. And we look forward to continuing our work together.

The conventions we celebrate today laid a marker for human compassion on a global scale. They enshrined and guaranteed the rights of refugees and stateless persons, and created a system for protecting refugees and other vulnerable persons and responding to crises. That system endures today. Its value can be measured in the generations of people around the world who have found new lives and futures thanks to resettlement, local integration, and voluntary repatriation.

As we look back at our accomplishments, we must also recognize the work we have left to do. Since the refugee convention was adopted in 1951, the scale of the challenge has expanded in ways no one could have foreseen.

During those 60 years, tens of millions of desperate people have fled conflicts and crises in a steady flow, from Indochina in the 1970s to the Balkans in the 1990s to the Horn of Africa right now. As their numbers have grown, and populations have become increasingly mobile, refugees have become a fluid but permanent presence.

Millions of people continue to be uprooted by wars or victims of persecution because of race, tribe, religion, political opinion or sexual identity. Many are internally displaced persons, disempowered within their countries, in places such as Burma, Syria, and Nepal.

We — the governments, multilateral institutions and other global partners gathered here — have come to realize that this challenge demands us to respond. We must create effective, forward-looking policies, rather than purely reactive responses.

That means, in some cases, training immigration judges or border guards on how to treat asylum-seekers with efficiency and compassion, or making counseling services available to refugees who are also victims of gender-based violence. It means providing civic education to young people so they might learn democratic practices, and helping to better protect girls, women, and children, who are particularly vulnerable to violence, sexual exploitation and other abuse during times of crisis and upheaval.

The needs of refugees don't respect our bureaucratic divisions, so all these efforts have to be coordinated across the entire government: justice and health, foreign affairs and national security. Each can bring unique perspectives and capabilities. And the nature of the problem also demands breaking down barriers among governments-sharing best practices and creating partnerships to deal with shared regional challenges.

Though the challenges are significant, the benefits of solving them are clear, and extend beyond resolving the crisis of the moment. We won't only help people return home in safety and with dignity and begin new lives in resettlement countries. With the right support, refugees can strengthen the communities and societies they join. That improves stability and security which benefits all of us.

That's why protecting and assisting refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons, and other vulnerable populations, is among my government's highest humanitarian priorities.

Today, 12 million people on this planet wake up every morning stateless, belonging to no country at all. Most of them are in developing countries without sufficient resources. And more than 40 million people are displaced around the world. The pledges we are all making today will be an important step in helping them build a better future.

Later, Acting Assistant Secretary Robinson from the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration will speak in some detail about the 28 pledges the United States is delivering. I would like to briefly mention one that is a particular priority for the United States, and for me personally.

It concerns one of the major causes of statelessness, which is discrimination against women.

At least 30 countries around the world prevent women from acquiring, retaining, or transmitting citizenship to their children or their foreign spouses. And in some cases, nationality laws strip women of their citizenship if they marry someone from another country.

Because of these discriminatory laws, women often can't register their marriages, the births of their children, or deaths in their family. These laws perpetuate generations of stateless people who are often unable to work legally or travel freely. They cannot vote, open a bank account, or own property. They often lack access to health care and other public services. And without birth registration or citizenship documents, stateless children often cannot attend school.

In this compromised state, women and children are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, including gender-based violence, trafficking in persons, and arbitrary arrest and detention. And that hurts whole societies because when women are given the opportunity to participate equally, they contribute to their countries' democratic governance, peace and stability, and economic development.

The United States has launched an initiative to build global awareness about these issues, and to support efforts to end or amend those discriminatory laws. We will work to persuade government officials and members of parliaments to change nationality laws that discriminate against women, to ensure universal birth registration, and to establish procedures and systems to facilitate the acquisition of citizenship for stateless persons.

I encourage other member states to join this effort. I am pleased that High Commissioner Guterres has signaled his support. And I encourage UNHCR to work with UN Women, UNICEF, UNDP, and other UN partners to achieve equal nationality rights for women.

There is so much more that governments can do, and ideas we haven't yet thought of that can help these and other vulnerable groups. That is where we call upon your creative solutions, your engagement, your imagination. What new strategies can we adopt to better serve the refugees who come to our borders, or empower the stateless people within them? What has never been tried before? How can we expand our efforts and broaden our scope?

With us here today is Fatuma Elmi, whose life during the past 20 years is clear evidence of the wisdom of investing in women. When civil war broke out in her native Somalia, she applied for asylum successfully in the United States.

She settled in Minneapolis with her daughter, and worked as a volunteer helping other refugee mothers and daughters adapt to life in the USA. A few years later, she joined the Lutheran Social Services agency where, for the past 15 years, she has helped new refugees find employment and build their own futures.

Her story is just one of millions I could share, stories of refugees who have found a new home and forged a better life, and given back to the communities they have joined. You can help write many more stories like that. And you can do it by making pledges that make a real difference to the Somali family stuck in a refugee camp in Kenya, or the Afghan girl who wonders when her family will be able to return home after three decades of war.

We welcome your commitments. And we urge you to turn your pledges into action. So do millions of men, women and children.

We look forward to many more years of partnership on behalf of refugees around the world.

Thank you.

Hillary Rodham Clinton
US Secretary



Statement delivered

by Kenyan Minister of State
Hon. Gerald Otieno Kajwan'g,

The Chair, The Secretary of State,
The High Commissioner for Refugee,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

I am sure each one of us feels gratified, as I do, on the occasion of the celebration of these two momentous anniversaries – the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 50th anniversary of 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Mr. Chairman,

The 1951 Refugee Convention urges for an international response to a human tragedy. That people forced out of their homes and habitats by war or other conflicts can seek and obtain protection and care across borders.

The 1951 Refugee Convention provides a framework for how to respond to refugee emergencies and other protracted crises. We are gathered here together to show our commitment to the letter and spirit of the Refugee Convention and to find ways and means of dealing with this human catastrophe that affects people in the millions every year.

Mr. Chairman,

Today, it is a shame that, with all this progress that the world has made in science and technology, we can still be confronted with new forms of forced displacement, especially arising from human conflicts whose real causes are primitive to say the least.

Massive displacements continue, conflicts multiply as old conflicts remain unresolved. It is estimated that 44 million people are currently uprooted as a result of conflicts. At the end of 2010, an estimated 7.2 million refugees were stuck in protracted refugee situation in 24 countries across the world.

In my own country, Kenya, we have been host to many refugees fleeing conflict from our neighboring countries. The most protracted refugee situation has arisen from a cyclic assault on the Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia by competing bands of armed forces for decades now.

These competing forces known variously as Islamic Courts, Al-Shabab or pockets of Al-Qaeda, have caused distraction to the Somalia state and sent hundreds of thousands of people, especially women and children fleeing Somalia, to the neighboring countries of Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Yemen.

Kenya alone hosts over 600,000 people (twice the population of Geneva city) in camps in different parts of the county and in our cities.

Kenya is overwhelmed by this huge human translocation with its attendant monetary cost and security challenges. It is estimated that Kenya spends an average of USD 10 million per month of tax payers' money to meet these challenges.

The Al-Shabab militia which operates under the auspices of the Al-Qaeda terrorist networks has become extremely adventurous and for a long time now:

1. Planned and executed attacks on targets within the regions, including suicide bombing in Uganda and Kenya.
2. Made numerous cross-border incursions particularly in the north eastern region of Kenya that borders Somalia.
3. Laid land mines and improvised explosive devices targeting Kenya security personnel, equipment and installations at border towns.
4. Abducted foreign tourists, relief agency workers and our own armed personnel.
5. Increased the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, contributing to aggravated crimes in the region.
6. Participated in large-scale piracy activity in the Horn of Africa and Indian Ocean coastline, disrupting trade and increasing cost of doing business.
7. Injured our tourism industry which is the mainstay of our economy after agriculture.

These terrorist attacks on Kenya and its neighbors have forced Kenya to reluctantly join forces with the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Somalia to pursue and neutralize the Al-Shabab bases inside Somalia and restore peace and a semblance of governance in the troubled country. The campaign is ongoing and we, as a region, are determined to bring this mess to an end.

However, we as Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) comprising Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Burundi, Sudan, Djibouti, etc. – the frontline states and the entire African Union – have resolved to confront this enemy head on and restore civilization in the republic of Somalia.

We appeal to the international community to politically and materially support our just cause. It is a conflict that has been thrust upon us that require enormous resources, energy and resolve to deal with it comprehensively. We have the resolve and the human resources but we need hardware, technical and logistical support to complete the job.

The refugee problem will not be solved by humanitarian assistance alone. We must decisively intervene in Somalia by helping the TFG to govern itself. This

will effectively stem the outflow of refugees that continue to crowd camps in the neighboring.

In the meantime we insist that the host countries (that host large number of refugees) are entitled to burden sharing by the international community.

We need budget support to deal with the financing gaps that are occasioned by the drain on our respective treasuries to support the refugee crises.

We need to assist the host community who bear the greatest burden of the influx by supporting development projects in water, health and environment, to avoid conflict between the host communities and refugees. Conflicts often arise from competition for water pasture and source of energy.

Mr. Chairman, in closing let me put emphasis on the following themes:

Firstly, it is imperative that we harness the political goodwill of the host countries through international solidarity and burden sharing in confronting the refugee crises.

Secondly, we urge that material support be extended to the frontline state of the conflict zones to enhance their own capacity in to face attacks by insurgents.

Thirdly, we must decisively deal with conflict that generate an endless exodus of asylum-seekers worldwide and provide durable solution to the protracted refugee situation.

One refugee without hope is too many.

I thank you

Hon. Gerald Otieno Kajwan'g
Minister of State, Kenya

Closing Statement

by High Commissioner António Guterres

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to begin by thanking the three co-chairs of this meeting, Sweden, Egypt and Australia. Their leadership of the work in plenary was exemplary, as was the way they conducted the intergovernmental process that led to today's approval of the Ministerial Communiqué. This is especially important as this event was open to all UN member states and not only members of UNHCR's Executive Committee. With participants from 155 countries, including 72 delegations at the ministerial level, this was the largest meeting ever dedicated to the protection of refugees and stateless persons.

The distinguished Ambassadors in Geneva of Sweden, Egypt and Australia have been uniquely competent and effective in preparing for this conference, and we owe them our deep gratitude. I also want to extend this gratitude to Ministers Tobias Billström of Sweden and Chris Bowen of Australia who have co-chaired our sessions together with Ambassador Badr of Egypt. Finally, let me express my appreciation to the staff of the Palais des Nations, especially the interpreters, and to all the UNHCR staff who were involved in this process.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This meeting has been a remarkable one. At a time when we are witnessing an enormous increase in the number of people displaced by conflict, natural disasters and other environmental hazards; at a time when the world is in an extremely difficult financial and economic situation; at a time when in several parts of the world we have seen expressions of anxiety, insecurity and even xenophobia – at such a time it is remarkable that we were able to come together to give the world a positive message, reaffirming and strengthening our commitment to the protection of refugees and stateless people in today's world.

First of all, the pledges presented by the delegations in this plenary were extraordinary. They covered a range of aspects related to the improvement of protection, assistance and solutions for refugees. For example, 19 States, particularly in Africa, committed themselves to facilitate local integration for refugees. Another 18 States pledged to improve access to resettlement, including through making additional places available. Commitments were also made on international solidarity and burden-sharing, recognizing the enormous effort host countries make in providing protection to large numbers of refugees. At the same time States signalled their readiness to engage in a timely debate about the new challenges of forced displacement. Four countries pledged to move this debate forward with us and to explore initiatives at regional and sub-

regional levels to assess the protection gaps created by new forms of forced displacement, especially environmentally-related cross-border displacement.

Let me repeat that UNHCR is not seeking an extended mandate in this area, but it is encouraging that States now recognize the need for the international community to come together and find solutions to fill these protection gaps.

But where I believe there was a real breakthrough, a quantum leap, was in relation to the protection of stateless people. Statelessness is one of the most neglected areas of the global human rights agenda. To be honest, it has also been a kind of step-child of UNHCR's mandate. The number of countries that had ratified the statelessness conventions prior to 2011 was minimal compared to the number of States Parties to the 1951 Convention and its protocol. Thanks to the commemorations process, and with Benin signing today, seven countries have already ratified one or both of the conventions on statelessness. In addition, we have heard some 26 States make commitments in relation to the ratification of these conventions during the plenary session. This is a gigantic step forward.

And not only that – 32 States made other pledges in order to improve the protection of stateless people. I think that now we have a duty to take advantage of this momentum and to make preventing and reducing statelessness a major global priority in the coming period.

UNHCR will be reporting to the June 2012 Standing Committee on progress made in relation the pledges made during this conference. Pledges can still be sent to UNHCR until the end of January, allowing for full publication of all the commitments made by member states in this process.

At the same time, we will actively engage with all member states in order to support them in granting to refugees and stateless people better protection and finding solutions to their plight.

For those of us who work in UNHCR, who have devoted our lives to what I consider to be one of the most noble causes of mankind, for us to be part of this process and feel the commitment of member states and other international organisations is the best energy possible to mobilize our own capacities and our own engagement. Thank you very much to all the delegations for the extraordinary example of solidarity that was shown in this meeting which had one single objective – to support the people we all care for.

Mr. António Guterres
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees





Expressions of
support

BRASILIA DECLARATION

ON THE PROTECTION OF REFUGEES AND STATELESS PERSONS IN THE AMERICAS

(Brasilia, 11 November 2010)

The Governments of the participating countries from the Americas: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Gathered in the city of Brasilia to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the sixtieth anniversary of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the fiftieth anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness;

Highlighting the contribution of the Americas to strengthen the protection of victims of forced displacement and stateless persons through the adoption of multilateral treaties on asylum, statelessness and human rights;

Recognizing UNHCR's work to promote international refugee law and guidelines on forced displacement and statelessness, as well as its supervisory responsibility in the field of refugees and stateless persons;

Acknowledging the progress achieved in caring for and protecting refugees and internally displaced persons, since the adoption of the Cartagena Declaration of 1984 and the Mexico Declaration and Plan of Action to Strengthen the International Protection of Refugees in Latin America of 2004, and addressing the new challenges presented by mixed migratory movements in various regions of the continent, as well as acknowledging the need to revitalize the search for durable solutions with the active participation of these populations, taking into account UNHCR's new policy on refugees in urban areas;

Reiterating the right of every person to seek and be granted asylum and the importance of the right to a nationality, enshrined in the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man of 1948 and the American Convention of Human Rights of 1969;

Reiterating our unrestricted respect for the principle of *non-refoulement*, including non-rejection at the border and indirect *non-refoulement*, as well as

for the non-penalization of illegal entry, and non-discrimination, as the fundamental principles of international refugee law;

Recognizing with satisfaction that the existing domestic legislation on refugees and internally displaced persons of the countries on the continent has incorporated gender, age and diversity considerations to respond to the differentiated care and protection needs of men and women, girls and boys, the elderly, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants;

Highlighting the broader scope of the protection accorded by the regional refugee definition, which has been reflected in the domestic legislation of some countries in the region;

Acknowledging the efforts that countries of origin have been making, with support from the international community, to deal with the circumstances that generate movements of people seeking international protection as refugees, and the importance of continuing those efforts;

Underlining the efforts made by receiving countries in the region, even under difficult socio-economic circumstances and faithful to their generous asylum tradition, to continue providing protection to asylum-seekers and refugees;

Underscoring the fundamental contribution made by States, with the support of UNHCR, the donor community, national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights and civil society organizations, among others, to care for, protect and seek durable solutions for refugees, stateless persons and internally displaced persons;

Reiterating the importance of continuing to make progress in the search for and implementation of durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons, through renewed commitment to international cooperation as well as to responsibility sharing in relation to refugees;

Underlining the creative and innovative character of the regional Solidarity Resettlement Programme, implemented by Argentina, Brazil and Chile, joined by Uruguay and Paraguay, as well as the need to consolidate this with the technical and financial support of the international community;

Taking into account the growth and complexity of mixed migratory movements, especially from outside the continent, fostered by transnational networks engaged in smuggling and trafficking in persons;

Taking note of “UNHCR’s Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration: A 10-Point Plan of Action”, and the recommendations and conclusions of the “Regional Conference on Refugee Protection and International Migration in the Americas: Protection Considerations in the Context of Mixed Migration”, held in San

Jose, Costa Rica, in November 2009, and the importance of acknowledging the different profiles of persons within migratory movements so as to respond to the specific, differentiated protection needs of refugees, victims of trafficking, unaccompanied/separated children and migrants who have been subjected to violence;

Underscoring the importance of State-led regional consultative migration fora as they contribute to the development of safeguards for the care and protection of refugees, victims of trafficking, unaccompanied/separated children and vulnerable migrants;

RESOLVES:

1. *To revitalize* implementation of the “Borders of Solidarity”, “Solidarity Cities” and “Solidarity Resettlement” programmes of the 2004 Mexico Plan of Action to Strengthen the International Protection of Refugees in Latin America, with the support of the international community, as necessary.
2. *To promote* the exchange of good practices and lessons learned throughout the region within the framework of the Mexico Declaration and Plan of Action which could be useful for the care and protection of refugees and internally displaced persons and the search for durable solutions.
3. *To recommend* applying the Mexico Plan of Action as the regional framework to address new challenges related to the identification and the protection of refugees in the context of mixed migratory movements.
4. *To recognize* the importance of achieving durable solutions for refugees and, in particular, the need to address the fundamental root causes of refugee displacement, in order to avoid new refugee flows.
5. *To promote* accession in the hemisphere to the international instruments for the protection of refugees and, in this regard, to call on States that have not yet done so to consider speedy accession to these instruments.
6. *To consider* the possibility of adopting appropriate national protection mechanisms to address new situations not foreseen by the international instruments for the protection of refugees, giving due consideration to the protection needs of migrants and victims of trafficking, including whether they are in need of international protection as refugees.
7. *To urge* countries in the Americas to consider acceding to the international instruments on statelessness, reviewing their national legislation to

prevent and reduce situations of statelessness, and strengthening national mechanisms for comprehensive birth registration.

8. *To promote* the values of solidarity, respect, tolerance and multiculturalism, underscoring the non-political and humanitarian nature of the protection of refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons, and recognizing their rights and obligations as well as their positive contributions to society.
9. *To recognize* the importance of greater opportunities for regular migration and policies that respect the human rights of migrants, regardless of their migration status, for preserving the space for refugee protection.
10. *To promote* assessment of the protection needs of separated or unaccompanied children, including their need for international protection as refugees, and the establishment of national mechanisms for the determination of the best interests of the child.
11. *To thank* the Government and the people of Brazil for their initiative to hold this meeting and their generous hospitality and solidarity.
12. *To approve* the present Declaration as the “Brasilia Declaration” and disseminate its contents as a contribution of the region to the commemorations organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION STATEMENT

ON PARLIAMENTARY ACTION IN SUPPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR) AND REFUGEE PROTECTION

(Panama, 20 April 2011)

IPU Governing Council at its 188th session

We, parliamentarians, meeting in Panama on the occasion of the 124th IPU Assembly, take this opportunity to renew our commitment to extend support for the protection of those who have been forcibly displaced or are stateless and for UNHCR, the principal humanitarian agency of the United Nations system dedicated to their protection.

There are today some 43 million forcibly displaced people around the globe of whom 15 million are refugees. There are 12 million stateless people. Global trends such as environmental degradation and climate change, combined with mega-trends such as urbanization, pose challenges for both UNHCR and States and may call for new approaches to providing protection and assistance to those who are forcibly displaced.

The problem of statelessness has grown over the past decade owing to issues linked to the dissolution of states, the operation of conflicting nationality laws and implementation of legislation which discriminates against women in the passage of nationality. Statelessness prevents individuals from travelling abroad, enrolling children in school, having access to employment and educational opportunities and keeps all too many lives in limbo.

We recall debates and resolutions that we have adopted at IPU Conferences in recent years on the subject of refugees and internally displaced persons. We commend the IPU and the UNHCR for their work to sensitize parliaments to the problem of forced displacement and the ways in which parliamentarians can assist in finding solutions to the plight of forcibly displaced and stateless people.

We are particularly pleased with the handbooks for parliamentarians they have produced together on Refugee protection: A guide to international refugee law and Nationality and Statelessness, which have been translated into 36 and 29 language versions, respectively. We invite them to update the Handbook for parliamentarians on Refugee protection: A guide to international

refugee law to reflect contemporary challenges and developments over the past decade.

We recognize that more needs to be done to address the plight of refugees, returnees, internally displaced persons and stateless people. We pledge to do our part, as members of parliament.

In particular, we reaffirm that the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol are the core international refugee law instruments and that they remain crucial for the protection of refugees. We therefore pledge to strengthen the implementation of these instruments and to consider developing flexible tools and approaches to deal with contemporary protection challenges that do not fit comfortably within the 1951 Convention framework.

Similarly, we reaffirm that the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons are the principal international instruments for addressing statelessness. We encourage all States that have not yet done so to accede to or ratify these instruments and lift any reservations lodged at the time of accession. We greatly welcome the efforts of UNHCR and propose to work with it in seeking to enact the necessary legal framework and introduce safeguards to avoid situations of statelessness, including through ensuring that every child acquires a nationality at birth and promoting gender equality to enable women to confer nationality on their children.

We propose to mark the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and 50th anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness in an appropriate manner in our parliaments.

We applaud the adoption in October 2009 of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. We encourage States in Africa to sign and ratify the Kampala Convention and parliaments to adopt implementing legislation. We encourage States in other regions of the world to consider an analogous approach to improve the provision of protection and assistance for the world's some 26 million internally displaced persons.

We welcome the 60th anniversary of UNHCR and recognize its pivotal role in providing international protection and assistance to refugees, returnees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons.

Finally, we pledge to review the implementation of these conventions in our countries and to report back to the IPU on the results thereof. Specifically, we wish to see progress in the area of accessions to the principal refugee

and statelessness conventions, introduction of legislative safeguards for the prevention and reduction of statelessness, and new approaches to deal with those displaced within or across national boundaries owing to environmental factors and natural disasters linked to climate change.

ZAGREB DECLARATION

(Zagreb, 27 October 2011)

We, the participants of the Conference on the Provision of Civil Documentation and Registration in South Eastern Europe (Zagreb, 26-27 October 2011) taking into account fundamental human rights obligations and relevant international instruments on statelessness, as well as aspirations towards European integration, propose and recommend to consider the following principles:

I. At the local level

1. Remove all obstacles to the documentation and registration needs, particularly of vulnerable persons. This may include legal reforms, adequate residency and documentation requirements, the waiving of fees, facilitated birth and subsequent registration and the issuance of identity cards.
2. Establish a national coordination mechanism (e.g., MoU) amongst the various stakeholders for which a focal point should be designated.
3. Strengthen relevant municipal services, in particular that of civil registration and social welfare centers, to identify and address registration and documentation issues.
4. Carry out concrete efforts to identify and assist all persons at risk of statelessness, especially those who need to be registered and who lack documentation.
5. Conduct activities in coordination with civil society and use mobile teams for outreach and registration.
6. Develop awareness campaigns to sensitize on the need to be registered at birth and explaining the procedures.
7. Actively involve Roma and other minority groups throughout the entire process.
8. Promote universal birth registration, in specific cases by simplifying evidentiary requirements in administrative and judicial procedures necessary to complete registration.

II. At regional level

Enhance cooperation at the regional level. To this end, examine the role, structure and methods of the Sarajevo Process Working Group on Civil Documentation in order to further a regional initiative to:

1. Identify and address the regional aspects of the provision of civil documentation, registration and the risk of statelessness and develop benchmarks to assess progress.
2. Conduct awareness raising activities amongst potential target groups and stakeholders.
3. Ensure cooperation and exchange of information among stakeholders including responsible authorities and civil society representatives.
4. Establish adequate, accelerated and facilitated procedures to assist civil documentation and registration.
5. Encourage the reciprocal recognition of documents.
6. Further develop co-operation with relevant institutions outside the region to overcome issues related to identification and documentation of persons originating from the region.
7. Follow up during the March 2012 meeting of the Roma Decade in Skopje.

EUROPEAN UNION DECLARATION

ON THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1951 CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES

(Luxembourg, 27 and 28 October 2011)

3121st Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting

The Council adopted the following declaration:

In order to mark the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the European Union, founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality, solidarity and fundamental rights, reaffirms its commitment to this unique instrument as the foundation of the international regime for the protection of refugees.

The European Union recalls its commitment to the development of a common policy on asylum based on the full and inclusive application of the 1951 Convention, and reaffirms its attachment to the absolute respect of the right to asylum, as recognised in particular in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

The European Union underlines the progress it has achieved in this respect in the last ten years: the completion of the first phase of the creation of a Common European Asylum System, the establishment of the European Refugee Fund and of the European Asylum Support Office, enhanced practical cooperation, reinforcement of the rule of law guided by the case-law of European courts competent in the area of asylum. The European Union reiterates its commitment to further developing the Common European Asylum System based on high protection standards combined with fair and effective procedures.

In further developing the external dimension of the Common European Asylum System, the European Union remains committed to expressing solidarity with third countries, inter alia through voluntary resettlement programmes, whilst continuing its efforts to promote and help building capacity in close cooperation with the UNHCR and other international actors to handle protracted refugee situations in these countries.

The European Union calls on all States that have not yet done so to accede to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol, and calls on those States which have

made geographical limitations and others reservations to reconsider these, so as to ensure universal application of its provisions. In this respect, the European Union recalls the Stockholm Programme of 1 December 2009 which states that, subject to a report of the Commission on the legal and practical consequences, the European Union should seek accession to the Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol.

The European Union recognises the unique mandate of UNHCR and the importance of its efforts to protect and promote durable solutions for refugees and other people in need of international protection who are of its concern. It notes the significant importance for Contracting States to cooperate with UNHCR in order to facilitate its duty of supervising the application of the provisions of the 1951 Convention and coordinating international responses to protect refugees and handle protracted refugee situations. The European Union stands ready to continue its work in close partnership with UNHCR in order to ensure effective international protection and assistance. In this respect, the European Union acknowledges the important role of UNHCR in the provision of humanitarian assistance to refugees.

In this anniversary year, the European Union reaffirms its strong commitment to assist and protect, in accordance with international obligations, all those men, women and children, who are compelled against their will to leave their homes and their countries in order to escape fear of persecution.

BELGRADE JOINT DECLARATION

ON ENDING DISPLACEMENT AND ENSURING DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR VULNERABLE REFUGEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

(Belgrade, 7 November 2011)

1. We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia declare our conviction that achieving just, comprehensive and durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons in the region will contribute in a crucial manner to deepen our good-neighbourly relations and stability in the region. We recognize that the successful resolution of these issues is vital to the further enhancement of positive and productive relations among our countries and citizens and the underpinning of our respective bids to join the European Union.
2. We recall the principles established in the Sarajevo Declaration of 31 January 2005 and elaborated in the Belgrade Joint Communique of 25 March 2010, in particular full respect for the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons and the mutual obligation to closely co-operate and synchronise our activities in order to ensure durable solutions for them, either through voluntary return and reintegration or local integration.
3. We met today in Belgrade, to review the significant progress achieved with regard to assuring durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons remaining from the 1991-1995 displacement in the region, including IDP's in Montenegro from 1999, and to identify the final scope of needs as well as to reaffirm our commitment to overcoming remaining obstacles for those still in need of durable solutions.
4. Taking into account relevant legislation, strategies, programmes and action plans of each country, as well as international norms and standards, we recommit our Governments to co-operate in a spirit of good faith to protect and promote the rights of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons, including existing individual rights, and to provide all necessary political, material, legal, social and other support required to end their displacement and enable them to live as equal citizens in our countries, free from any form of discrimination.
5. To this end, our Governments have developed a regional working plan outlining the actions we are taking to remove the obstacles and to achieve durable solutions. Further, our Governments have agreed upon a Joint Region-

al Multi-Year Program to secure durable solutions for the most vulnerable refugees and internally displaced persons. The Joint Regional Multi-Year Program is an integral part of this Joint Declaration, and the Program will be presented at a Donor Conference in early 2012, for support. We agree that at the Donor Conference the remaining needs will be presented and pursued individually in parallel by each government, according to need, with the aim to bring this protracted 1991-1995 displacement to an end in a dignified, sustainable and lasting manner.

6. With this, we are also pleased to state that outstanding issues related to the regional aspects of 1991-1995 displacement have been solved between our countries such as:
 - Ensuring that all refugees accommodated in collective centres will be provided with an adequate housing solutions;
 - Establishing a regional framework for addressing the housing needs of vulnerable persons, including vulnerable ex-Occupancy/Tenancy Rights holders, and taking into account concrete national programmes;
 - Ensuring that facilitated and accelerated procedures are in place to provide guarantees to civil documentation for all refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons, to enable them to fully and effectively enjoy their rights and achieve durable solutions; this entails that genuine documents already in their possession shall be given particular attention in these procedures;
 - Guaranteeing a free and informed choice of durable solutions for the refugees and internally displaced persons;
 - Managing donated funds through a Trust Fund Mechanism to ensure that donated funds will benefit the agreed upon priority population in the region;
 - Ensuring continued regional data exchange to avoid multiplication of assistance and to ensure that no one be excluded.
7. We hereby express our deep appreciation for the active role of the international community over the past years, particularly for its persistent efforts and support in seeking permanent solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons in the region. We welcome the Donor Conference as the international community's final collective effort to close the chapter of the refugee population from 1991-1995 in the region.
8. The Regional Program provides for durable solutions to outstanding issues on the regional aspects of displacement. We remain committed to pursuing efforts at the respective national levels with the view to reach the final resolution of the refugee situations.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT STATEMENT (EXCERPTS)

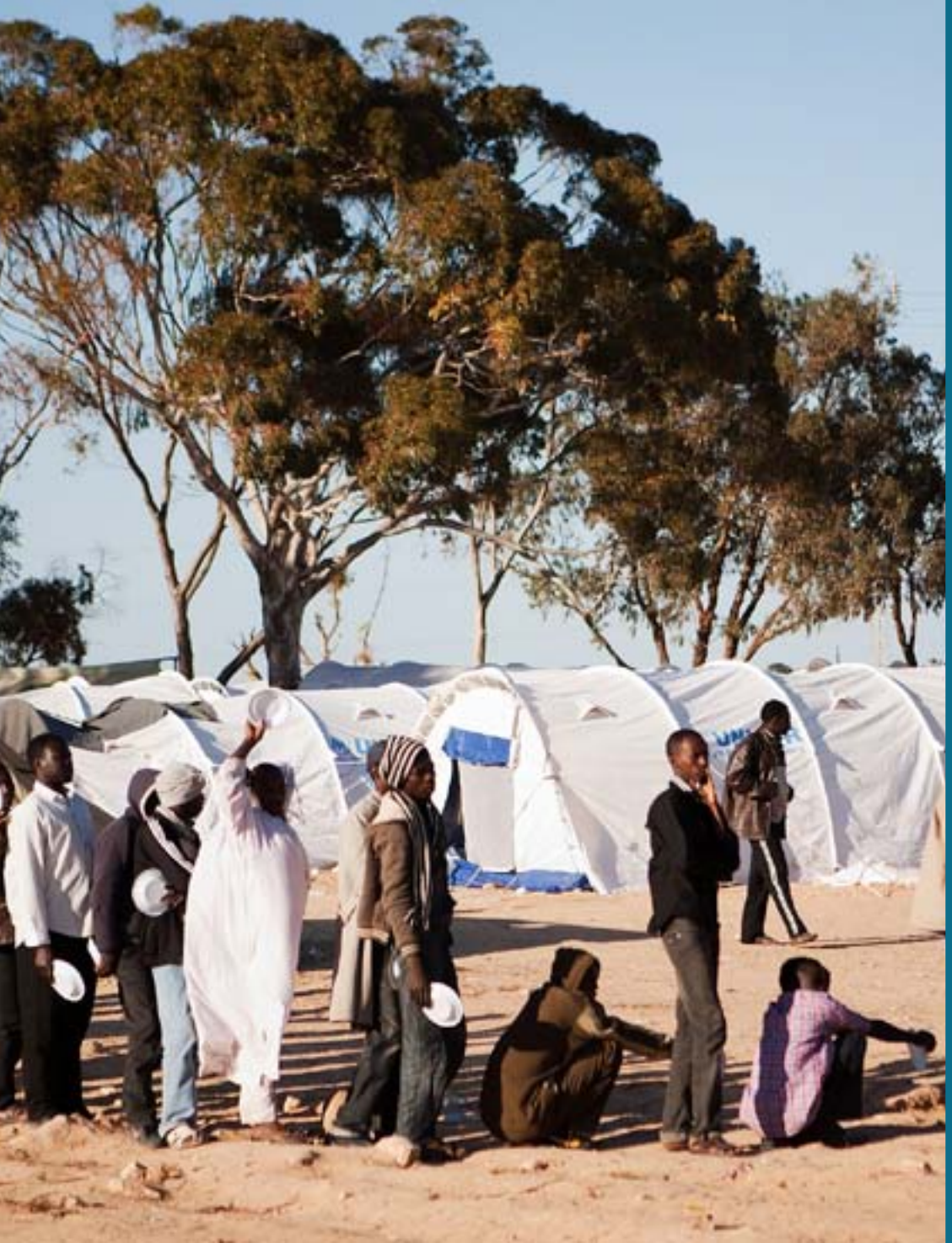
Opening address delivered by H.E. Jerzy Buzek President of the European Parliament at the 12-15 December 2011 plenary session in Strasbourg

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. This document forms the foundation of our EU asylum regulations. It also defines the international understanding of the term 'refugee'. The European Parliament, as you know, is actively working on and involved in matters related to refugees. We have also participated in the negotiations on the common European asylum system. We are calling for its full implementation in 2012.

I would like to remind you, if I may, of the Shusha camp in Tunisia, housing refugees from Libya and citizens of almost all African countries. These are people who cannot return to their homeland. The European Union, and above all the Member States, should take a decision on this matter. The United States has agreed to accept 800 refugees, Norway 400, the European Union, at present – all the Member States together – 150. There are 3,800 refugees. They cannot return to their homeland and currently the Tunisian authorities are in charge of them. They live in the open desert in tents.

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UNHCR / S. Modola / October 2011



UN Photo / Eskinder Debebe / February 2008



UNHCR / Jean-Marc Ferré / December 2011



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UNHCR / Sam Phelps / November 2011



Janne Mikkilä / 2007



UNHCR / Jean-Marc Ferré / 7 December 2011



US State Department / January 2009



UNHCR / P. Wiggers / February 2012



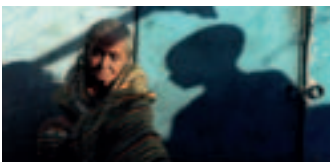
UNHCR / J. Tanner



UNHCR / A. Zhorobaev / December 2010



UNHCR / F. Noy



UNHCR / G.M.B Akash / June 2006



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UNHCR / S. Hopper



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The UN Refugee Agency