

NOTES FOR A
STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR J. ALAN BEESLEY
TO THE 37TH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

GENEVA

TUESDAY, 7 OCTOBER 1986

Mr. Chairman, may I begin by reiterating my congratulations on your election as our chairman and extending congratulations to the Vice-Chairman and the rapporteur. I would also like to express our gratitude to the outgoing Chairman and to his colleagues of last year's bureau.

Allow me, Mr. Chairman, to express, through you, our gratitude to the High Commissioner and to the Nansen Committee for their recognition of the contribution that Canada and the Canadian people have made to the refugee cause during these last four decades. The award of the Nansen Medal for 1986, as a tribute to the combined efforts of the people of Canada, of all of the Canadian non-governmental organizations, and of successive Canadian governments, will be received as a recognition of Canada's continuing commitment to the protection and welfare of refugees.

We have listened with close attention and interest to the High Commissioner's report on the situation of refugees throughout the world and on the initiatives being taken by him in trying to resolve their plight. I would like to renew to the High Commissioner Canada's strong and active support in meeting the challenges that lie ahead.

The world's refugee problems in 1986 provide no basis for comfort or complacency. While there have been no recent major outflows of refugees, we must face the fact that there are still more than 11 million refugees in the world who are in need of protection and some form of durable solution. At the same time, an estimated 70-80 million people have left their countries of origin in search of economic improvement. Immigration policies of many countries have become more restrictive due to economic constraints. The net result has been some degree of convergence of the immigration and refugee streams, as the refugee or asylum route has become the only opportunity for migration for large numbers of people.

Mr. Chairman, last January we welcomed Mr. Hocké to the position of High Commissioner for Refugees. At the outset he indicated a desire to act with energy and initiative, in close consultation with the Executive Committee, in seeking durable solutions for refugee problems. The approaches that have been taken in this respect, and the progress to date, give us renewed optimism. We are particularly gratified by the High Commissioner's recent efforts in the organization of working groups which have as their objective the achievement of a better understanding of the increasing complexity of the phenomenon that has become known, for lack perhaps of a better term, as irregular movements.

The reorganization of the UNHCR along geographic lines will provide greater support and guidance to UNHCR field staff who are directly involved with refugees and their problems. We are supportive of the High Commissioner's undertaking to review the Indochinese refugee situation and we welcome the opportunity to work with him in seeking durable solutions to this seemingly intractable problem. As other delegations have mentioned, the High Commissioner plays a unique role which allows him to act as a co-ordinator and as a focal point in our multilateral efforts.

Mr. Chairman, we further welcome the on-going efforts of the High Commissioner to ensure that UNHCR's organizational structure and management procedures facilitate cost-effective implementation of UNHCR programmes. We are appreciative of the systematic review of UNHCR assistance programmes that was undertaken in May of this year. In view of the projected shortfalls in budgets for both general and special programmes, we are still concerned about the need to ensure a direct correlation between current and planned programmes, and the primary objectives of UNHCR, within the framework of limited resources.

Canada would like to reiterate the need for equitable burden-sharing, both of resettlement and financial contributions, and urges all Member States to contribute generously to the UNHCR. We also encourage further cooperation with other UN agencies, and with voluntary organizations. UNHCR has played a catalytic role in promoting the concept of more effective linkages between refugee aid and development. However, it needs the full support and cooperation of host governments and international financial and development agencies for achieving this objective.

In the pursuit of durable solutions, Canada shares the view expressed yesterday by the High Commissioner, that the industrialized world must share the burden of accepting refugees who seek asylum outside their regions. Resettlement should no longer be seen as the responsibility solely of traditional resettlement countries, but rather as a responsibility of all concerned countries in providing comprehensive solutions to refugee problems.

We will look forward to working closely with the High Commissioner during the months to come. His statement yesterday has given us much food for thought. In particular, his comments about Action and the Law, and about the applicability of the 1951 definition to the realities of the present, will be the subject of considerable discussion among us as we endeavour to carry out our own role as members of the Executive Committee.

Mr. Chairman, my Delegation has previously urged the High Commissioner to give due attention to, and report to the Executive Committee on, the particular needs of refugee women, both in terms of protection and promotion of self-reliance. We look forward to additional programmes that respond to the special needs of this vulnerable group, whose overall situation remains essentially unchanged from year to year.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, the Canadian delegation would like to express its appreciation to the High Commissioner and his staff, particularly those in the field who continue to display devotion and resourcefulness under difficult conditions. We endorse the recent steps taken by the High Commissioner, who can count on the continuing support and cooperation of Canada in the search for durable solutions to the problem of refugees around the world.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ANNEX

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO UNHCR

1986

<u>CASH</u>	<u>CANADIAN \$</u>
General Programmes: Unearmarked	6,000,000
Africa General Program	1,290,000
Africa Special Programs	2,760,000
Latin America General Programs	3,000,000
Latin America Special Programs	50,000
South East Asia General Programs	1,000,000
South East Asia Special Programs	100,000
Pakistan General Programs	4,000,000
<u>TOTAL:</u>	<u>18,200,000</u>
<u>FOOD AID (BILATERAL)</u>	
Pakistan (Afghan Refugees)	14,000,000
<u>PROPOSED SUPPLEMENTARY CONTRIBUTION</u>	
African refugee women's programs (under discussion with UNHCR)	500,000