

MR. CHAIRMAN,

THIS HAS BEEN YET ANOTHER EVENTFUL YEAR FOR THE UNHCR, A YEAR IN WHICH CONTINUING REFUGEE CRISES, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AND FORMER YUGOSLAVIA, HAVE OCCUPIED MUCH OF THE WORLD'S ATTENTION.

THERE HAVE ALSO, OF COURSE, BEEN SUCCESS STORIES. WE ARE ALL AGREED THAT THE MOST APPROPRIATE SOLUTION TO THE SITUATION OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IS THE CREATION OF CONDITIONS WHICH ALLOW FOR THEIR REPATRIATION IN SAFETY AND IN DIGNITY.

THE RETURN OF REFUGEES TO THEIR HOMES IN GUATEMALA, AFGHANISTAN, TAJIKISTAN, CAMBODIA, ETHIOPIA, AND THE START OF SOME MOVEMENT BACK INTO SOMALIA, ARE ALL PROMISING SIGNS, BUT WE KNOW THAT OPERATIONS SUCH AS THESE ARE FRAGILE AT BEST.

THIS UNDERLYING INSTABILITY MAKES IT ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE MULTI-FACETED NATURE OF UNHCR'S INTERVENTIONS IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS, AND ITS ABILITY TO MEET ONGOING COMMITMENTS, HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE IN GREAT PART THANKS TO THE DEDICATION OF UNHCR PERSONNEL. WE COMMEND THE CONTRIBUTION OF STAFF, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN THE FIELD, WHO HAVE PERFORMED THEIR DUTIES IN DIFFICULT--AND OFTEN DANGEROUS--CONDITIONS.

IT WILL TAKE MUCH EFFORT ON THE PART OF ALL OF US TO ENSURE THAT THESE EFFORTS AMELIORATE THE SITUATION FACING THE WORLD'S 19 MILLION REFUGEES. IN THIS REGARD, WE RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIP WITH THE HIGH COMMISSIONER IN FULFILLING HER OFFICE'S MANDATE. THIS PARTNERSHIP IS CRITICAL TO THE ADOPTION OF A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO DEALING WITH REFUGEE SITUATIONS AS ADVOCATED BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER.

CANADA AGREES THAT THE PREVENTION OF REFUGEE MOVEMENTS IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, THE PROTECTION OF THOSE PERSONS WHO FLEE THEIR HOMES, AND THE PROVISION OF DURABLE SOLUTIONS, MUST BE PURSUED IN ORDER TO DEAL WITH REFUGEE MOVEMENTS.

PREVENTION

MR. CHAIRMAN,

WITH RESPECT TO PREVENTION, OBSERVING HUMAN RIGHTS AND APPLYING PRINCIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE ARE KEY TO ENSURING THE PREVENTION OF DISPLACEMENT AND ASYLUM SEEKER OUTFLOWS.

SOCIETIES WITH STABLE GOVERNMENTS WHICH SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS AND WHICH FOSTER ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRESS FOR ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE PEACEFUL; EXODUSES ARE LESS LIKELY FROM SUCH ENVIRONMENTS.

WE ARE PLEASED THAT THE ROLE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN PREVENTING MIGRATION FLOWS IS GAINING WIDE RECOGNITION; OF PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THIS REGARD IS THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT, WHICH HAS RECOGNIZED THE MIGRATION-DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM BY INCLUDING THE SUBJECT ON ITS AGENDA.