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RELATED POLICY STRATEGIES ARE BEING DISCUSSED IN A WIDE RANGE OF INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND MEETINGS. THIS DIALOGUE, IN WHICH THE UNHCR AS WELL AS CANADA AND MANY OTHER COUNTRIES ARE PARTICIPATING, PROVIDES AN UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITY TO ENSURE THE INTEGRITY OF THE 1951 CONVENTION AND IN PARTICULAR ADHERENCE TO IT BY THE NEWLY-EMERGING DEMOCRACIES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE.

PROTECTION

MR. CHAIRMAN,

IN CASES WHERE REFUGEES ARE FORCED TO FLEE, PROTECTION MUST BECOME THE FOCUS OF OUR ACTIVITIES.

EVEN THOUGH REPATRIATION AND LOCAL INTEGRATION ARE THE PREFERRED RESPONSES TO REFUGEE SITUATIONS, A SMALL PROPORTION OF REFUGEES DO REQUIRE THIRD COUNTRY RESETTLEMENT. WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO THIS OPTION FOR PERSONS FOR WHOM THERE IS NO OTHER DURABLE SOLUTION. HOWEVER, RESETTLEMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARE BEING JEOPARDIZED BY THE GROWING INSTANCE OF ABUSE OF REFUGEE STATUS DETERMINATION SYSTEMS.

WE ARE PLEASED TO NOTE THE EXCOM CONCLUSION ON INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION WHICH RECOGNIZES THAT SUCH ABUSE PREVENTS THE EFFECTIVE PROTECTION OF ALL REFUGEES.

CANADA SUPPORTS INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF REFUGEE STATUS DETERMINATION PROCEDURES BY MEASURES SUCH AS EXPEDITED DETERMINATION PROCEDURES WHICH ALLOW FOR GENUINE REFUGEES TO BE RECOGNIZED AND RESETTLED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

RECENT AMENDMENTS TO CANADA'S IMMIGRATION LEGISLATION INCLUDED PROVISIONS TO EXPEDITE THE REFUGEE STATUS DETERMINATION PROCESS AND CONTROL MEASURES TO DETER ABUSE. BOTH POLICIES ARE DESIGNED TO BETTER DIRECT SCARCE RESOURCES FOR THE BENEFIT OF PERSONS IN NEED OF OUR PROTECTION.

ANOTHER MEANS BY WHICH THE PROTECTION OF REFUGEES MAY BE PRESERVED AND REINFORCED IS RESPONSIBILITY-SHARING, WHICH IS DESIGNED TO ASSURE ALL ASYLUM SEEKERS WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE THEIR CLAIMS DETERMINED. CANADA IS ENGAGED IN DISCUSSIONS WITH OTHER RECEIVING COUNTRIES ON RESPONSIBILITY-SHARING ARRANGEMENTS.

AT THE SAME TIME, WE RECOGNIZE THAT PROTECTION STRATEGIES MUST BE CLOSELY DESIGNED TO MEET THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF PARTICULAR GROUPS. THE SITUATION OF VULNERABLE REFUGEES, ESPECIALLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN, IS OF CONTINUING CONCERN TO CANADA.

ACCORDINGLY, WE HAVE DIRECTED FUNDS TO ORGANIZATIONS ASSISTING VICTIMS OF ABUSE IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA AND NOTE WITH APPRECIATION THE ROLE OF THE UNHCR IN DETERMINING THE EXTENT OF THE ABUSE AND MEASURES TO ASSIST WOMEN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE IN THE REGION. THIS EFFORT WAS FACILITATED BY THE PRESENCE OF THE UNHCR'S COORDINATOR FOR REFUGEE WOMEN; CANADA ENCOURAGES THE PRESERVATION OF THE PROFILE AND INFLUENCE OF THIS POSITION.

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