

No. 64 (XLI) - 1990 - Refugee Women and International Protection

The Executive Committee,

Noting with serious concern the widespread violations of the rights of refugee women and their specific needs;

Underlining the potential of refugee women and the need to ensure their full participation in analyzing their needs and in designing and implementing programmes which make appropriate use of their resources;

Reaffirming its Conclusions No. 39 (XXXVI) on Refugee Women and International Protection;

Stressing that all action taken on behalf of women who are refugees must be guided by the relevant international instruments relating to the status of refugees as well as other applicable human rights instruments, in particular, for States parties thereto, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women;

Recognizing that ensuring equal treatment of refugee women and men may require specific action in favour of the former;

Recalling the special relevance of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies on the Advancement of Women and the obligation of the United Nations Systems as a whole to give effect to its provisions;

Reiterating the importance of collecting data which allows for the monitoring of progress achieved in meeting the needs of refugee women,

a) Urges States, relevant United Nations organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations, as appropriate, to ensure that the needs and resources of refugee women are fully understood and integrated, to the extent possible, into their activities and programmes and, to this end, to pursue, among others, the following aims in promoting measures for improving the international protection of refugee women:

- i) Promote energetically the full and active participation of refugee women in the planning, implementation and evaluation/monitoring of all sectors of refugee programmes;
- ii) Increase the representation of appropriately trained female staff across all levels of all organizations and entities which work in refugee programmes and ensure direct access of refugee women to such staff;
- iii) Provide, wherever necessary, skilled female interviewers in procedures for the determination of refugee status and ensure appropriate access by women asylum-seekers to such procedures, even when accompanied by male family members;
- iv) Ensure that all refugees and the staff of relevant organizations and authorities are fully aware of, and support, the rights, needs and resources of refugee women and take appropriate specific actions;
- v) Integrate considerations specific to the protection of refugee women into assistance activities from their inception, including when planning refugee camps and settlements, in order to be able to deter, detect and redress instances of physical and sexual abuse as well as other protection concerns at the earliest possible moment;
- vi) Extend professional and culturally appropriate gender-based counselling as well as other related services to refugee women who are victims of abuse;
- vii) Identify and prosecute persons who have committed crimes against refugee women and protect the victims of such crimes from reprisals;
- viii) Issue individual identification and/or registration documents to all refugee women;
- ix) Provide all refugee women and girls with effective and equitable access to basic services, including food, water and relief supplies, health and sanitation, education and skills training, and make wage-earning opportunities available to them;
- x) Provide for informed and active consent and participation of refugee women in individual decisions about durable solutions for them;

xi) Ensure that resettlement programmes make special provisions for refugee women at risk.

b) Invites UNHCR to develop comprehensive guidelines on the protection of refugee women as a matter of urgency in order to give effect to its policy on refugee women as contained in document A/AC.96/754.