

The Executive Committee,

- (A) Recognizes that the involuntary displacement of persons within their own countries is a problem of global dimensions, and that the plight of such-internally displaced persons, whose numbers may exceed those of refugees, is a matter of grave humanitarian concern;
- (B) Notes that the many and varied underlying causes of involuntary internal displacement and of refugee movements are often similar, and that the problems of both refugees and the internally displaced often call for similar measures with respect to prevention, protection, humanitarian assistance, and solutions;
- (C) Reiterates the need for the international community to seek ways and means to avert involuntary displacements;
- (D) Emphasizes that since internally displaced persons remain within the territorial jurisdiction of their own countries, the primary responsibility for their welfare and protection lies with the State concerned;
- (E) Urges the Governments of States where there are internally displaced persons to fulfil their responsibility for their welfare and protection;
- (F) Calls upon the international community, in appropriate circumstances, to provide timely and speedy humanitarian assistance and support to countries affected by internal displacement to help them fulfil their responsibility towards the displaced;
- (G) Notes that, in many instances, the internally displaced are present alongside refugees, returnees, or a vulnerable local population, in situations where it is neither reasonable nor feasible to treat the categories differently in responding to their needs for assistance and protection;
- (H) Recognizes that actions by the international community, in consultation and coordination with the concerned State, on behalf of the internally displaced may contribute to the easing of tensions and the resolution of problems resulting in displacement, and constitute important components of a comprehensive approach to the prevention and solution of refugee problems;
- (I) Calls on the Governments concerned to ensure safe and timely humanitarian access to persons in need of protection and assistance, including the internally displaced and victims of armed conflict, as well as refugees within their territories;
- (J) Recognizes that resolution 48/116, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 December 1993, which reaffirmed support for the High Commissioner's efforts, "on the basis of specific requests from the Secretary-General or the competent principal organs of the United Nations and with the consent of the concerned State, and taking into account the complementarities of mandates and expertise of other relevant organizations, in providing humanitarian assistance and protection to persons displaced within their own country in situations calling for the Office's particular expertise, especially where such efforts could contribute to the prevention or solution of refugee problems", continues to provide an appropriate framework for the involvement of the High Commissioner in situations of internal displacement;
- (K) Encourages the High Commissioner to continue the efforts of her Office to put into action its internal criteria and guidelines for UNHCR involvement in situations of internal displacement, as an important contribution towards a more concerted response by the international community to the needs of the internally displaced;
- (L) Emphasizes that activities on behalf of internally displaced persons must not undermine the institution of asylum, including the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution;
- (M) Recognizes that international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and, in many cases, national laws include norms providing for the security and protection of the internally displaced as well as those at risk of displacement, and expressed serious concern at the failure of parties involved to respect these norms;
- (N) Acknowledges the importance of the work of the Representative of the Secretary-General for Internally Displaced Persons and, in particular, his efforts to compile existing international standards in respect of the treatment of the internally displaced, and to develop a code of conduct comprising guiding principles in this regard;
- (O) Calls on UNHCR to continue its close cooperation with the Representative of the Secretary-General in the fulfilment of his mandate;
- (P) Further acknowledges the essential role of the International Committee of the Red Cross in disseminating international humanitarian law and in providing protection and humanitarian assistance to those displaced by armed conflict;
- (Q) Calls for the strengthening of efforts in the training and dissemination of international human rights law and international humanitarian law and for the joint promotion, by organizations and agencies concerned, of the implementation of these international standards;
- (R) Considers that, in addressing the problem of internal displacement, the international community should seek to collaborate to the maximum possible extent with existing humanitarian organizations, including non-governmental organizations, with relevant expertise;

(S) Encourages UNHCR to continue its efforts, under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, and in cooperation with other agencies concerned, to reinforce and structure coordination through existing interagency mechanisms, notably the Interagency Standing Committee, in order to improve the response by the international community to the plight of the internally displaced, and stresses the importance in this connection of strengthening mechanisms for the sharing of information;

(T) Urges that discussions on interagency aspects of internal displacement be pursued actively in other appropriate fora so as to ensure a comprehensive and coherent approach by the international community to the problem of internally displaced persons.

Comments: Executive Committee 45th session. Contained in United Nations General Assembly Document No. 12A (I) Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme upon the recommendation of the Sub-Committee of the Whole

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