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**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON**  
**THE OAU COMMISSION ON REFUGEES**

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ON THE OAU COMMISSION ON REFUGEES

I. INTRODUCTION

The OAU Commission on Refugees has, since the presentation of its report to the Sixty-eighth Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers in June 1998 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, continued to monitor closely the problem of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in the continent. The Commission together with the OAU Secretariat therefore, carried out various activities to find durable solutions to the problem of millions of refugees and displaced persons. Some of the most important activities included the holding of the OAU Ministerial Meeting on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Africa from 13-14 December 1998 in Khartoum, the Sudan, the provision of assistance to refugees in particular in the field of education, undertaking various evaluation missions to some OAU Member States that were affected with the problem of refugees and displaced persons in Africa as well as participating in some meetings and a workshop concerning refugees, returnees and displaced persons.

2. The Commission carried out its activities successfully, especially with regard to the holding of the Ministerial Meeting in Sudan as well as the undertaking of missions to evaluate the problem of refugees and displaced persons to Member States. All this was done in close cooperation between the UNHCR, ICRC and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in the Member States concerned.

II. REVIEW OF THE GENERAL SITUATION OF REFUGEES  
RETURNEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

3. During the period under review, Africa still host the largest number of refugees, about 5 million close to 15 million internally displaced persons. The continent has the potential for further large scale human displacement as incidents of civil strifes and persistent conflicts in some Member States continue to undermine all the efforts aimed at resolving the problem. The situation has reached an alarming stage at a time when the continent is in a difficult period of undergoing economic recovery and transformation. The countries most affected are Angola, Burundi, Comoros, Guinea Bissau, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Liberia, Somalia and Sierra Leone.



4. Despite Africa's enormous socio-economic problems, it has been consistently meeting its numerous challenges in granting asylum to thousands of refugees. The host countries continue to make huge sacrifices in order to meet the basic needs of refugees and displaced persons. It is even difficult to quantify the sacrifices made in terms of money. The presence of refugees and displaced persons exert tremendous pressure on the host countries, for this they deserve to be congratulated. However, in recent years refugees are increasingly posing a threat to peace, security and stability in asylum countries and sometimes misunderstanding with countries of asylum and countries of origin and even sometimes with humanitarian organizations. As a result, these problems have created serious complex situations and new challenges to the host countries and the international community at large.

5. While political solutions are being sought by African Leaders to address and solve the problem of refugees and displaced persons, the international community on the other hand, should continue to provide the much needed financial and material assistance to countries of origin and countries of asylum to alleviate the sufferings of thousands of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa.

#### ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION

6. Since the last report of the OAU Commission on Refugees to the Council of Ministers in June 1998, the Commission met several times, especially at the level of its Bureau to consider various issues which affect the refugees, returnees and displaced persons. One of the most important meetings was the Ministerial Meeting which took place in Khartoum, the Sudan.

7. Furthermore, the Commission undertook missions to various African countries so as to assess and evaluate the problem of refugees, returnees and displaced persons within this period.

#### A. MEETINGS AND WORKSHOP

##### i. Ministerial meeting on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Person in Africa

8. Pursuant to Decision CM/Des.362 (LXVI) adopted by the 66<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers in May 1997 in Harare, Zimbabwe and which was further endorsed by Decision CM/Dec.412 (LXVIII) in Ouagadougou last June, the OAU Secretary General convened,

in close collaboration with UNHCR, a Ministerial Meeting of the OAU Commission on Refugees, to discuss and find durable solutions to the problem of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa.

9. Consequently, the Meeting which was preceded by an Experts Meeting took place in Khartoum, the Sudan from 13-14 December 1998. It was attended by the majority of OAU Member States, various international Organizations, UN Agencies, Governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as observers.

10. In the light of the continuing refugee and humanitarian crisis in Africa, the meeting reviewed and examined refugee and protection issues and discussed ways and means of developing strategies to identify and promote durable solutions to the long outstanding refugee problem. At the end of the two day Ministerial Meeting, pertinent Recommendations and a Declaration were adopted which are attached to this report as Annex I and II respectively.

ii. Meeting of the OAU Scholarship Awarding Committee on Refugees

11. The OAU Scholarship Awarding Committee met on 18 August 1998 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Osman El Sayed, Ambassador of the Sudan in his capacity as Chairman of the OAU Commission on Refugees to consider awarding scholarships to refugee students.

12. The Committee awarded scholarships to 14 refugee students out of 40 applicants who met the criteria established by the Committee. Currently the OAU is sponsoring 51 students for the academic year 1998/99 and the total sum involved is US\$255,000.00.

iii. Meeting of the 49<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner's Programme (EXCOM) Geneva, 5-9 October 1998

13. The Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs, H.E. Ambassador D. Antonio, the Chairman of the OAU Commission on Refugees, H.E. Mr. El Sayed, Ambassador of the Sudan to Ethiopia, the "Rapporteur of the Commission, H.E. Mr. Jean Hilaire Mbea Mbea, Ambassador of Cameroon to Ethiopia, the Executive Secretary of the OAU Permanent Mission in Geneva, Ambassador A. Besind as well as the Head of the OAU Bureau for Refugees Mr. S.E.M. Ngung attended the meeting of the 49<sup>th</sup> EXCOM.



14. During the Course of the Session, Ambassador Osman made a statement on behalf of the OAU emphasizing the magnitude of the problem of refugees, returnees and displaced persons. He pointed out the efforts being made by OAU in searching for a durable solution to the problem which included the scheduled OAU Ministerial Meeting on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Africa from 13-14 December 1998 in Khartoum, the Sudan. He urged the participants to attend such an important meeting.

iv. Workshop on Internal Displacement in Africa

15. The Workshop on Internal Displacement in Africa was held from 19-20 October 1998. It was jointly organized by Brookings Institution (Washington DC) UNHCR and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The Workshop was attended by 55 participants who represented international organizations, regional and sub-regional bodies, non-governmental organizations, and research institutions from Africa, Europe and North America.

16. The participants shared a common concern for the internally displaced persons as they brought distinct and different perspectives to the meeting, reflecting the nature of their involvement and experience with the issue of internal displacement. Valuable interaction took place between policy makers and practitioners. The workshop, therefore, focused attention on the problem of internal displacement in Africa and identified ways of improving the response to the problem at the national, regional and international levels. In this regard, the workshop emphasized the need of promoting the dissemination and application of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement throughout Africa and exploring the role of Africa's Internal Displacement throughout Africa and exploring the role of Africa's regional and sub-regional organizations in addressing the problem of internal displacement.

17. At the end of the workshop, the participants formulated recommendations in relation to the issue of internal displacement. The Commission also considered the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement when it met in June 1998 as requested by the Ministerial Meeting in Khartoum in December 1998.

B. MISSIONS OF THE OAU COMMISSION ON REFUGEES

18. In line with the implementation of the Programme of Action of the OAU Commission on Refugees adopted by the OAU Council of Ministers



in 1969, the Commission identified and visited 11 countries faced with the problem of refugees, returnees and displaced persons between the months of October and November 1998. The regions visited were Central, Southern Africa and Horn of Africa. North, West and some countries in Central Africa were visited before June 1998. The countries visited were Angola, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Sudan, and Zambia. Due to further deterioration of the situation of refugees and displaced persons after the visits in 1998, the Commission had to return to some countries in May 1999. These were Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, and Zambia. The delegations met with government officials responsible for refugee matters, officials of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and NGOs with whom they discussed problems and ways and means of assisting refugees, returnees and displaced persons, and thereafter, pertinent recommendations were made to this effect. The representatives of UNHCR were part of the mission.

19. The objectives of the mission in all the eleven countries visited were:

- a) to hold consultations with the government officials of the countries visited and exchange views on the problem of refugees and displaced persons;
- b) to assess the impact refugees and displaced persons have had on the countries of asylum and the burden being borne by these countries as a result of hosting large numbers of refugees;
- c) to make a review of the root causes of refugee movement in the region and to explore the possibilities for durable solutions to the refugee problem in order to promote peace and security in the area; and voluntary organizations were coping in terms of providing assistance to the refugees and displaced persons.

20. The Members of the Missions found the missions to be of great importance to the work of the OAU in the area of refugees, returnees and displaced persons. In this regard, they felt that the OAU Commission on Refugees should continue to undertake such missions in favour of refugees, returnees and displaced persons instead of theorizing the problem at the OAU headquarters in Addis Ababa, as this will show solidarity to our unfortunate brothers and sisters in camps/settlements and at the same time it will give the OAU the opportunity to appreciate the burden being carried out by the host countries and appreciate the excellent work and assistance given by UNHCR, other UN Agencies as well as Non-Governmental Organizations.



21. All the countries viewed voluntary repatriation as the most durable solution to the problem of refugees. They called on the OAU to address in practical manner, the root causes of the problem of refugees and displaced persons so as to eradicate the problem in the continent.

A. HORN OF AFRICA

22. The Mission to the Horn of Africa was led by H.E. Mr. Mamadi Diawara, Ambassador of Republic of Guinea to Ethiopia. Other members of the delegation were H.E. Mr. Masuhla Humphrey Leteka, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Lesotho and Miss Macrine Mayanja from the OAU Division for Refugees, Displaced Persons and Humanitarian Affairs.

a. Ethiopia

23. The Mission visited Western and Eastern parts of Ethiopia. It visited Sudanese refugees in Gambella (780 km from Addis Ababa) in the Western region from 20 to 22 October 1998 and from there the delegation went to Jijiga (660 km from Addis Ababa) in the Eastern region of the country where Somali refugees were found from 24 to 26 October 1998.

24. At the time of visit, the Mission was informed that Ethiopia was host to about 300,000 refugees settled in various camps/settlements as well as some urban refugees in Addis Ababa. Over 300,000 people are displaced at the border area with Eritrea, due to Ethio-Eritrean conflict which started in June 1998. The returnees up to date are estimated close to one million mainly from neighbouring countries.

25. The Mission visited two Sudanese settlements in Gambella namely, Bonga with a Sudanese refugee population of 12,806 and Fugnido which had 23,798. In both settlements, various activities were taking place such as income generating projects, medical treatment of refugees, gardening and distribution of food and non-food items. In both settlements the refugees talked to the Mission and informed them that their main problems were lack of food and non-food items, medicine as well as lack of schools and school materials.

26. The Mission also visited the Eastern part of the country where Somali refugees were staying in eight camps. Third population was estimated at 203,000 all receiving UNHCR assistance in close cooperation with the government and other aid agencies. The mission visited Teferiber camp which is 72 km from Jijiga. The camp had a refugee population of 36,337 persons. The Mission was taken around the camp and visited various

facilities used by the refugees. The Mission was also afforded the opportunity to witness the registration of those who were to be repatriated and the repatriation exercise in Teferiber of about 3,000 refugees back to north-west Somalia. The Mission was shown the food package and non-food items which were to be given to the returnees including the 200 Birr per person.

27. Still at the refugee camp, the OAU delegation was also able to be present at the handing over ceremony of its US\$50,000 as a contribution which was earmarked for the procurement of non-food items following the OAU Commission on Refugees recommendation for the provision of non-food items to the Somali refugees in 1996. The OAU contribution was utilized to purchase blankets and jerrycans which benefited over 10,000 families.

28. At the end of the visit, the authorities pointed out the major problems in refugee camps were mainly lack of bore holes, schools and school materials, grinding mills, food and non-food items, medicines and deforestation in refugee impacted areas.

29. Considering the enormous burden placed on Ethiopia due to large numbers of refugees and displaced persons, the country needs assistance. In this regard,

- i) the Commission therefore calls upon the international community to support environmental projects financially;
- ii) the Mission recommends that the international community construct more classrooms which should also include higher education and those who finish high school should be given scholarships by OAU and other refugee scholarship awarding agencies, especially those who are members of the OAU Coordinating Committee on Assistance and Protection to Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa; and
- iii) on the question of water, the majority of the camps depend on rainfall, thus making it difficult for the refugees to have enough water, especially during the dry seasons. This affects the well being of refugees, particularly the children. The Commission recommends that the OAU seriously consider contributing some funds to construct some shallow wells which would help to meet the demand by both the refugees and nationals as well as cattle.



30. Following the Commission's visit in October 1998, the situation of refugees, returnees and displaced persons has not changed that much except the refugee population increased slightly and that the exercise of repatriating Somali refugees in the safe areas of NW Somalia (Somaliland) continued as well as the return of more Ethiopians, especially from the Sudan.

b. Djibouti

31. The mission had a working visit in the Republic of Djibouti from 28 to 30 October 1998. The Mission met with Hon. Elmi Wais, Minister of Interior and Decentralization and other high ranking officials of the Ministry. The Minister thanked the OAU Mission to have visited his country as it had been a long time since the country received such a mission. The Mission was informed that the Republic of Djibouti with only a population of half a million people had been hosting large numbers of refugees since its independence in 1977. Today the country gave asylum to 23,000 registered refugees living in camps and 55 urban dwellers. Out of that number 21,500 were Somalis mainly from the North-west Somalia (Issa tribe) while 2,000 were Ethiopians and the rest of different nationalities. They were found in two camps namely: Ali-Adde and Holl Holl, in the district of Ali-Sabieth. Furthermore, the country has urban refugees numbering about 55,000 who constitute 20 per cent of the country's population and they were a great strain to the country's economy. The Mission visited Ali-Adde and Holl Holl refugee camps; and talked to the elders who requested for blankets and delivery rooms for expectant mothers.

32. Concerning the internally displaced persons, the civil war between the Djiboutian Government and the FRUD opposition movement which ended in 1994, caused the flight of thousands of persons from Afar ethnic origin. Some sought refuge in neighbouring countries, in particular, Ethiopia - others were internally displaced in Djibouti-ville and they were leading miserable life. No census had been carried out to determine their number.

33. Concerning the country's population, the refugees, including migrant workers, exert tremendous pressure on the country, the Mission requests the OAU to consider giving some assistance to both camps to buy the much needed blankets and assist in constructing simple delivery rooms for the expectant mothers.



c. Somalia (North-West Somalia)

34. The Mission left Jijiga by road and travelled to North-West of Somalia on 26 October 1998. It is 150 km from Jijiga to Hargesia, the capital of North-West Somalia. The Mission travelled with government officials and UNHCR officials from Jijiga to Hargesia. They held lengthy discussions with government officials, UNHCR officials as well as non-governmental organizations from 26 to 27 October 1998. They included: H.E. Mr. Mohammed Ibrahim Egal, President of Somaliland, H.E. Mr. Mohammed Salah Nur, Minister of External Affairs, and H.E. Mr. Abdullahi Hussein Imam, Minister of Resettlement, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (MRR&R).

35. The Mission was offered an opportunity to pay a courtesy call to H.E. Mr. Mohammed Ibrahim Egal, the President of Somaliland in his Office in Hargesia. The Government officials expressed their sincere thanks to the OAU Secretary-General for having sent a Mission to see itself the situation in Somaliland, especially the thousands, of returnees. The authorities informed the Mission that under the Ministry of Resettlement, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (MRR&R) which had a leading role in the repatriation, reintegration and rehabilitation programme, thousands of Somalis were coming back. They stated that most of the returnees were in Eastern part of Ethiopia, Libya, Kenya and Yemen. They said that over 400,000 refugees including internally displaced persons had returned either with the help of UNHCR or spontaneously. The officials informed the Mission that as they were receiving their nationals back from exile the country which depended almost on livestock was experiencing economic difficulties as Saudi Arabia banned their livestock. The economy lost 70 per-cent foreign exchange. They expected the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development for Eastern Africa (IGAD) to continue following up the issue of lifting the ban. The Mission was informed that the government of Somaliland was committed to collaborate with all the parties involved in finding a lasting and permanent solution on all matters related to a successful repatriation and reintegration of returnees including agreements with the countries of asylum and UNHCR within the framework of International Conventions.

36. The Mission visited Quick Impact Project (QIPs) of UNHCR which included women's centre, three primary schools, a secondary school, meat and vegetable market as well as one site for returnees.

37. Concerning the current situation in Somaliland, the Commission recommends that the OAU Secretary-General send a Fact Finding Mission



to assess the needs of returnees and how they could be reintegrated into society and also additionally in order to retain the thousands of returnees, the Commission recommends that OAU provide some financial contribution to the North-West Somalia so that the returnees would be integrated and rehabilitated into society.

38. The Mission took note of the enormous burden placed on UNHCR as it was the only organisation fully involved on ground to assist North-West Somalia. The Commission therefore recommends that the OAU appeals to the international community on humanitarian grounds to assist in the rehabilitation and construction of Somaliland as this would help all the refugees from Somaliland to return home.

39. While Somalis continued to return to North-West of Somalia even after the mission, the situation in other parts of Somalia was worrying as fighting of various factions continued claiming hundreds of lives and others fleeing to other countries.

d. Sudan

40. The Mission started working in Sudan from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> November 1998. While in Khartoum, the Mission met and held very fruitful discussions with H.E. Mr. Ahmed Moh Ali Ass, State Minister in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, H.E. Dr. Omar Abdel Magid, Director General of International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Abdel Rahim Khalil, Director of International Organisations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Hassan Bashir A. Wahab, Director of African Department, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other senior officials of the government.

41. The authorities informed the Mission that Sudan had a very generous policy of granting asylum, to refugees which had been going on for over 30 years, and that today the refugee population was estimated at over one million including those assisted by UNHCR and others on their own. They were found 24 settlements and two reception centres in Eastern, Central and the Red Sea States. Their numbers were as follows: Eritreans 147,085, Ethiopians 12,467 and Somalis 43.

42. Furthermore, other refugees were residing in different urban areas such as Khartoum, Kassala, Wad Medani, Port Sudan and Gadaref. Over 80,000 Ethiopians had been repatriated and a number of Eritreans from the country. This reduced the refugee population significantly and some camps

were closed. On the other hand, the country is still looking after her own displaced persons numbering more than one million.

43. On 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1998 the Mission went to El-Gadaref and Kassala regions about 600 km from Khartoum. It was accompanied by government officials and UNHCR. They visited Wad-Sharifie Refugee Reception Centre which had about 37,000 Eritrean refugees. The refugees had all the necessary services, for example, food, water, sanitation services and health services but some shelters were affected by shelling as the camp was located near the Sudanese-Eritrean border – 13 km from Eritrea. The Mission also visited internally displaced persons who numbered almost 30,000 in the area. They lacked proper housing and other essentials such as blankets, jerrycans and cooking utensils.

44. At the camp, the Mission also met and held some discussions with the refugee elders. They informed the Mission that they were willing to be repatriated back to Eritrea and stated that they wanted the support of the international community in order to start a new life. They also requested that the delegation of Eritrea should visit and tell them about the current situation in Eritrea.

45. The Mission appreciated the excellent work done by the Government of Sudan, UNHCR and all international organisations involved in the promotion of voluntary repatriation. The Commission therefore urges them to continue pursuing voluntary repatriation by providing the much needed funds to host countries.

46. The Mission noted the plight of large numbers of internally displaced persons, including the one visited by the Mission in Kassala region. In this regard, the Commission requests the OAU to consider buying essential items such as blankets, jerrycans, plastic sheets and cooking utensils to benefit the internally displaced persons.

47. The Mission recognized that the long presence of refugees had resulted in severe environmental damage as more than 100,000 hectares of forests and range land had been completely destroyed by refugees through tree cutting for firewood, building materials and overgrazing. Conscious of this, the Commission appeals to the international community to contribute to the reforestation projects aimed at restoring the damage caused.

48. The mission was briefed on the willingness of the government of Sudan to accept the Sudanese refugees back home to Sudan. The Mission therefore urges the Government of Sudan to enter into tripartite agreements



with the countries of asylum and UNHCR to start repatriating the Sudanese refugees.

49. After the Mission's visit, Sudan received a new influx of Ethiopian refugees from Eritrea and many of them are in Kassala region.

e. Eritrea

50. The Mission visited the state of Eritrea from 6 to 11 November 1998. During its stay it met Mr. Amdemichael Kahsay, Director General of Euro-American and International Organizations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who was acting Minister at the time of visit and other officials of the government, UN Agencies including UNHCR and other organisations.

51. The Mission was first informed of the thousands of Eritreans who fled during the Ethiopian-Eritrean war from mid 1970s to 1991 and pointed out that after gaining independence, the country had been receiving its nationals back mainly from neighbouring countries of which the number was estimated between 130,000 to 150,000 while others were still waiting for the resumption of organized repatriation and reintegration programme which was to have started last year but was affected by the current crisis between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

52. The Mission was further informed that since the Ethio-Eritrean border conflict started in June 1998, hundreds of thousands of people had been totally displaced from their homes and communities, and sought refuge in areas further from the border while others were affected either through disruption of their ability to farm and conduct their normal livelihood or by having to share their own meagre resources with the displaced. Schools and health facilities in the border areas ceased to function, causing disruption of services to the local population and placing additional pressure for others. The government of Eritrea through Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC) had been fully involved in assisting internally displaced persons whose number was estimated at over 250,000 found at border areas such as Zalambessa, Aiga/Alitana and West of Assab.

53. Noting the great progress made by the government since the country's independence in 1993, but recently the country was faced with large numbers of returnees and displaced persons and to some extent the Eritreans coming from Ethiopia since June 1998, it could not cope with such numbers to reintegrate and rehabilitate the societies. The Commission, therefore, requests the OAU to consider providing some financial assistance

to reintegrate and resettle the returnees as well as displaced persons in the border areas where a majority are women and children.

B. CENTRAL REGION

54. The Mission was led by Mr. Daniel Yifru, director General of African Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia. Other Members of the Mission were H.E. Mrs. Sophie Kalinde, Ambassador of Malawi to Ethiopia and the OAU and Mr. I.C. Mponzi, representing the OAU Secretariat.

a. Burundi

55. The Mission visited the country from 16 to 20 October 1998. While in the country, the Mission was privileged to have an audience with H.E. Pierre Buyoya, President of the Republic of Burundi, other senior Government officials and representatives from UNHCR, OAU and Non-Governmental Organizations. The Mission was informed by the officials that Burundi had a refugee population of 30,000 mostly from the Democratic Republic of Congo and a few numbers from Rwanda. While the number of displaced persons was estimated at 500,000 and those of returnees at 187,000.

56. Concerning the security situation, the authorities observed that it had improved in most parts of the country except in the provinces of Makamba, Bubanza, Cibitoke and Bururi which were sometimes subjected to rebel attacks. They stressed that the climate was ripe for the UNHCR and OAU in close collaboration with the countries of asylum and Burundi to start mass voluntary repatriation of refugees back to Burundi. The authorities recommended for the revival of the meetings of the Tripartite Mechanism between the Governments of Burundi and Tanzania together with the UNHCR in order to facilitate the voluntary repatriation. The OAU was requested to be a Member of the said Mechanism.

57. The Government of Burundi requested the OAU to provide it with some financial assistance so as to help it in the resettlement and rehabilitation of returnees and displaced persons.

58. After the Commission's visit, some new developments took place such as in both Makamba and Ruyigi Provinces which resulted into the death of civilians and more than 1,000 people became displaced. The high level peace talks on Burundi led by H.E. Mualimu Julius K. Nyerere and which have been concentrating on the issue of security since early 1999 continued. This would help a lot to improve the confidence building measures and



bring about security, peace and stability which would in turn result into mass voluntary repatriation of refugees.

b. Rwanda

59. The Mission had a working visit in the Republic of Rwanda from 21 to 24 October 1998. While in the country it met and held fruitful discussions with H.E. Gasana Anastas, Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Sheikh Abdul Harerimana, Minister of Internal Affairs, Communal Development and Reinstallation, H.E. Mrs Aloysie Inyumba, Minister of Gender, Family and Social Affairs, other senior Government officials together with African Ambassadors accredited to Rwanda as well as some representatives of UN Agencies and NGOs.

60. During the discussions, the Mission was informed that Rwanda had a refugee population of 36,000 the majority of them being from the Democratic Republic of Congo while the number of returnees was estimated at 2.8 million.

61. The Mission noted that the Government of Rwanda in close collaboration with the UNHCR had done a good job in the rehabilitation of returnees in particular in providing materials for the construction of houses, health centres, water, education facilities and other related infrastructure.

62. However, the Mission also observed that the Government of Rwanda which came to power barely five years ago, after the worst genocide committed in human history was in desperate need of material and financial assistance to provide the required logistical support for resettling and rehabilitating the remaining hundreds and thousands of internally displaced persons and returnees who were still sheltered in plastic sheets. The Mission therefore recommended that some assistance be provided by the OAU to the Government of Rwanda to help it in the resettlement and rehabilitation of returnees and displaced persons.

63. After the Mission of the Commission, Rwanda continued to welcome back her nationals mainly from the sub-region. At the beginning of the year, about 5,200 Rwandese repatriated on their own to Gisenyi from North Kivu while almost 2,000 were assisted by UNHCR to return to Nyabibwe.

64. In March 1999, a memorandum of understanding was signed between UNHCR and UNDP in the country concerning the hand-over of longer-term reintegration projects to the country's development agency. In the meantime, the Government asked UNHCR to assist with the logistics to

transfer up to 400,000 internally displaced people from their present camps to new sites in the north-west.

c. Kenya

65. The Mission had a working visit in Kenya from 26 to 28 October 1998 and held very useful discussions with H.E. Mr. Shariff Nassir, Minister of Home Affairs and National Heritage, other senior Government officials as well as officials from UNHCR and non-governmental organisations.

66. The Mission was informed by the authorities that Kenya had a refugee population of more than 174,000 settled in various refugee settlements in the country and an additional number of 12,000 refugees residing in major cities and towns in the country. Most of the refugees came from Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda.

67. During the visit to various refugee camps, the Mission witnessed hundreds of school children conducting their classes under the trees, especially in Kakuma camp due to lack of classrooms.

68. The Mission was also mindful of the many and varied problems of security and safety relating to the presence of refugees in Kenya. It particularly took note of the fact that some refugee camps in the country had become either centres for smuggling weapons or breeding grounds for law breakers and criminals. It was with this in mind that it recommended for the OAU to provide some financial contribution to the government of Kenya in order to construct some classrooms and to re-enforce the security situation in the refugee camps.

69. After the visit of the OAU Commission, the situation of refugees and displaced persons in Kenya did not change much except that some additional new refugees were relocated to Daadab refugee camp in North-east of the country where more than 108,000 refugees a majority of them Somalis are located.

d. Tanzania

70. The Mission visited Tanzania from 29 October to 2 November 1998. While in the country it met and held fruitful discussions with Senior Government Officials, Representatives of UNHCR and other officials from the non-governmental organizations.



71. The authorities put the figure of refugees in the country at 310,587, the majority of them from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo with few numbers from Rwanda and other countries.

72. The Mission was informed that the Government of Tanzania believed that voluntary repatriation was the most durable solution in resolving the refugee problem in the continent. It welcomed the willingness by the Government of Burundi to start the campaign on the massive voluntary repatriation of refugees back to their home country. It requested UNHCR and OAU to be fully involved in the exercise. The authorities, however, underscored the voluntary nature of repatriating refugees and that the refugees should go back home in peace and dignity.

73. Regarding the meetings of the Tripartite Mechanism with the Government of Burundi and the UNHCR, the authorities assured the OAU Mission that the said Mechanism would be revived as soon as possible and requested the OAU to be a Member of the Mechanism.

74. Additionally, the Mission observed that the Government of Tanzania was receiving hundreds and thousands of new refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo, due to the prevailing war. It, therefore, recommended to the OAU to provide some financial assistance to the Government of Tanzania to help it cope with the new influx of refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

75. After the visit of the Mission of the OAU Commission, Tanzania started receiving influx of refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo. During the month of March 1999, the rate of refugees arriving was less than 100 a day. By the end of April 1999, people were fleeing Democratic Republic of Congo and entering Tanzania at the rate of 200 per day. Between 22 March and 12 April, almost 4,500 refugees arrived in the country crossing by boat through Lake Tanganyika from Eastern Congo to Kigoma, thus bringing the number of new arrivals at more than 50,000. At the time of reporting, the flow of refugees showed no sign of stopping as the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo continued with its intensity.

### C. SOUTHERN REGION

#### a. Angola

76. The Mission was led by H.E. Ibrahim Kamara, Ambassador of Sierra Leone to Ethiopia. He was accompanied by Dr. Emad Awad from the OAU Bureau for Refugees. The Mission had a working visit in the Republic of



Angola from 22 to 30 October 1998. It met and held very fruitful discussions with Dr. Albino Mabungo, Minister of Assistance and Social Affairs, and other high ranking officials.

77. The Mission was informed that Angola was host to 10,612 refugees mainly from neighbouring countries. Out of this number 10,407 refugees were from the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Mission was informed that Angola was facing not only a problem of refugees coming from neighbouring countries but also that of returnees and displaced persons. They highlighted the negative impact of the eruption of violence since June 1998 and the efforts deployed by the government to resettle the displaced people numbering 1.3 million.

78. The Mission was further informed that UNITA troops had re-mined areas already de-mined, a factor which was of extreme gravity, taking into consideration the "donor fatigue" on one hand, and the sophisticated nature of mines used on the other hand. Eight million land mines were supposed to be planted in Angola, a factor hindering efforts aimed at the resettlement of the population in their areas of origin. Furthermore, there was lack of funds to feed the most needy and implement the rehabilitation programme.

79. On 24 April 1998, the Mission visited refugees and displaced persons in the region of Bengo, 60 km from Luanda. The Mission was told that the Province was currently hosting 20,000 old cases of displaced persons and 32,000 new cases of displaced persons. In addition there were a number of refugees coming from the Democratic Republic of Congo since 1977. The camp of Boa Esperanca was hosting 19,000 Angolans entirely of internally displaced persons, while that of Acucareira de Caxito was hosting 23,000 persons composed of refugees who fled the Democratic Republic of Congo since 1977 living side by side with internally displaced persons. The Mission addressed the refugees and displaced persons and the refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo wanted to be repatriated.

80. Due to lack of funding and the increased number of internally displaced persons, the government of Angola was facing a very critical humanitarian situation and has been obliged to suspend the implementation of its rehabilitation programme. The Commission therefore requests the OAU to provide a token contribution to the country in order to buy necessary materials to assist internally displaced persons.



81. After the Commission's visit, there was resumption of 25 year civil war in December 1998 which had shattered the 1994 Peace Agreement. Some people died while others fled to neighbouring countries and the number of internally displaced persons and the homeless increased from 1.3 million in October to about 4 million in April 1999. The deteriorating security situation has hampered the operations of humanitarian agencies and as a result thousands of people including internally displaced persons are faced with hunger.

b. Zambia

82. The Mission had a working visit in the Republic of Zambia from 30 October to 3 November 1998. While in Lusaka the Mission met H.E. Mr. Keli Walubita, Minister of Foreign Affairs and H.E. Dr. Katele Kalumba, Minister of Home Affairs and other officials.

83. The Mission was informed that the current population of refugees in the country was 166,000 located in urban areas, refugee settlements as well as in border areas. The majority of the urban caseload, which was the highest in the Southern Region, was composed of the Congolese while Angolans constituted the majority of those in the settlements and the ones spontaneously settled in the border areas of Western and North Western provinces.

84. From October 31 to November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1998, the Mission visited Meheba Refugee Settlement established in 1971 with 8,000 refugees from Angola and situated about 700 km from Lusaka. The refugee population was 27,805, the majority were Angolans followed by Congolese from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Various activities were taking place in the settlement.

85. In addition to visiting Meheba Refugee Settlement, the Mission went to Makeni Refugees Skills Development Centre which had evolved from a refugee transit center to a skills development centre offering training in English as foreign language, Home Management and Economics; Poultry-rearing, soap-making, mushroom-growing and Business Management. /the project has been implemented by AFRICARE in collaboration with UNHCR.

86. Zambia is a landlocked country sharing borders with nine countries. It is perpetually vulnerable to influxes of refugees. The current situation both in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo provoked new influxes of refugees in the country. Zambia needs all the support from the international community in the spirit of burden-sharing. It is with this in

mind that the Commission requests the OAU to donate some money to meet the needs of refugees especially the new cases.

87. When the Mission left Zambia in early November 1998, the country was overwhelmed with the exodus of refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo mainly from south-east part of the country. The majority started coming since March 1998. It was estimated that about 300 refugees cross into Northern Zambia every day. Many of them were in Kaputa. The area was overcrowded and the facilities were over stretched as the town grew from 300 people over 1,5000 within a few months. In April 1999, UNHCR started resettling the refugees from Kaputa to Mporokoso at least 50 km away from the border.

88. It should be recognized that the number of refugees in Zambia is likely to increase unless a durable political solution is found to ongoing conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola. In the meantime, the country will need all the assistance to cope with such large numbers of refugees.

89. At this point the Missions want to point it out once again that the countries visited carry heavy burdens in hosting large numbers of refugees where assistance is not enough. It is therefore the opinion of the Missions that as a way of showing solidarity, the Commission recommends to OAU to extend some assistance to all the countries visited, especially in some areas which affect both the refugees and the host countries. These areas include education, environmental degradation and water resources, food and non-food items, health services as well as in reintegration and rehabilitation programmes.

90. Finally, the Missions wish to express their highest appreciation and gratitude to all the governments of the countries visited and the offices of the United Nations High commissioner for Refugees for the tremendous welcome, hospitality and courtesy accorded to the Missions in accomplishing their work programme.

#### IV. REFUGEES FROM OTHER REGIONS

##### A. Northern Region

91. It would be recalled that the situation of over 160,000 Sahrawi refugees living in Algeria had remained the same since the adoption of the referendum by the UN Security Council in 1991. But with the new development in March 1999, when the UN Secretary General again



submitted to the Security Council the report on Western Sahara which was accepted in principle by Morocco was designed to accelerate the referendum process with certain amendments to be incorporated in the identification and appeals protocols together with a revised timetable to all the parties involved, is expected that the referendum would be held by the year 2000. Once that is done, the process of organized voluntary repatriation of refugees would commence. Furthermore, the region has close to 6,000 refugees from different Member States with asylum in the Republic of Egypt.

### Algeria

92. About 165,000 Sahrawi refugees are still living in Algeria in various camps in Tindouf while awaiting for the revised implementation of the UN referendum to be held in March 2,000. This will pave the way for the repatriation of Sahrawi refugees who have been living in the country for many years.

93. In addition to Sahrawi refugees, the country gives asylum to a number of displaced Tourages from Mali and Niger most of whom are awaiting return to their countries of origin.

### C. WESTERN REGION

94. At the time of reporting, the Western Region was still gripped with the problem of refugees and displaced persons despite the positive developments of the return of thousands of Liberians back to Liberia and the restoration of a legitimate government in Sierra Leone in early 1998. The current situation has not only shattered the hopes of returning home of more than 400,000 Sierra Leonean refugees mainly from Guinea and Liberia but triggered a repeat of the situation of last year when there was an influx of about 250,000 Sierra Leoneans who found refuge in the region. Both Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire host the largest number of refugees from Sierra Leone and Liberia.

95. As the escalation of conflicts threatens the development, security and stability of the region, it is of utmost importance that the Secretary General of the OAU and the Commission continue to use their good offices by urging all the parties involved in the crisis to find a political solution to the problem.

a. Cote d'Ivoire

96. As some Liberians were being repatriated from Cote d'Ivoire back to Liberia, the country was receiving new influx from Sierra Leone, thus increasing the number of refugees in the country. Today Cote d'Ivoire gives asylum to over 200,000 refugees mainly Sierra Leoneans and Liberians.

97. Some Liberian refugees opted to be reintegrated in the country in local communities and were engaged in various local activities.

b. Ghana

98. Ghana is host close to 12,000 refugees who come mainly from Liberia and Sierra Leone. UNHCR continues to repatriate the Liberian refugees back to Liberia under the UNHCR voluntary Repatriation Programme.

c. Guinea

99. Guinea has over 700,00 refugees on its soil, thus representing one tenth of the country's population. Out of this number over half are Sierra Leonean refugees and around 120,000 Liberians while others come from neighbouring countries. Most of the refugee camps for Sierra Leonean refugees are found on the border with Sierra Leone thus causing security problems. In March the refugee population reached almost 60,000 as some refugees were moved from border areas in April 1999. There was also a new influx of Liberian refugees from the Northern part of Liberia estimated at 6,000.

100. UNHCR was working on transferring the refugees away from the Sierra Leone border to sites further from the border. The two new locations, Guelo and Katkama would accommodate a large number of refugees from six camps which are most vulnerable to attacks namely, Dakongo, Yaegbadou, Konin, Sowadou, Komandou and Gelema. Some of the European Union's contribution of Euro 5 million would be used for the exercise of relocating Sierra Leonean refugees away from the border.

d. Guinea Bissau

101. After months of unrest in Guinea Bissau, more than 5,000 people fled the country and went to neighbouring countries in Guinea, Cape Verde, Gambia, Senegal and as far away as Portugal while over 30,000 especially from the capital became internally displaced and some of them went and



lived with family members outside the capital. They were living in various places such as Safim, Nhoma, Nhaera, Bafata, Gabu, Prabis and Gumura.

102. After signing the peace agreement in November 1998 most of the refugees and internally displaced were gradually coming back to their homes as life was slowly returning to normal but at the same time, others were leaving the country after the coup d'état in May 1999. World Food Programme (WFP) and ICRC were providing food to the most needy. Additionally, ICRC in conjunction with the National Red Cross Society were responsible for the distribution of non-food items such as tents, buckets, mats, jerrycans and soap to the displaced people as well as other people living in extremely difficult conditions.

e. Liberia

103. Since the successful election in July 1997, peace and security returned to most parts of Liberia, thus paving the way for the repatriation of thousands of Liberian refugees mainly from the West African region. By the end of February 1999, over 100,000 Liberians returned home with the assistance of UNHCR. 70,000 of these repatriated from Guinea, 24,700 from Cote d'Ivoire, 3,200 from Ghana, 1,200 from Nigeria, 1,225 from Sierra Leone and the rest from other countries. About 60,000 Liberians returned home spontaneously during the same period, thus bringing the total number of returnees close to 300,00 half of the number of refugees are those who fled Liberia during the eight year civil war. The United Nations helped in the reconstruction of Liberia and also in resettling almost 100,000 internally displaced persons while UNHCR was assisting with reintegration projects in various districts of the country.

104. As the repatriation exercise was going on, in September last year, there were some incidents in the country which forced about 18,000 ethnic Krahns to flee to Cote d'Ivoire and about 6,000 fled to Guinea. After six months almost 13,000 refugees returned back to Krahne areas. The repatriation exercise is expected to be completed some time this year.

105. While Liberia continued to welcome back her nationals mainly from neighbouring countries, the country is host to more than 90,000 Sierra Leonean refugees who left after the conflict resumed in December 1998.

f. Nigeria

106. During the period under review, Nigeria had about 5,000 refugees originating mainly from Liberia and Sierra Leone and a small number from other countries.

g. Sierra-Leone

107. After the restoration of the legitimate government of Sierra Leone on 10 March 1998, the government started restoring peace and order in the country but it did not last long as civil war erupted after a few months once again and security situation deteriorated reaching a climax in December 1998. The Conflict had not only spread in Sierra Leone but also in neighbouring countries, thus affecting civilians in Sierra Leone and outside the country, refugees, returnees and humanitarian aid agencies as well.

108. The prevailing situation prevented the over 400,000 Sierra Leonean refugees who were ready to return back. At the same time, the country witnessed the influx of Sierra Leoneans opting to flee to other countries and for some of them for the second time. Some Liberian refugees who were in the country also left because of the security problems, others numbering 8,000 were still in Sierra Leone. The crisis has therefore affected innocent civilians including refugees and some Sierra Leonean recent returnees. The estimated number of displaced persons as of April 1999 was half a million, 150,000 in Freetown, 30,000 in Lungi, 14,000 in Bama, 55,000 in Kenema, 17,000 in Kambia, 4,000 in Bo and 18,000 in Shenge. Additionally over 250,000 are homeless. It is also difficult for humanitarian agencies to carry out their operations and mobilize resources for Sierra Leone.

C. CENTRAL REGION

109. The dramatic refugee problem in the region and the situation of war in the Republic of Congo and the political uncertainty in Burundi continues to preoccupy the OAU. The crises in the region remained critical as the issues and conditions that created the situation have not been resolved. In this regard, the region continued to bear the burden of hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees on their territories while others were still internally displaced. This massive number of refugees has had an enormous impact on the environment, social services and other infrastructures in the countries of asylum and has, in some cases, led to increased tension between host countries and those of origin and sometimes with the refugees themselves.



a. Cameroon

110. At the time of reporting, Cameroon was host close to 40,000 refugees mainly from Chad and Rwanda and some of the Chadians are in the process of being repatriated back home.

b. Central African Republic

111. With regard to Central African Republic, the refugee population is about 45,000; the majority are Sudanese followed by Chadians and Rwandese and others from different nationalities. The repatriation exercise has been going on to repatriate refugees who opt to go back to their countries of origin. This is in line with the various agreements which were signed between the host government and countries of origin.

c. Chad

112. In March 1998 about 8,500 Sudanese refugees found refuge in Chad and in February 1999 an additional 10,000 others arrived during a two week period. They are settled in Adre, on the eastern border with Sudan. Today the country is home to about 23,000 refugees, the majority Sudanese and others are of different nationalities.

c. Congo

113. As hundreds of Congolese were returning home, new crisis developed in early 1999 and somehow affected their return. In March 1999, about 200,000 people mainly from Brazzaville were still sheltering in the Pool region, Southwest of the capital still in the Democratic Republic of Congo. On 10<sup>th</sup> April 1999, UNHCR and the governments of the Congo and Democratic Republic of Congo signed a Tripartite Agreement which enabled some Congolese to be repatriated from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Brazzaville. By the end of the same month, over 700 Congolese refugees opted for repatriation and the UNHCR facilitated their transportation.

114. Congo is also a country of asylum to refugees from Democratic Republic of Congo, (8,000 to 10,000) Angola (12,000) and Rwanda (over 5,000). Close to 50 unaccompanied Rwandese minors were flown by UNHCR and ICRC back to Rwanda to be reunited with their parents.

e. Democratic Republic of Congo

115. At the writing of this report, the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo remained worrying as war continued. In April, people were fleeing, especially from the eastern part at the rate of 200 per day, running away from the war as rebels were looting, raping women, burning houses and recruiting young men by force to fight on their side while others have become internally displaced. The situation in the country continued to cause human suffering to the nationals and refugees in the country.

116. On the other hand, new cases of refugees from Angola and Congo arrived in the Democratic Republic of Congo adding more numbers to the old cases. The number of refugees from the Republic of Congo was over 22,000 found in Bas-Congo Province, and Angolans account for about 15,000 with 8,000 new arrivals in Songololo and 4,000 in the two on Kimpese.

D. EASTERN REGION

117. The Eastern region continued to be considered as one of the regions sheltering over two million refugees with long standing caseloads. Additionally, more than three million people were displaced within the region. This was mainly due to famine and drought which had greatly affected the population and the continuing civil wars. The problem becomes even more complex as it is sometimes difficult to separate the refugees, returnees and displaced persons because of the border lines which means very little to some concerned groups, especially the nomads.

118. However, some positive developments took place in the region as Ethiopians, Eritreans and Somalis have returned to their habitual places. Still a lot has to be done to bring about peace and stability in the region as this will eventually pave the way for the return of thousands of refugees and displaced persons in the region. To this effect leaders of the sub-region continue to meet and discuss the situation in various meetings and fora, for example, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development for Eastern Africa (IGAD) deliberates in its annual meeting, on how it could prevent regional conflicts which are responsible for the mass movements of people within the region and the flight of others to other countries.

Uganda

119. For many decades, Uganda was home to thousands of Rwandese refugees who fled Rwanda in 1959. However, after 1994 the majority of them went back to Rwanda and some stayed behind in the Western part of the



country. Today, the country continues to give asylum to refugees mainly from Sudan who are settled in the Districts of Arua, Kitgum, Masindi and Moyo. There are also some Congolese from Democratic Republic of Congo and a few new cases of Rwandese refugees who crossed over from Haut Congo Province of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania.

120. Additionally Uganda is looking after its displaced people mainly in the Northern and Western parts of the country. This is due to the acts of the rebels trying to destabilize the country. The number is about 200,000. Recently, it was estimated that between 50,000 to 70,000 Ugandans in the displaced persons in the country. In February and March 1999, over 60,000 displaced families living in 26 protected villages in Acholiland received assistance in the form of food and non-food items.

#### E. SOUTHERN REGION

121 The Southern Region which has been enjoying relative peace and stability for some years now is once again, threatened by the steady increase of refugees and internally displaced persons. This is mainly due to events taking place in Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Somalia. Angolan refugees account for 300,000 in the region.

##### a. Botswana

122. Botswana was home to a number of South African Freedom fighters in the 1960s to early 1990s. After South Africa's non-racial and democratic elections in April 1994, and the formation of a government of National Unity, the South Africans returned home and Dukwi refugee camp 600 km north of the capital was closed. Recently though, the camp was re-opened to house over 2,500 asylum seekers who crossed into Botswana from Caprivi Strip in Namibia.

123. By march 1999, five Namibian refugees had been repatriated back to Namibia. The Government of Namibia announced a general amnesty to the asylum seekers at Dukwi camp hoping that the refugees would opt to voluntarily return home, the most durable solution to the problem of refugees.

##### b. Malawi

124. Malawi continues to shelter close to 2,000 refugees from Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Somalia and other countries. The

majority of refugees who receive UNHCR assistance reside at the Dzaleka refugee camp in Dowa District.

c. Namibia

125. Namibia's refugee population is estimated at over 2,000 refugees as new arrivals are coming into the country mainly from Angola and others from different countries. Most of the refugees are found at Osire camp, 225 km from Windhoek. There are also a number of few refugee students in Windhoek.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONCLUSION

126. Even though some progress would appear to have been made during the one year period in search for lasting solutions to the problem of refugees and displaced persons in Africa, the truth is that the situation remains increasingly worrying as the continent has the largest number of refugees and internally displaced persons in the world and are found in the poorest countries.

127. It is the responsibility of African leaders to find political solutions to the on-going crises which produce refugees and internally displaced persons and as a result, threaten peace, security and stability which slows down the socio-economic development in Africa.

128. It is therefore crucial that the Recommendation and the Declaration of Khartoum adopted during the OAU Ministerial Meeting on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Africa in December 1998 in Khartoum, the Sudan, should be implemented by Member States and other concerned parties as this will pave the way for a durable solution to the problem of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa. The two documents are attached to this report as Annexes I and II.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

129. In addition to the Recommendations and the Declaration of Khartoum, the Commission further emphasizes that:

- i) Member States continue to seriously address the root causes of the problem of refugees and displaced persons and create



conducive conditions for their return in conditions of safety and dignity;

- ii) Member States to continue practising politics of inclusion and population participation which promote accountability, democracy, governance, respect for human rights as well as socio-economic development;
- iii) The international community to continue giving material and technical support to countries of asylum to enable them to fulfil their obligations and also provide assistance to countries of origin for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the socio-economic infrastructures;
- iv) The OAU should extend some assistance to the 11 countries with serious problem of refugees, returnees and displaced persons visited by the Commission towards the end of 1998 so as to show solidarity with them;
- v) The OAU and UNHCR should ensure proper coordination of various players involved in assisting refugees and displaced persons, this will prevent them from working individually, and as a result, the much needed assistance will be properly utilized; and
- vi) The OAU Commission on Refugees should continue to implement its Programme of Action in favour of refugees, returnees and displaced persons which was adopted by the OAU Council of Ministers in 1996.

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