

RESOLUTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES IN AFRICA (ICARA)

The Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, meeting in its Thirty-sixth Ordinary Session in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 23 February to 1 March, 1981,

Recalling its resolution CM/Res.814 (XXXV) on the situation of refugees in Africa, and in particular its operative paragraph “8” calling for the convening of a Pledging Conference for assistance to refugees,

Recalling further the recommendations adopted on this subject by the Third Conference of African Ministers of Social Affairs held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 8 to 10 October 1980,

Noting with satisfaction the decision of the UN General Assembly by its resolution 35/42 to convene an International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (ICARA),

Deeply concerned about the plight of refugees in Africa, their ever-increasing numbers, and the limited resources at the disposal of African governments to deal with their needs, as effectively demonstrated in the Report of the OAU Commission of Fifteen on Refugees in Africa (Document CM/1093 (XXXVI)) unanimously adopted by this Council,

Expressing gratitude to the countries of asylum for the great sacrifice they are making in providing asylum to refugees in the spirit of African solidarity and traditional hospitality,

Noting with appreciation the efforts made by the international community through multilateral and bilateral arrangements to help countries of asylum to cope with the refugee situations within their boundaries, as well as the assistance given to facilitate the

voluntary return of the refugees to their countries of origin and for their resettlement and rehabilitation,

Recognizing, however, that despite the generous contributions provided by the international community, such assistance falls far short of the critical, medium and long-term needs of the refugees and does not ensure their basic human needs,

Recognizing further the importance of sending missions to selected donor countries, as well as to inter-governmental organizations, as part of the pre-conference preparation for sensitizing international opinion and for mobilizing the necessary support for the Conference,

Having been appraised of the efforts made since November 1980 in preparation for the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa,

Having heard with satisfaction the Progress Report and suggestions made by the Secretary-General concerning ICARA:

1. TAKES NOTE of the Progress Report and approves the suggestions made by the Secretary-General concerning arrangements for the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (Doc./CM/Plen.Rapt.Rpt. (XXXVI) Annex VII);
2. CONGRATULATES the governments of Member States on their assistance programmes to Refugees in Africa;
3. CONGRATULATES the Secretary-General of the OAU on the initiative he has taken to convene, in co-operation with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, in International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa;

4. FURTHER CONGRATULATES the Secretary-General of the United Nations on all the preparatory arrangements he has made to convene this conference at such short notice in close consultation with the OAU Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;
5. COMMENDS the UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and all refugee serving agencies, both governmental and non-governmental, active in Africa, for the invaluable and praiseworthy programmes and efforts which have contributed to alleviating the plight and sufferings of African refugees;
6. RECOGNIZES that these programmes are of an emergency nature and, although valuable, do not measure up to the basic needs of the African refugee population;
7. APPEALS to all donor countries and agencies to recognize the African refugee situation as an international responsibility and to make adequate and generous contributions to alleviate the sufferings of refugees;
8. CONSIDERS that, as the urgent refugee situation in Africa is likely to continue for some time to come, thus ICARA is not an end per se but the initial stage of a long-term exercise in the course of which fact-finding missions, accurate data collection activities, feasibility studies and the like will help to define priorities and to formulate projects whose impact on refugee situations is likely to pave the way for more durable solutions;
9. ENDORSES the appeal of the United Nations Secretary-General that the level of participation at the Conference for all countries be at ministerial level, so as to underscore the importance which those countries attach to the Conference;
10. CALLS UPON the international relief organizations, as well as donor countries and agencies in view of the urgency, magnitude and complexity of the refugee situation in Africa to enhance their capacities and harmonize their activities so

that the greatest and most positive impact is brought to bear on the refugee situation;

11. RECOMMENDS to the countries of asylum to reinforce their assistance machineries in order to make them more effective;
12. RECOMMENDS FURTHER TO:
 - (a) UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF and other relief-related organizations to review and enhance their own capacities for responding promptly and adequately to the demands of the African refugee situation;
 - (b) donor countries and agencies to maintain close consultation with those involved in the African refugee situation, either through bilateral or multilateral contacts, so that they can be kept fully informed of the actual needs of the refugees;
 - (c) all concerned to initiate activities that would entail more co-operation and co-ordination among all involved in refugee protection and assistance programmes for the benefit of the refugees themselves whose cause is the primary concern of the international community;
 - (d) all concerned to attach great importance to ways and means of facilitating voluntary repatriation of refugees;
 - (e) OAU and UNHCR, in addition to their general assistance programmes to focus, in the formulation of their assistance programmes, on the voluntary repatriation or settlement of refugees in the country of asylum;

13. REQUESTS the Secretary-General of the OAU to keep the Council informed of the outcome of this International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, and to report periodically to follow-up actions;
14. FURTHER REQUESTS the Secretary-General of the OAU to communicate a copy of this resolution to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the information of all participants in the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa.