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REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PRC
SUB-COMMITTEE ON REFUGEES, RETURNEES
AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS:
FEBRUARY- July 2009

**REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PRC SUB-COMMITTEE ON
REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS:
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I. INTRODUCTION

The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa together with the Commission of the African Union and in collaboration with the AU Partners, implemented its Plan of Action which was adopted in 1996 in Yaounde, Cameroon, during the meeting of the Council of Ministers. Some of the activities, which were approved at the beginning of the year' were carried out accordingly.

II. ACTIVITIES

Missions of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons

The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons visited Angola, Central African Republic, Chad, Rwanda and South Africa between April and June 2009. They assessed the humanitarian situation of forced displacement. Extensive discussions were held with Government officials, AU Representatives, humanitarian organizations operating on the ground as well as refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons.

In Angola, the mission observed that the Government was doing an excellent job to resettle the returnees numbering over 450,000 who went back to more than 20 provinces in the country since 2003. They returned to the severely damaged infrastructure and socio-economic services due to the 30-year civil war. It was also noted that almost 150,000 are still outside the country mainly in neighbouring countries such as the DRC, the Republic of Congo and Zambia. The repatriation operation which ended in March 2007 will soon resume to allow the remaining Angolans who wish to return to come back; It will be a challenge for the Government to reintegrate them. This will be in addition to the challenge of addressing a steady flow of asylum seekers numbering over 13,000 from all regions of the African Continent, the majority of whom were not genuine refugees.

The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees expressed solidarity with the Government and the People of Angola and recommended that the African Union contribute US\$ 200,000 towards assisting the Government in its resettlement and reintegration programmes for returnees.

It should be noted that at the time of writing the report, some mentioned countries had not been visited. Their reports are not therefore included in the findings.

Meetings

In February 2009, on behalf of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, its Bureau met and considered the Programme of Work of the Sub-Committee for the period February to December 2009, which is being implemented.

As one of the members of the Task Force on the Special Summit of Heads of State and Government on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons scheduled to be held in October 2009 in Kampala, Uganda, the Bureau of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees participated in several preparatory meetings of the Task Force. The Sub-Committee also met in May 2009 and was briefed on the preparations of the Summit.

Some Ambassadors representing the five regions and who are also members of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees held an informal meeting with the ICRC on the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in February 2009. Several recommendations were made on the way forward in the promotion of IHL, in particular, in the preparations of the Special Summit.

III. CONCLUSION

In various meetings and conferences, the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees emphasized the importance of the participation of all Member States at the first-ever Special Summit of African Union Heads of State and Government on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa as it will not dwell on achievements and statements, but rather on mapping out the thorny challenges and how to move forward in the form of recommendations and solemn Declaration for the eventual elimination of the problem of forced displacement. The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees also emphasized the importance of endorsing and signing the African Union Convention on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, which will be the first legally binding Convention on IDPs in the world.

Finally, it has been observed that Member States are slow to receive the missions of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees in their respective countries. As a result, it has impacted on the activities of the Sub-Committee in executing its work programme on time.

2009

Report on the activities of the PRC sub-committee on refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons: February- July 2009

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