

Purtenaires en Action

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TIL: (00H) 22 732 66 00 - Fax: (004!) 22 739 99 04

PARINAC INFORMATION NOTE AND UPDATE No.1

'The non-governmental organizations are our quickest partners in emergency response, our strongest advocates on international protection. Their community-based approach is an asset in bridging the gap between relief and development. Their ability to mobilize public support and donor assistance is critical at a time of heightened demands. The decision to award the Nansen medal this year to Medecins sans Frontieres is a recognition of the NGO contribution to the refugee cause. UNHCR has initiated a process of consultation with NGOs, called PARINAC (Partnership in Action), which is intended to lay the basis for enhanced and improved future NGO/UNI-ICR collaboration.' Ms. Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, from the Opening Statement to the 44th Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme.

WHAT DOES PARINAC MEAN? PARINAC is the result of a comprehensive UNHCR/NGO consultation in each region designed to enhance dialogue and understanding between UNHCR and NGOs; to facilitate closer collaboration and increase the combined capacity to respond to the global refugee problem and, where appropriate, the problem of internal displacement.

WHY IS PARINAC NECESSARY? The end of the Cold War has meant the end of some international conflicts and an increase in internal conflicts resulting from suppressed ethnic tribal or religious differences. As a result, there have been mass movements of populations, within and outside national borders, who are in need of protection and assistance. The ever-growing numbers of new refugees and internally displaced persons in many parts of the world, along with the challenges of post-conflict repatriation movements, means that no single body can adequately respond to these needs. NGOs are playing an increasingly significant role, and both UNHCR and NGOs need to improve their working relations in order to respond more effectively to the new challenges.

WHO IS INVOLVED? The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) have jointly launched the process and form the regional conferences' Organizing Committee. All NGOs, at the national, regional, or international level, who are involved with or have an interest in the issue of refugees, returnees or internally displaced persons are encouraged to participate. The donor community is providing political and financial support. Six regional consultations in the Americas and the Caribbean, Asia, Africa and Europe, will involve UNHCR in discussion with local, regional and international NGOs. The process will also include UN bodies and other international organizations.

WHO ADVISES PARINAC? The following NGOs have been invited to serve on an Advisory Committee to provide input into all aspects of the PARINAC process: All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response; European Consultation on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), InterAction, Australian Care for Refugees (AUSTCARE), Regional Association for Forced Migrations in Central America (ARMIF); and the Committee for Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand (CCSDPI').

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10L: (00H) 22 739 11 93 . fax: (0041) 22 739 87 B9

participation from other sources, in the event that their request for funds to the PARINAC Secretariat is unsuccessful. UNHCR field offices in consultation with the PARINAC Organizing Committee, will recommend NGO assistance grants. The criteria for allocating travel grants will be;

21. active involvement with refugee/returnee/internally displaced matters

b. collaboration with UNHCR at the field level or in advocacy work

The criteria is subject also to a balance between regions, specialization and background of agencies. .

IT 0 T9 The convening of the regional Conferences, including national and regional NGO participation, and related expenses, together with the Oslo Conference, require some US\$1.1 million. As of end September, 1993, contributions amount to some US\$350,000. Several additional donors have announced their intention to contribute in the near future. It is expected that major NGOs will also contribute, primarily in the form of travel grants for their partners in developing countries.

WHAT N TI-IER AD ? Improved information flow and the regional consultations will lead to the Oslo Declaration and Plan of Action.

Discussions with local, regional and international participants in each of the regional Conferences will provide the basis of an agenda for broad complementary action in favour of refugees, returnees and displaced persons.

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will evolve and be clarified further during the six regional Conferences:

ERQTEQTIQN Type and frequency of information exchange which will assist in analysis and response to situations which may create, or have created, displacement. Consolidation and strengthening of advocacy groups and promotion of refugee law. Dissemination and implementation of guidelines on the protection of refugee women and children, and adaptation of these guidelines to displaced populations, as appropriate. Monitoring arrangements in the area of respect for basic human rights related to refugee movements.

EMERQENQY EPQNSE Clarification of roles in the various stages of involvement, from needs assessment to provision of assistance, including stand-by arrangements. Determining who is involved, where and in which area of expertise. Identification of training activities on emergency response and other programme-related areas. Identification of areas of refugee involvement in program. Identification of joint or supportive UNHCR/NGO fund-raising possibilities. -

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS Identification of the specific characteristics of regional displacements and the range of current involvement, in order to fill the existing lacunae in the protection and assistance of this population. Determination of most appropriate regional and international arrangements and action depending on the causes and nature of displacement. Education and information on the neutral, impartial and humanitarian character of involvement.

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The PARINAC process has been launched with the first regional conference for the Americas and the Caribbean, which took place in Caracas from 28 to 30 June 1993 with the participation of over 90 NGOs.

The final document of the Conference, the Caracas Proposal, identifies a number of areas where NGO/UNHCR cooperation should be strengthened. Specific recommendations relating to the assistance and protection of internally displaced persons, have been shared with the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Internally Displaced Persons, Mr. F. Deng, who pledged his support to the PARINAC process.

Various follow-up meetings are taking place at the national level between UNHCR and NGOs, to explore ways and means to implement the various recommendations resulting from the Caracas conference and to agree on a regional UNHCR-NGO document to be presented to Oslo.

PREPARING FOR KATHMANDU AND TUNIS CONFERENCES

The second regional Conference will take place in Kathmandu from 1 to 3 November 1993. It will review UNHCR-NGO activities and collaboration in South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka). Preparatory UNHCR-NGO meetings are currently taking place at the country level.

Preliminary contacts have been made with the Arab Institute for Human Rights in Tunis which will assist in hosting the regional meeting covering North Africa, the Middle East and South West Asia, scheduled for 18-20 January 1994.

PARINAC AND THE CR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Discussions in Geneva during UNHCR's Executive Committee meeting (EXCOM), in the first week of October, gave considerable impetus to the PARINAC process. 't

During the traditional pre-EXCOM meeting with NGOs, attended this year by more than 150 participants, the PARINAC process was extensively discussed. Addressing this meeting, the High Commissioner stressed once again the importance she attached to the PARINAC process. '

An information note on PARINAC was circulated to governments and agencies attending the 44th EXCOM. In her opening address the High Commissioner emphasized that need to enhance and improve future UNHCR/NGO collaboration as an important element of UNHCR's global strategy to address the increasing challenges of the 1990's.

During EXCOM, informal consultations took place with donor governments, drawing attention to the need to have the PARINAC budget rapidly funded. Pledges of future support were received from some governments. The 44th Session of the Executive Committee welcomed the initiation of the PARINAC process and invited governments to support the initiative.