

**THE ADDIS ABABA DOCUMENT ON REFUGEES AND
FORCED POPULATION DISPLACEMENTS IN AFRICA.**

**ADOPTED BY THE OAU/ UNHCR SYMPOSIUM ON REFUGEES AND
FORCED POPULATION DISPLACEMENTS IN AFRICA**

**8 - 10 SEPTEMBER 1994
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**(Held in Commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of
the adoption of the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the
Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa
and the twentieth year of its entry into force)**

CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|-------------|
| PART ONE | 3 |
| INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | 5 |
| I. ROOT CAUSES OF REFUGEE FLOWS AND OTHER FORCED POPULATION DISPLACEMENTS | 5 |
| II. THE 1969 OAU CONVENTION GOVERNING THE SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF REFUGEE PROBLEMS IN AFRICA | 7 |
| III. REFUGEE PROTECTION IN AFRICA | 8 |
| IV. MATERIAL ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES | 10 |
| V. INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS | 11 |
| VI. SOLUTIONS FOR REFUGEES | 12 |
| (A) REFUGEE REPATRIATION | 12 |
| (B) INTER-AFRICAN RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES | 14 |
| VII. OTHER POPULATIONS IN NEED OF PROTECTION AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE | 15 |
| VIII. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE | 15 |
| IX FROM RELIEF AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY | 16 |
| X INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS | 17 |
| FOLLOW-UP | 18 |

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. The OAU/UNHCR Commemorative Symposium on Refugees and Forced Population Displacements in Africa took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 8 to 10 September 1994. The symposium was held to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (the "1969 OAU Convention") and the twentieth year of its entry into force on 20 June 1974.
2. The Symposium brought together representatives of almost all the Member States of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and a number of the Member States of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Also represented were relevant organizations of the United Nations system, other inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and academics from various parts of the world.
3. The participants in the Symposium have noted with satisfaction the important contribution that the 1969 OAU Convention has made to refugee protection and solutions in Africa. It has also inspired other regions of the world. While acknowledging the challenges facing the Convention, the Symposium reaffirmed its belief in the continued validity of the Convention as the regional foundation for providing protection and finding solutions for refugees in Africa. The Symposium also believed that the Convention provided a good basis for developing the legal tools and mechanisms for solving the problems of refugees and forced population displacements as a whole.
4. There have been positive developments in finding solutions for refugees in Africa, such as the successfully completed repatriation of South African refugees in 1993 and the continuing return home of over one million Mozambican refugees. However, new refugee emergencies have also occurred in many parts of the Continent. In fact, the refugee population in Africa has grown more than 10 times, from 700,000 to over 7,000,000, in the twenty-five years since the Convention came into existence in 1969. Moreover, in addition to the 7,000,000 refugees, one third of the world total, there are an estimated 20 million internally displaced persons on the African continent. But while the displacement crisis is growing, the political, financial and material support towards protecting and assisting refugees can no longer be taken for granted, as a result of various global developments.
5. The refugee flows impose intolerable security, social and economic burdens on the countries that have generously provided and continue to provide asylum. More seriously, they are symptomatic of the tragedy of the ethnic conflicts, social disintegration and political anarchy prevailing in some countries in Africa.

6. Thus, the anniversaries of the 1969 OAU Convention provide an opportunity not only to review the achievements of and challenges facing the Convention, but also to draw attention to the continuing urgency of the refugee and displacement crisis in Africa.

7. The recommendations contained in this document do not lose sight of many important initiatives, recommendations, decisions, declarations and plans of action which have preceded this Symposium, in Africa and elsewhere, and which have an important bearing on the refugee issue. Thus, in formulating its recommendations, the Symposium has drawn inspiration from, among others, the Recommendations of the Pan-African Conference on the Situation of Refugees in Africa, (Arusha, Tanzania, 7 - 17 May 1979, "The Arusha Recommendations"); the African Charter on Human and People's Rights of 1981; the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (1984, "ICARA H Recommendations"); the Oslo Declaration and Plan of Action on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa ("SARRED", August 1988); the Khartoum Declaration on Africa's Refugee Crisis Adopted by the Seventeenth Extra-Ordinary Session of the OAU Commission of Fifteen on Refugees (Khartoum, Sudan, 20 - 24 September 1990); the Declaration. Framework of Cooperation and Action Programme of the Horn of Africa Summit on Humanitarian Issues (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, April 1992); the African Humanitarian Initiative for Sustainable Development (1993); the Cairo Declaration on the Establishment Within the OAU of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention Management and Resolution (Cairo, June 1993); the Addis Ababa PARINAC Conclusions and Recommendations, (March 1994); the Oslo PARINAC Declaration and Plan of Action (Oslo, June 1994); and the Tunis Declaration on the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (Tunis, June 1994).

PART TWO

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. ROOT CAUSES OF REFUGEE FLOWS AND OTHER FORCED POPULATION DISPLACEMENTS

8. Refugee flows are a symbol of the crises which afflict many societies in Africa. In particular, most of the refugee flows are the result of armed conflicts and civil strife. Ethnic intolerance; the abuse of human rights on a massive scale; the monopolization of political and economic power; refusal to respect democracy or the results of free and fair elections; resistance to popular participation in governance; and poor management of public affairs all play a part in forcing people to flee their normal places of residence.

9. External factors have also played a part in at least contributing to forced population displacements. Historically, the main cause of coerced population displacements has been colonialism. Today, there is no question that international economic forces have contributed to the widespread poverty in Africa and to the widening gap between the poor and the rich. In many African countries, there is competition over scarce resources, and the human and physical environment has suffered degradation. Some States can no longer carry out the critical functions of government, including the control of national territory; oversight over the nation's resources; extraction of revenue; maintenance of an adequate national infrastructure; rendering of basic services such as sanitation, education, and housing; and governance and maintenance of law and order. All these factors contribute in one or another way to the root causes of displacement.

10. The Symposium has focused much of its discussions on the root causes of displacement and the imperative need to carry out preventive measures. Recognizing that conflicts are the major cause of displacement in Africa today, the participants echoed many times over the urgency of taking energetic measures to prevent conflicts or resolve them expeditiously after they have started. They called for decisive national and international measures to create stable, viable and progressive societies. Otherwise, refugee displacements would continue unabated, and prospects for the return of refugees to their countries of origin would also remain elusive.

Recommendation One

The Member States of the Organization of African Unity (OA U) and the OA U Secretariat, in collaboration with the relevant inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, should examine all the factors which cause or contribute to civil conflicts, with a view to elaborating a Comprehensive Plan of Action for tackling the root causes of refugee flows and other displacements. Among others, the following issues should be

examined: ethnic strife and conflict; the role of the arms trade in causing or exacerbating conflicts in Africa; the establishment of a firm foundation for democratic institutions and governance; the respect of human rights, the promotion of economic development and social progress; the obstacles to providing protection and humanitarian assistance to displaced persons; and the inter-relationship between humanitarian, political and military actions at an international level.

Recommendation Two

The political leadership of Africa should rise up to the challenges of practicing politics of inclusion and popular participation in national affairs; creating a firm foundation for responsible and accountable governance; and promoting social progress, economic development and a just and fair society.

Recommendation Three

In this context, the Symposium notes with satisfaction the activities of the OAU in conflict prevention and resolution. Bearing in mind the beneficial effects of such activities in preventing or reducing displacement, the Symposium:

(i) recommends that the linkage between the activities of the OAU in conflict prevention, management and resolution and those on behalf of refugees and internally displaced persons should be strengthened.

(ii) urges organizations involved in refugee and other displacement issues, and the international community at large, to support the activities of the OAU in conflict prevention, management and resolution.

(iii) in particular, encourages those organizations, and the international community at large, to contribute generously to the OAU Peace Fund and to provide human resources, technical support, advisory services and equipment to support the above-mentioned activities, in conformity with the relevant OAU guidelines.

(iv) further encourages them to support the OAU in elaborating and expanding its activities in the fields of human rights monitoring, the promotion of human rights and humanitarian law, election monitoring, the management of political transitions, and the development of early warning systems at national, sub-regional and continental levels.

Recommendation Four

The Symposium urges all parties involved in armed conflicts to respect the principles and norms of humanitarian law, particularly those aimed at , protecting civilians from the effects of war, preventing their being subjected to attacks, reprisals or starvation, or being displaced in conditions contrary to the provisions of Additional Protocol 11 to the 1949 Geneva Conventions on the laws of war.

II. THE 1969 OAU CONVENTION GOVERNING THE SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF REFUGEE PROBLEMS IN AFRICA

11. As a regional complement of the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, the 1969 OAU Convention has been a strong pillar for refugee protection and solutions in Africa. It has enabled the provision of asylum to refugees and the implementation of voluntary repatriation in a way that has consolidated brotherhood and comity among African States. It has also inspired the development of favourable refugee laws, policies and practices in Africa and indeed in other regions of the world, most notably in the Latin American region. The Convention remains the only international legal instrument which contains elaborate principles on the voluntary repatriation of refugees.

Recommendation Five

The Symposium reaffirms its belief in the continuing validity of the 1969 OAU Convention as the cornerstone of refugee protection and solutions in Africa. In this regard, and in order to implement the Convention more effectively, it is recommended that States:

- (i) which have not already done so should ratify the Convention.*
- (ii) should uphold the principles of the Convention on the humanitarian nature of asylum; prohibit activities inconsistent with refugee status; safeguard refugees against refoulement or expulsion; actively promote voluntary repatriation; respect the principle of voluntariness in repatriation; and practice burden-sharing and solidarity among States.*
- (iii) should enact the necessary legislations and regulations so as to give effect nationally to the Convention and its principles.*
- (iv) with the support of the OAU, UNHCR, and other relevant organizations, provide training to government officials on the provisions of the 1969 OAU Convention and the principles of refugee protection in general, as well as promote those standards among the refugee and national populations as a whole.*
- (v) should courageously resist temptations to whittle down, through national policies, laws or practices, the obligations and standards contained in the Convention.*

Recommendation Six

Those regions of the world in which international or regional legal systems for refugee protection do not exist, or where the applicable regimes are under review, should consider the relevance of the 1969 OAU Convention. In this regard, the Symposium highlights the Convention's broad definition of a refugee, its provisions on the non-

rejection of refugees at borders and the prohibition of refoulement of refugees, and the respect of the voluntariness of refugee repatriation.

III. REFUGEE PROTECTION IN AFRICA

12. Most of the African States have acceded to the three major international instruments on refugees. 45 States have acceded to the 1951 Convention; 46 to the 1967 Protocol and 42 to the 1969 OAU Convention. Only 4 States in Africa have not yet acceded to at least one of these instruments. Throughout the continent, countries are generous towards refugees and many practise liberal asylum policies.
13. Nevertheless, the institution of asylum and the system of refugee protection are under tremendous stress in Africa. The large number of refugees seeking asylum in countries already themselves experiencing tremendous social and economic hardships, has brought into question the very capacity of nations to cope with refugees. In a number of countries, the basic principles of refugee protection are not being upheld. Refugees have been arrested and detained without charge. Others have been returned against their will to places where their lives may be in danger. Yet others have been restricted to refugee camps or to remote, inaccessible locations where they are sometimes exposed to banditry, rape and other forms of criminality. Many have not been able to enjoy social, economic and civil rights.
14. This is partly the result of a combination of political, security, social and economic constraints whereby States are able to abide by their international legal obligations only under the most difficult and burden-some circumstances. Unfortunately, because of a global recession and the increased number of persons seeking asylum and humanitarian assistance world-wide, the international community's financial and material support to lighten the burden on African host countries has diminished.

Recommendation Seven

African States should abide by the letter and spirit of the 1969 OAU Convention and continue to uphold their traditional hospitality towards refugees and their liberal asylum policies. In particular:

(i) Refugees seeking admission into the territory of another State should not be rejected at the border or returned to territories where their lives may be endangered. Accordingly, Governments should not close their borders in order to refuse refugees admission.

(ii) Governments should use their best endeavours to treat refugees according to the standards established under refugee law. In particular, they should ensure the personal safety of refugees, locate them in areas which are accessible, safe and where basic services and amenities can be provided, and enable them to regain a normal way of life.

Recommendation Eight

The international community, the United Nations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and other relevant organizations, should support and assist host Governments in fulfilling their responsibilities towards refugees in a manner consistent with the principles of refugee law on the one hand, and legitimate national security, social and economic interests on the other hand. In particular, financial, material and technical assistance should be made available to:

(i) ensure that the social and economic structures, community services, and the environment of host countries or communities are not unduly stretched as a result of having to host massive numbers of refugees.

(ii) provide food, water, shelter, sanitation and medical services on a timely basis so that refugees and local populations alike are not put in a life-endangering situation.

(iii) determine the refugee status of persons seeking asylum, and to ensure that those who do not need or deserve international protection do not abuse the humanitarian institution of asylum.

(iv) enable Governments to respond effectively to situations which may contribute to a deterioration in security, law and order in the refugee-hosting areas. In this regard, priority should be placed on isolating and disarming individuals or groups among the refugee populations who may be armed and threatening the lives of innocent refugees, local citizens, and humanitarian personnel, or engaging in other criminal acts.

(v) further to the preceding recommendation, to trace and impound for safe custody or destruction, dangerous weapons illegally circulating or hidden in refugee-hosting areas.

(vi) create or strengthen national institutions to manage and deal with refugee matters at central, provincial and district levels; build adequate and well-trained human resources capacity; and to have such technical and logistic resources as will enable Governments to respond to and administer all aspects of refugee problems.

IV. MATERIAL ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES

15. The principles of international solidarity and burden-sharing have traditionally provided the foundation for the response by the international community to refugee problems. It is now evident that African countries cannot sustain the burdens of hosting refugees on their own. Yet, because of "compassion fatigue" or "donor fatigue", financial and material resources for refugee programmes in Africa from the developed countries are declining. In recent emergency situations, the response of the international community has been hesitant and characterized by poor preparedness and limited resources.
16. Moreover, in all parts of the world, measures taken to meet diverse national interests have not always conformed to the objectives of refugee protection in all cases. To avoid illegal migration and reduce the abuse of asylum procedures, measures such as interdiction on the high seas, visa restrictions and carrier sanctions have been instituted. Likewise, new refugee categorizations have been devised along with a more restrictive interpretation of the refugee definition in the 1951 Convention. In addition, concepts such as "safe countries of origin", "temporary protection", "safety zones", "in-country processing" and "safe return" have been developed.
17. These measures, while taken to safeguard various national interests, have had the effect of imposing restrictive migratory controls and raised concerns that genuine refugees are being deterred from being able to seek and enjoy asylum. On the other hand, in some countries, such measures have the effect of denying entry to refugees.

Recommendation Nine

Donor countries, and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, should provide financial, material and technical assistance to the African asylum countries hosting refugee populations. In cases of large-scale influxes, such assistance should necessarily be provided on a timely basis in order that lives are not lost.

Recommendation Ten

The refugee crisis cannot be addressed effectively through rigid and regionalized approaches. The Symposium recommends that this problem be addressed in a global and comprehensive manner, as it will ultimately affect every region of the world. Likewise, countries should strive for effective cooperation and mutual assistance on refugee, displacement and migratory issues, the same way they collaborate on security, economic and environmental matters.

Recommendation Eleven

The Symposium appeals for genuine international solidarity and burden-sharing to be brought back to the centre of the refugee problem, the international system of protection and of solutions for refugees. In particular, a truly international system embracing global standards and principles on prevention, refugee protection, assistance and solutions should be reinvigorated. The steady slide towards restrictive, deterrent, laws, policies and practices at a global level must be halted and reversed.

Recommendation Twelve

In order to reinforce the measures proposed in the above-mentioned recommendations, the Africa region should elaborate, with dedication and determination, modalities for an effective response to the refugee problem on a regional basis. In situations where a sub-region or group of countries are affected by a common refugee problem, such an approach is particularly appropriate. In other cases where emergencies are beyond humanitarian action alone, the necessary political initiatives may also require a regional approach. Therefore, arrangements to ensure prevention of refugee displacements, guarantee protection within the region and actively promote solutions are considered to be essential elements of this approach.

V. INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

18. The situation of internally displaced persons typifies vividly the crisis of displacement in Africa today. They are estimated at almost 20 million. Notwithstanding the magnitude of the problem, no single organization has a specific and comprehensive mandate to respond to the protection and assistance needs of internally displaced -persons as a whole. In certain circumstances, their needs have been catered for by given organizations. Nevertheless, the international community remains inadequately equipped to respond effectively to all aspects of their problems. Indeed, the problem of internally displaced persons represents one of the most tragic humanitarian and human rights crises in Africa today.

Recommendation Thirteen

The primary responsibility to ensure the protection of all its nationals belongs to the State as a duty and responsibility flowing from sovereignty. States should uphold the rights provided for under international and national law in favour of internally displaced persons. In particular, their right to life; not to be arbitrarily relocated; and to be able to return to their habitual places of residence must be respected at all times. In addition, both States and non-state entities involved in armed conflicts are bound to abide by the human rights and humanitarian law principles and norms, the observance of which would ensure the protection of internally displaced persons.

Recommendation Fourteen

All parties to a conflict or who control areas where internally displaced persons are located should cooperate with the relevant organizations involved in humanitarian activities in enabling them to gain access to the displaced so as to cater to their needs. This type of access for humanitarian purposes should not be considered as impinging on the sovereignty of States. On the contrary, the consent of States to such access, to ensure saving the lives of the internally displaced persons, is an exercise of a primordial function of sovereignty.

Recommendation Fifteen

The Symposium strongly supports the efforts of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons, and initiatives taken in other national, regional and international fora, to promote appropriate legal, institutional and operational mechanisms for the better protection and assistance of internally displaced persons.

VI. SOLUTIONS FOR REFUGEES

(a) REFUGEE REPATRIATION

19. The voluntary return of refugees to their countries of origin, whenever feasible, remains the best solution. In this connection, the Symposium notes with satisfaction that the conclusion of a Peace Accord in Mozambique in October 1992 has opened the way for the return home of more than one million Mozambican refugees. Moreover, in other regions, the potential for refugee solutions through repatriation looks promising.
20. However, in some other regions of the continent, a large number of refugees are unable to return to their countries. The main constraint to voluntary repatriation is continuing insecurity, violence or strife in the countries of origin. Moreover, many areas of potential repatriation have suffered years of destruction, stagnation and decay. In other areas, there is a high prevalence of land mines and other abandoned or concealed munitions. In yet others, the repatriation of refugees is impeded either by policies deliberately intended to deter return, or because of a shortage of resources, such as land, for the settlement of the returnees and their re-integration.
21. Most refugees return spontaneously with little or no assistance given to them or to the areas into which they are returning. Some voluntary repatriation programmes are not properly coordinated between participating organizations. Thus, adequate assessment of the needs of the returnees and the areas of return are often neglected.

22. The Symposium deplores attempts, which have been made by some Governments both in and outside Africa, to return refugees to their countries of origin against their will, including in situations where danger to their safety still exists.

Recommendation Sixteen

Every opportunity for the voluntary repatriation of refugees should be seized upon. In keeping with the provisions of the 1969 OAU Convention, Governments of asylum and Governments of origin should create conducive conditions for the return home of refugees in safety and dignity. The OAU and UNHCR should support these initiatives and measures and also carry out such activities, consistent with their respective mandates, to promote and facilitate voluntary repatriation.

Recommendation Seventeen

In promoting refugee repatriation, the principle of voluntariness elaborated in the 1969 OAU Convention and in general refugee law should be respected at all times. Governments should not resort to the forcible repatriation of refugees for any reason. Furthermore, refugees should not be returned to conditions where they may be endangered. The withdrawal of food distribution in refugee camps so as to force refugees to return to their country, whereas they may still be in need of protection, is a flagrant contravention of refugee law and the well-accepted principle of voluntariness of repatriation.

Recommendation Eighteen

Refugee repatriation programmes should be designed in such a manner as to ensure that refugees who return spontaneously are not excluded from the relevant monitoring activities and assistance programmes.

Recommendation Nineteen

Refugees should be allowed to participate in decisions concerning their repatriation. In this connection, they should be provided with all the relevant information necessary for informed judgments. The Government of the country of origin, the Government of the country of asylum, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees should cooperate in providing refugees with the necessary information.

Recommendation Twenty

In planning and implementing repatriation programmes, the protection and assistance needs of the most vulnerable, particularly women, children and the elderly, must be provided for at every stage of the return and reintegration operation.

Recommendation Twenty One

The international community should provide assistance for the rehabilitation or reconstruction of the social and economic infrastructures, services and distribution systems in the areas of return in order that the conditions for successful repatriation are thereby created.

Recommendation Twenty Two

The Organization of African Unity and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees should collaborate in clarifying:

(
i) *which organizations or authorities have responsibility to remove land mines and other munitions imbedded in areas of return.*

(ii) *the extent of the obligation upon the international community to provide humanitarian assistance for the rehabilitation and recovery of areas of return and the implications of this obligation.*

(iii) *what legal principles apply and what actions may be taken by refugees, countries of asylum and the international community at large to achieve a solution where, as a result of the policies or other developments in the country of origin, refugees are in effect condemned to permanent exile and for all practical purposes lose their nationality.*

(b) INTER-AFRICAN RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES

23. While voluntary repatriation remains the best solution to refugee problems, resettlement to another country is sometimes the only way to guarantee the protection of refugees. Resettlement in the traditional resettlement countries is increasingly becoming more restricted and limited. While UNHCR continues its efforts for the resettlement of refugees from Africa in those countries, there is a need for African countries to reinvigorate inter-African resettlement of refugees.
24. Indeed, many African countries have in the past accepted refugees from other countries of asylum for permanent settlement. Recently, some others have offered to resettle small numbers of refugees and have provided quotas for this purpose. For its part, UNHCR has provided funds to ensure the successful integration of refugees accepted for resettlement under these arrangements.

Recommendation Twenty Three

The Symposium appeals to African States to offer additional places for the resettlement in their territories of refugees from other African countries.

Recommendation Twenty Four

Where refugees are accepted for resettlement under these inter African arrangements, UNHCR should provide the necessary resources to facilitate their reintegration into their new societies. In cooperation with the OAU, it should also help in developing resettlement criteria to ensure that inter-African resettlement is implemented in a way which is compatible with the integration capacity of the accepting countries.

Recommendation Twenty Five

Modalities for further encouraging and implementing inter African resettlement of refugees should be elaborated jointly by UNHCR, the OAU and interested African states. For this purpose, a consultative meeting could be envisaged.

VII. OTHER POPULATIONS IN NEED OF PROTECTION AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

25. Alongside refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons, there are other populations, including victims of poverty, drought or famine, as well as unaccompanied minors and demobilized soldiers who usually have some need for protection and for material assistance similar to those of refugees or returnees. Their needs are not recognized in a systematic way in the mandates of the organizations of the international humanitarian system.

Recommendation Twenty Six

Organizations whose mandates are limited to only specific groups of persons should carry out their humanitarian and assistance activities in a flexible and imaginative manner. They should strive to ensure that the needs of the community in which refugees and returnees are located are also met, without limiting themselves strictly to only those persons falling within their respective mandates.

VIII. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

26. The Symposium took note of recent initiatives aimed at improving the international community's emergency preparedness and response capabilities. Along with the establishment in 1991 of the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs, several early warning mechanisms have been established. Most organizations involved in humanitarian action have established standing emergency response capabilities.
27. Yet, in almost all major refugee emergencies which have occurred in Africa, the response has been late and generally poor. Among many other reasons, the system depends almost entirely on external inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations and external finance and material resources. Secondly, there is no international relief system per se - there are several

actors who do not always display structural interdependence and are sometimes divided by different mandates and institutional goals. Thirdly, the system is characterized by a lot of competition, overlap and wastage. Finally, emergency response measures cannot be fully effective if not linked to the complex interplay of political and other factors that cause the emergency in the first place.

Recommendation Twenty Seven

The Symposium supports the ongoing efforts aimed at strengthening the international emergency response system, including those measures for the development of effective early-warning systems; to improve coordination, cooperation and communication among agencies involved in humanitarian action; to pre position emergency stocks and resources; improve emergency planning; and to establish emergency response capabilities within individual organizations.

Recommendation Twenty Eight

The Symposium reiterates that these actions should be linked to institutional and capacity building at the indigenous level. In particular, they should contribute to the establishment or improvement of the national (government) disaster response and management capacity and enable grass-roots and community-based organizations to participate effectively in all aspects of emergency response.

IX FROM RELIEF AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

28. The Symposium observed that in many parts of Africa, the situation in both the country of origin and, the country of asylum is characterized by extreme poverty and serious dislocations in the social and economic structures. Whereas relief assistance is needed to save lives in an emergency situation, the long-term objectives of rehabilitation, reconstruction and development cannot be achieved by such assistance alone. Moreover, as long as those objectives are not achieved, relief assistance itself may reinforce the situation of want and need.

Recommendation Twenty Nine

Emergency relief and humanitarian assistance should, as far as possible, be conceived and delivered within the context of the long-term development goals of the concerned countries and with a view to preventing the recurrence of conflict and/or displacement. Relief and humanitarian assistance should therefore be designed in such a way that their short term nature paves the way for medium to long-term solutions, namely rehabilitation, reconstruction and development with transformation as the ultimate and most durable goal.

Recommendation Thirty

The interventions of the relevant organizations, in the framework of inter-agency coordination, should be organized in such a way that measures designed to cope with emergency situations are linked to well-thought out policies and programmes for development. This approach is particularly crucial for those societies where war and massive displacements have left economic decline, shattered infrastructures, . destroyed food production systems and caused chronic food shortages, widespread malnutrition and rampant death. In relation to repatriation, particularly of refugees of an agricultural background, they should be provided land for settlement and use, seeds, tools, other agriculture implements, and livestock so that they may be able to regain a' normal way of life. There should also be major investments in health, education, shelter and sanitation and in the recovery and rehabilitation of the social and economic infrastructures.

X INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

29. The implementation of the recommendations contained in this document will necessitate an interplay of political, social and economic questions. All these issues will have to be integrated into a rational and comprehensive system in which the respective governments and the international and non-governmental organizations complement each other in an efficient and effective manner.

Recommendation Thirty One

The Symposium calls upon Governments and the relevant inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations to take concerted actions to implement the proposals contained in this document. Where necessary, the mandates, structures, capacities or competences of the respective institutions should be reviewed so as to enable them to address a much wider range of humanitarian, social and political matters. Furthermore, cooperation and coordination between and among organizations and authorities should be consolidated. New or unprecedented challenges should be boldly and innovatively tackled.

PART THREE

FOLLOW-UP

Recommendation Thirty Two

The Symposium requests its organizers to present the recommendations herein to the appropriate organs, respectively, of the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other relevant inter-governmental and non-governmental bodies for their consideration and approval.

Recommendation Thirty Three

The recommendations should also be presented to the Member States of the Organization of African Unity and the Member States of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for their separate consideration and implementation as may be considered appropriate.

Recommendation Thirty Four

Those States and the organizations specifically mentioned in this document are requested to follow up and take practical measures to implement the relevant recommendations.

A/AC.96/839