

AG/RES. 2047 (XXXIV-O/04)

PROTECTION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS, REFUGEES, RETURNEES, AND STATELESS  
PERSONS IN THE AMERICAS

(Adopted at the fourth plenary session held on June 8, 2004)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

RECALLING its resolution AG/RES. 1971 (XXXIII-O/03), “The Protection of Refugees, Returnees, and Stateless and Internally Displaced Persons in the Americas,” and its resolutions AG/RES. 774 (XV-O/85), AG/RES. 838 (XVI-O/86), AG/RES. 951 (XVIII-O/88), AG/RES. 1021 (XIX-O/89), AG/RES. 1039 (XX-O/90), AG/RES. 1040 (XX-O/90), AG/RES. 1103 (XXI-O/91), AG/RES. 1170 (XXII-O/92), AG/RES. 1214 (XXIII-O/93), AG/RES. 1273 (XXIV-O/94), AG/RES. 1336 (XXV-O/95), AG/RES. 1416 (XXVI-O/96), AG/RES. 1504 (XXVII-O/97), AG/RES.1602 (XXVIII-O/98), AG/RES. 1693 (XXIX-O/99), AG/RES. 1762 (XXX-O/00), AG/RES. 1832 (XXXI-O/01), and AG/RES. 1892 (XXXII-O/02);

WELCOMING the accession by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, with which a total of 29 OAS member states are parties to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and/or to its 1967 Protocol;

WELCOMING ALSO the adoption of domestic regulations to determine refugee status in Venezuela, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay, and the fact that thus far a total of 21 countries of the Hemisphere have in place domestic legislation pertaining to refugees, and that another four countries of the Hemisphere have existing bills pertaining to refugees;

NOTING WITH CONCERN the significant increase in asylum seekers and the existence of a large number of refugees in some countries of the Americas who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, are outside the country of their nationality and are unable, or owing to such fear, are unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of their former habitual residence as a result of such events, are unable, or owing to such fear, are unwilling to return to it;

NOTING the presentation made by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to the Permanent Council on May 14, 2004, entitled “International Protection of Asylum Seekers, Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons, Stateless Persons, and Other Persons of Interest to the UNHCR in the Americas: Importance of International Solidarity and Shared Responsibility”;

RECOGNIZING the importance of efforts that could be made by countries of origin, with the support of the international community, to address the circumstances that generate flows of persons fleeing to seek asylum;

RECOGNIZING that the protection of refugees is a responsibility shared by the entire international community and that durable solutions depend on the will and capacity of states, guided by a spirit of humanitarianism and international solidarity;

UNDERSCORING that to promote enhanced protection for refugees, comprehensive strategies and coordinated actions are needed that include, among other aspects, voluntary repatriation and, when appropriate and feasible, local integration or resettlement in a third country, in a context of increasing solidarity and effective cooperation among all states, in keeping with the pertinent international conventions;

EMPHASIZING the efforts being made, even under difficult socioeconomic circumstances, by the countries of the region, faithful to their generous tradition of asylum, to continue giving protection to asylum seekers and to refugees;

CONSIDERING:

That the protection of asylum seekers, refugees, and stateless persons is strengthened through the increasing cooperation between the pertinent organs of the inter-American system, the UNHCR, and other pertinent players, as well as through the support of programs for the protection of refugees that are developed and implemented by governments; and

The importance of international dialogue, solidarity, and cooperation among the states and the international community to strengthen the international framework of protection for refugees and to address new challenges; and

NOTING WITH PLEASURE the support of the UNHCR for the organization of events to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, as well as the collaboration of the Government of Mexico as host for that celebration in November 2004,

RESOLVES:

1. To urge the states parties to take or continue to take the necessary measures to strengthen refugee protection and make it more effective, including, *inter alia*, the adoption and implementation of national provisions pertaining to refugees and stateless persons and procedures for the determination of refugee status and for the treatment of asylum seekers and refugees, and to continue to implement fully and effectively their obligations under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and/or its 1967 Protocol, and, where applicable, under the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, and other international and regional instruments, taking into account the special needs of vulnerable groups, such as women, children, persons with disabilities, and the elderly.

2. To urge those member states that have not yet done so to consider signature and/or ratification of, or accession to, as appropriate, the international instruments on refugees and statelessness or to consider withdrawing reservations made upon ratification or accession, as well as the adoption of necessary procedures and institutional mechanisms for the determination of refugee status and for the treatment of asylum seekers and refugees, in keeping with the principles established in the international and regional instruments, as applicable.

3. To encourage countries of origin to make every possible effort, with support from the UNHCR and the international community, to address the circumstances that generate flows of persons fleeing to seek asylum.

4. To urge member states to continue to apply protection measures that are consistent with international principles of international refugee protection, including, *inter alia*, non-refoulement, family unity, and confidentiality in cases of asylum.

5. To call on member states and the international community to increase technical and economic cooperation to the countries of the Hemisphere that receive refugees and that so require, and to work in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to provide effective protection to asylum seekers and refugees in the region.

6. To renew its appeal for international and inter-American cooperation to facilitate necessary assistance and protection in cases of the mass flight of refugees as well as the search for durable solutions such as voluntary repatriation and, when appropriate and feasible, the local integration or resettlement of refugees in a third country, in accordance with international and regional instruments, as applicable.

7. To urge the member states and to request the organs, agencies, and entities of the inter-American system to continue and increase their support for the UNHCR.