

**Intergovernmental event at the ministerial level of
Member States of the United Nations 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
(7-8 December 2011)**

HCR/MINCOMMS/2011/6
Distr. : Restricted
8 December 2011
English
Original : English and French

Ministerial Communiqué

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*.
