



CANADA

The Permanent Mission of Canada
to the United Nations
at Geneva

La Mission Permanente du Canada
auprès des Nations Unies
à Genève

NOTES FOR A
STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR J. ALAN BEESLEY
TO THE 36TH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

GENEVA

TUESDAY, 8 OCTOBER 1985

MR. CHAIRMAN, MAY I BEGIN BY EXTENDING MY WARM CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU, BOTH OFFICIALLY AND PERSONALLY, ON YOUR ELECTION TO THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THIS 36TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. OUR GOOD WISHES GO AS WELL TO THE VICE-CHAIRMAN AND THE RAPPORTEUR. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE TO THE OUTGOING CHAIRMAN, AMBASSADOR MEBAZAA AND TO HIS COLLEAGUES OF LAST YEAR'S BUREAU.

WE HAVE LISTENED WITH GREAT INTEREST AND ATTENTION TO THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S VALEDICTORY REPORT ON THE SITUATION OF REFUGEES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. THE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING US ARE INCREASINGLY DEMANDING, AND CALL FOR AN INCREASING MEASURE OF PERSISTENCE, IMAGINATION AND EQUITABLE BURDEN-SHARING FOR THEIR SOLUTION. A SUSTAINED EFFORT FROM ALL PARTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WILL BE REQUIRED TO MEET THIS CHALLENGE. THIS MAY BE A SAD COMMENTARY COMING, AS IT DOES, IN THIS 40TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR OF THE UNITED NATIONS, BUT IT MAKES THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT.

MR. CHAIRMAN, MY DELEGATION WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS ITS DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE SERIOUS FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE UNHCR. WE CONTINUE TO BE FULLY SUPPORTIVE OF THE UNHCR IN ITS DEMANDING AND COMPLEX RESPONSIBILITIES, AND DEEPLY COMMITTED TO

ITS HUMANITARIAN MISSION. WE SINCERELY HOPE THAT, IN A SPIRIT OF EQUITABLE BURDEN-SHARING, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WILL COME QUICKLY TO THE ASSISTANCE OF UNHCR DURING THIS CRITICAL PERIOD.

THE SERIOUSNESS AND URGENCY OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS FACING THE UNHCR REQUIRES PROMPT AND INNOVATIVE MEASURES. THESE SHOULD INCLUDE:

- (1) MORE EFFECTIVE LINKAGES BETWEEN REFUGEE AID AND DEVELOPMENT;
- (2) FURTHER STRENGTHENING OF THE MANAGEMENT OF UNHCR PROGRAMS; AND
- (3) SOLICITING OF FUNDING SUPPORT BY THE UNHCR MUCH MORE ACTIVELY AND PUBLICLY, PARTICULARLY FROM NON-TRADITIONAL SOURCES, INCLUDING THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL COMMUNITY. FUNDING FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR WOULD SEEM ESPECIALLY APPROPRIATE FOR THE UNHCR'S EMERGENCY PROGRAMS AND WOULD HELP BROADEN THE EMERGENCY RESOURCE BASE.

IN STRESSING THE ROLE WHICH THE PRIVATE SECTOR CAN AND DOES PLAY, I SHOULD LIKE TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA IS NOT SHIRKING ITS RESPONSIBILITIES. IT IS PREPARED TO

PLAY ITS PART IN EQUITABLE BURDEN-SHARING. DURING 1985, CANADA HAS CONTRIBUTED \$16 MILLION (CANADIAN) DIRECTLY TO UNHCR PROGRAMS AND A FURTHER \$2 MILLION TO REFUGEES THROUGH OTHER CHANNELS. ALSO, CANADA HAS PROVIDED \$14 MILLION IN FOOD AID TO AFGHAN REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN.

WE WILL BE ACTIVELY STUDYING THE POSSIBILITIES FOR EARLIER PAYMENT OF OUR 1986 CONTRIBUTION TO EASE THE ANTICIPATED CASH FLOW PROBLEM.

EQUITABLE BURDEN-SHARING MEANS MUCH MORE, HOWEVER, THAN FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS. MORE COUNTRIES MUST COME FORWARD WITH OFFERS FOR PERMANENT SETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES. IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO ASSUME THAT THERE IS SOME SORT OF AUTOMATICITY IN THE CASE OF TRADITIONAL RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES. IT IS WELL KNOWN, OF COURSE, THAT CANADA IS A MAJOR RESETTLEMENT COUNTRY FOR REFUGEES FROM ALL AREAS OF THE WORLD. TO TAKE THE RECENT EXAMPLE OF INDOCHINA, CANADA'S RESETTLEMENT TOTAL FROM THAT AREA HAS PASSED THE 100,000 MARK. IN 1984 ALONE, CANADA ADMITTED 15,400 REFUGEES REQUIRING PERMANENT SETTLEMENT FROM MOST PARTS OF THE WORLD, INCLUDING 1,100 FROM HONG KONG. MR. CHAIRMAN AND MR. HIGH COMMISSIONER, LET ME MAKE CLEAR THAT WE DO NOT LOOK ON THESE MATTERS IN FINANCIAL TERMS. CANADA'S APPROACH IS HUMANITARIAN. NEVERTHELESS, IN THE CONTEXT OF

EQUITABLE BURDEN-SHARING, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE DIRECT COSTS BORNE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA IN 1984 FOR THE RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES AMOUNTED TO MORE THAN \$30 MILLION (CANADIAN), QUITE APART FROM THE SUBSTANTIAL COSTS BORNE BY THE PROVINCES AND BY THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS. PERHAPS IT WOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED INAPPROPRIATE IF I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PUBLICLY PAY TRIBUTE TO THE GOVERNMENTS AND PEOPLES OF THE PROVINCES OF CANADA, AND TO THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS WHO ALL PLAY THEIR PART IN THIS PROCESS OF EQUITABLE BURDEN-SHARING.

MR. CHAIRMAN, THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE 35 YEARS OF THE UNHCR'S EXISTENCE, CANADA HAS ALWAYS BEEN WILLING TO PROVIDE HOMES FOR REFUGEES IN NEED OF RESETTLEMENT. ON EVERY SINGLE OCCASION WHEN INTERNATIONAL CRISES AND UPHEAVALS INDICATED THE NEED, WE HAVE BEEN IN THE FOREFRONT OF THOSE PREPARED TO RESPOND. WE HAVE RESETTLED REFUGEES NUMBERED IN HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS. I WISH TO EMPHASIZE THAT CANADA'S SOCIAL FABRIC HAS IN THE PROCESS BEEN GREATLY ENRICHED BY THESE REFUGEES.

MR. CHAIRMAN, MY DELEGATION CONSIDERS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE THAT UNHCR ENSURE THAT ITS PROGRAMMES ARE PLANNED IN A WAY WHICH TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE NEED FOR DURABLE SOLUTIONS,

BUT ALSO AVOIDS SIGNIFICANT SHORTFALLS AND THE APPEARANCE OF INDISCRIMINATE LAST MINUTE CUTS. CANADA IS PREPARED TO ASSIST ACTIVELY, IN AN ADVISORY ROLE WITH OTHER INTERESTED COUNTRIES, IN ENSURING THAT UNHCR POLICIES AND PROGRAMES CONTINUE TO REFLECT THESE OBJECTIVES. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES AND MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES SHOULD BE FLEXIBLE AND PROMOTE COST-EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF ESSENTIAL UNHCR ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES.

MR. CHAIRMAN, WE ARE ALL WELL AWARE THAT THE DROUGHT-RELATED CRISIS IN AFRICA HAS PLACED AN ADDITIONAL BURDEN ON THE UNCHR SINCE THE FALL OF 1984. WE COMMEND THE HIGH COMMISSIONER AND HIS STAFF FOR THEIR HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN AFRICA. WE FULLY RECOGNIZE THE MAGNITUDE AND COMPLEXITY OF THE PROBLEM, AND ITS IMPACT ON THE ALREADY MONUMENTAL TASK OF UNHCR WITH RESPECT TO TRADITIONAL REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS IN AFRICA. ACCORDINGLY, WE BELIEVE UNHCR SHOULD PROMOTE MORE EQUITABLE BURDEN-SHARING, IN COORDINATION WITH UN AND OTHER AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE AFRICAN EMERGENCY, IN ORDER TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO THE NEEDS OF UNHCR'S PRIMARY CONSTITUENCY, AS WELL AS OTHER NON REFUGEE POPULATIONS AFFECTED BY THE CURRENT SITUATION. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE SEARCH FOR DURABLE SOLUTIONS MAY HAVE HAD TO TAKE SECOND PLACE IN THE FACE OF MORE PRESSING PROBLEMS. HOWEVER, UNDERTAKINGS EXPRESSED AT

ICARA II MUST NOT BE FORGOTTEN, AND WE HOPE THAT INITIATIVES IN FAVOUR OF LOCAL RESETTLEMENT AND VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION CAN BE RESUMED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

WE WELCOME THE INITIATIVE TAKEN RECENTLY BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER ON VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION. THIS SOLUTION TO REFUGEE PROBLEMS HAS ALWAYS BEEN RECOGNIZED AS THE MOST APPROPRIATE. WHILE WE UNDERSTAND THE DIFFICULTIES IN BRINGING ABOUT THE VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION OF REFUGEES, WE FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO ADVANCE THIS SOLUTION. THE PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER WILL CONTINUE TO BE REQUIRED IN MANY SITUATIONS.

MR. CHAIRMAN, WE WELCOME THE SPECIAL ATTENTION BEING PAID TO THE PARTICULAR VULNERABILITY OF REFUGEE WOMEN. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT UNHCR RECOGNIZE THE TOTALITY OF NEEDS OF REFUGEE WOMEN, WHO ALONG WITH THEIR CHILDREN, CONSTITUTE A MAJORITY OF REFUGEE POPULATIONS. WE ARE VERY CONSCIOUS THAT REFUGEE WOMEN ARE FREQUENTLY OBLIGED TO ASSUME A SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGED SOCIO-ECONOMIC ROLE, IN THE CONTEXT OF DIFFICULT CONDITIONS, NEW ENVIRONMENTS AND LIMITED RESOURCES.

WE STRONGLY ENCOURAGE UNHCR TO INCORPORATE INTO ITS OVERALL POLICY AND PROGRAMME PLANNING, SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

AIMED AT IMPROVING AND ENSURING THE POTENTIAL, AND THE CAPACITY FOR SELF-RELIANCE, OF REFUGEE WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES. IN OUR VIEW THIS PROCESS WOULD BE FACILITATED BY FURTHER STRENGTHENING THE FOCAL POINT WITHIN UNHCR FOR COORDINATING WOMEN'S PROGRAMMES. UNHCR SHOULD ALSO ENSURE GREATER EQUITY FOR REFUGEE WOMEN, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO ARE HEADS OF FAMILIES, IN LITERACY, VOCATIONAL AND OTHER TRAINING PROGRAMS, AS WELL AS IN INCOME-GENERATING ACTIVITIES. POSSIBLE BIASES AGAINST WOMEN, WITH RESPECT TO GRANTING OF ASYLUM, LOCAL INTEGRATION, AND RESETTLEMENT, SHOULD BE REMOVED. WE STRONGLY ENCOURAGE INCREASED COLLABORATION BETWEEN UNHCR AND OTHER AGENCIES CONCERNED WITH THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF WOMEN.

WE REMAIN MOST CONCERNED AT THE UNDER-REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN PROFESSIONALS WITHIN UNHCR AS IN OTHER UN BODIES. THIS GAP IS ESPECIALLY MARKED IN SENIOR MANAGEMENT POSITIONS, BOTH AT HEADQUARTERS AND IN THE FIELD. WE LOOK FORWARD TO INCREASED EFFORTS BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER TO RECRUIT WOMEN TO ASSUME THE HIGHEST RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN HIS ORGANIZATION.

MR. CHAIRMAN, THE PROTECTION ISSUE REMAINS AT THE FOREFRONT OF OUR CONCERNS FOR REFUGEES. THE RECENT TRAGIC EVENT AT COLOMONCAGUA, WHICH RESULTED IN DEATH AND INJURY TO MANY REFUGEES, AS WELL AS ATTACKS ON REFUGEE CAMPS ELSEWHERE,

REMINDE US ALL OF THE NEED FOR CONTINUED MAXIMUM EFFORT IN PROTECTING ALL REFUGEES, AND PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO REMAIN CLOSE TO SITUATIONS WHICH CAUSED THEIR FLIGHT. WE SUPPORT THE UNHCR'S CONTINUED SENSITIVITY TO THE NEEDS OF REFUGEES IN ESTABLISHING LOCATIONS WHERE THEIR PROTECTION AND CARE CAN BE ASSURED.

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER HAS TAKEN INITIATIVES TO ENSURE THAT GENUINE REFUGEES CONTINUE TO BENEFIT FROM THE FULL PROTECTION OF THE CONVENTION. THE CONSULTATIONS OF LAST MAY ON ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES IN EUROPE PRODUCED A CLEAR REAFFIRMATION OF THE NEED TO LIVE UP TO THE HUMANITARIAN STANDARDS DEFINED IN INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE INSTRUMENTS. WE ARE GRATEFUL TO THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR CREATING A STUDY GROUP TO EXAMINE THE PROBLEM OF IRREGULAR MOVEMENTS, AND LOOK FORWARD TO ENDORSING ITS CONCLUSIONS LATER IN OUR PROCEEDINGS.

MR. CHAIRMAN, IRREGULAR MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE OBVIOUSLY REFLECTS A LARGE MEASURE OF DISCONTENT AMONG THE PERSONS CONCERNED. DOUBTS ON THE PART OF REFUGEES AS TO THE ADEQUACY OF PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE IN COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM CAN SOMETIMES FUEL UNREALISTIC DREAMS OF RESETTLEMENT IN OTHER COUNTRIES. BOTH THE CONDITIONS PREVAILING IN COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM AND THE INADEQUACIES OF RESETTLEMENT PLANNING FOR

THOSE NEEDING RESETTLEMENT ARE MATTERS WHICH NEED TO BE ADDRESSED. HOWEVER, THIS SHOULD NOT BE SEEN AS THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF TRADITIONAL IMMIGRATION COUNTRIES. THE TIME HAS COME, WE BELIEVE, FOR AN EXPANSION OF THE RESETTLEMENT PLANNING PROCESS. TAKING AS A BASIS THE ANNUAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT NEEDS ANALYSIS WHICH HAS BEEN PRESENTED BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER, WE SUGGEST THAT A PROCESS BE ESTABLISHED TO INCORPORATE THE RESPONSES OF ALL PRESENT AND POTENTIAL RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES. THIS WOULD ENABLE RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE MADE TO COUNTRIES RESETTLING REFUGEES AND PROVIDE THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WITH ESTIMATES OF RESETTLEMENT NEEDS, AND PROSPECTS FOR THEIR RESOLUTION.

THE EXISTENCE OF A PROCESS OF THIS NATURE WOULD, IN CONJUNCTION WITH APPROPRIATE RESPONSES TO PROTECTION PROBLEMS IN COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM, RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF THOSE REFUGEES WHO NOW FEEL THAT IRREGULAR RESETTLEMENT IS THE ONLY POSSIBLE RESPONSE TO WHAT THEY PERCEIVE AS UNTENABLE SITUATIONS. ADEQUATE PROTECTION AND CARE IN FIRST ASYLUM COUNTRIES, WITH IMPROVED COORDINATION OF RESETTLEMENT POSSIBILITIES, WOULD ALSO MEAN THAT THOSE REFUGEES WHO SUBSEQUENTLY ARRIVED THROUGH IRREGULAR MEANS COULD RETURN TO THE COUNTRY OF FIRST ASYLUM WITHOUT FEAR OF REFOULEMENT.

IN CLOSING, MR. CHAIRMAN, I WISH TO EXPRESS OUR SINCERE GRATITUDE TO THE HIGH COMMISSIONER AND HIS DEDICATED STAFF FOR THEIR IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION IN OVERCOMING THE MANY PROBLEMS REFUGEES FACE. THEY CAN, AS ALWAYS, COUNT ON THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IN THEIR DEMANDING TASK. ON A MORE PERSONAL NOTE, I WOULD LIKE TO PAY A WELL DESERVED TRIBUTE TO THE IMPRESSIVE ACHIEVEMENTS OF MR. POUL HARTLING AS HE PREPARES TO LAY DOWN THE ONEROUS THOUGH REWARDING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR REFUGEES WHICH HE HAS BORNE FOR THE LAST EIGHT YEARS. IN A WORD, HIS WILL INDEED BE A DIFFICULT ACT TO FOLLOW.

THANK YOU MR. CHAIRMAN.