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OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

Letter dated 5 October 1988 from the Permanent Representative
of El Salvador to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the preparatory meeting for the International Conference on Central American Refugees held at San Salvador, El Salvador, from 8 to 9 September 1988, with the participation of representatives of the Central American Governments, Mexico and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, at which it was decided to designate the Republic of Guatemala as host to the International Conference which is scheduled for the first week of May 1989.

With respect to this matter, I am attaching herewith a communiqué from San Salvador on the Central American refugees containing the conclusions of the preparatory meeting and listing the members of the Preparatory Committee, subject to confirmation, of the International Conference on Central American Refugees. I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the forty-third session of the General Assembly under agenda item 102, in particular, the sub-item entitled "Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons of Central America".

(Signed) Roberto MEZA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

COMMUNIQUE FROM SAN SALVADOR ON THE CENTRAL AMERICAN REFUGEES

The delegations of the Governments of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua, constituting the Preparatory Committee of the International Conference on Central American Refugees, with the co-operation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), have agreed to release the present communiqué containing the principal decisions adopted during its first meeting, held from 8 to 9 September in the city of San Salvador:

First

The Governments of Central America and Mexico have decided to convene an International Conference on Central American Refugees, to be held in Guatemala City in the first week of May 1989. They invite the international community to participate in this important event and to provide support for preparation and realization.

Second

They formally undertake to continue to deal with the problems relating to the refugees and their voluntary repatriation, as well as the preparatory work of the Conference and the Conference itself, on a purely humanitarian and apolitical basis.

Third

They define the following as the objectives of the Conference:

General objective:

To contribute to peace in the region by examining the needs and developing concrete proposals for practical solutions to the problems of the Central American refugees.

Specific objectives:

(a) To evaluate the progress made in elaborating principles governing protection of and assistance to refugees and their voluntary repatriation with a view to promoting the dissemination and implementation of those principles;

(b) To formulate national plans and programmes of action based on surveys conducted by the respective Governments, enabling countries with huge numbers of refugees, returnees and displaced persons to develop a strategy of concrete solutions linked, in each case, to development programmes, with priority given to the most needy groups and to the continued existence of temporary camps;

(c) To appeal for international solidarity to support Central American refugees by mobilizing resources and facilitating the co-ordination of the various

initiatives for co-operation in the region in order to consolidate voluntary repatriation, incorporation or integration into the country of asylum and, in special cases, resettlement in third countries in harmony with the ongoing efforts for peace and development in the region.

Fourth

They recommend that the Preparatory Committee should facilitate the co-ordination of the assistance, financing and co-operation channelled through the international community to support solutions to the problems of refugees, returnees and displaced persons.

Fifth

They further recommend an examination of all aspects of the problem of displaced persons in the region and of the possible solutions considered applicable by countries affected by that phenomenon.

Sixth

They request that, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 42/110, the General Assembly at its forty-third session and in particular the Secretary-General should promote support for the International Conference. They further request the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to organize the event and the preparatory activities, with the assistance of the organs of the United Nations system and, in particular, the United Nations Development Programme.

Seventh

They propose that the International Conference and the preparatory work should focus on promoting the initiatives set forth in the special plan of economic co-operation for Central America approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 42/231.

Eighth

They request that the Executive Committee of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, at its next meeting in October, should be informed of the conclusions adopted at this meeting and asked to support the convening and holding of the Conference and its work.

Ninth

They suggest that a proposal should be made to the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, at its twenty-eighth session, to be held in November in this city, that it reaffirm its support for the holding of the International Conference, to which it referred in its resolution 831 (XVII-0/87).

Tenth

They request the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to organize the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee in Antigua, Guatemala, from 25 to 27 January 1989.

Eleventh

They further suggest that UNHCR should promote exchanges of information and consultations with countries, international agencies and non-governmental organizations supporting the work of the Conference, and that meetings for that purpose should be held in conjunction with the meeting of the Executive Committee of UNHCR and in connection with the meeting of the Preparatory Committee referred to above.

Twelfth

They extend their thanks to the Government of Guatemala for its generous offer to host the International Conference.

Thirteenth

They wish to express special appreciation to the Government of El Salvador for the invitation to hold the meeting in its capital and for its hospitality; to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Ricardo Acevedo Peralta, for his inspiring address to the Preparatory Committee as it began its work and to warmly congratulate the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Joaquin Alexander Maza Martelli, for his excellent performance as President of the meeting.

Lastly, the delegations of the Governments of Central America and Mexico are affixing their signatures to this communiqué in recognition of the significance of this meeting which, in the spirit of the Procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America (Esquipulas II), is intended to complement, by dealing with the humanitarian and development aspects, the firm decision of the Central American countries to establish peace.

San Salvador, 9 September 1988

(Signed) Joaquin Alexander MAZA MARTELLI
President of the Meeting
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs
El Salvador

(Signed) Luis Alberto CORDERO ARIAS
Deputy Minister for the Office of the
President
Costa Rica

(Signed) Jaime GUELL BOGRAN
Director, International Organizations
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Hondura

(Signed) Ariel RIVERA
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs
Guatemala

(Signed) Oscar GONZALEZ
Co-ordinator General of the Mexican
Committee on Assistance to Refugees
Mexico

(Signed) Alejandro B. NDAÑA
Secretary-General of the Ministry of
Foreign Affairs
Nicaragua

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CENTRAL AMERICAN REFUGEES

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE, 8-9 SEPTEMBER 1988
(Subject to confirmation)

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