



International Council of Voluntary Agencies
Conseil International des Agences Bénévoles
Consejo Internacional de Organizaciones Voluntarias

talk back

The Newsletter of ICVA

Volume 7-2, 30 March 2005

SPECIAL ISSUE: UNHCR CANDIDATES TALK BACK

When ICVA tried for an open and transparent process in the selection of the High Commissioner for Refugees in 2000, it turned out to be a rather feeble attempt. The sudden nomination of Ruud Lubbers five years ago by the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, took most by surprise. This time around, the Secretary-General (SG) decided on a shortlist of candidates for the position that was announced last Thursday, 24 March 2005, in-line with the "new senior recruitment procedures," so it is unlikely that there will be another surprise nomination.

As noted in *Talk Back* 7-1, the new approach from the SG's office in trying to have a more transparent appointment process is a particularly welcome one. There is, of course, the delicate balance to be struck between confidentiality and transparency. At the same time, there is a need to ensure that the transparency is not restricted only to certain parts of the process deemed to be convenient for the SG's office.

What is not clear is how many candidates, in total, were put forward for the position by the deadline of 9 March 2005 by when candidates were to be submitted to the SG's office. ICVA, following consultations among the membership, submitted three candidates to the SG's office: Søren Jessen-Petersen, Ian Martin, and Dennis McNamara. Of those three, only Søren Jessen-Petersen has made it onto the shortlist. Unfortunately, ICVA never received even an acknowledgement letter from the SG's office nor any indication of why only one of the candidates put forward made it onto the shortlist.

The Race is Down to Eight

A number of criteria had been set out in the letter from the SG's office that went to governments and to a number of non-governmental organisations (including ICVA) asking for candidates to be put forward. Do the eight candidates on the shortlist meet all those criteria? How were the criteria weighted when deciding who should be shortlisted? How are the official criteria weighed against member states' interests?

The question also arises of how much "unwritten criteria" have been applied in the determination of the shortlist. Appointments at such a level usually involve a fair amount of backroom "bourse trading" between governments, which trade off positions in one organisation for another. Undoubtedly, some governments will have held off putting forward candidates for the position of High Commissioner for Refugees because they have their sights set on another

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position, such as UNDP or UNRWA, for example. The SG must have taken into account many of these political considerations when deciding who should be on the shortlist. After all, the chances of the SG putting forward a candidate who potentially might be rejected by the General Assembly are rather slim.

Particularly Welcome Developments, But How Will They Work?

When the spokesman for the SG announced the shortlist, he noted that the eight candidates would be called in for interviews in the "next few weeks." What was of particular interest was the mention that "the views of the refugee community on the candidates will be sought informally." In the special issue of *Talk Back* 7-1 on "Selecting the Next High Commissioner for Refugees" (9 March 2005), it was pointed out that consultations with this most obvious group of stakeholders in the position was notably absent in the process being undertaken by the Secretary-General's office. It will be very interesting to hear more details on how these informal consultations with this group will be undertaken in the coming weeks.

Making the Candidates' Views Known to Refugees and Other Persons of Concern to UNHCR

At the same time, NGOs and UNHCR staff could play a role in facilitating this informal consultation with refugees. By simply printing out, distributing, and discussing the views presented by the candidates with refugees, NGOs and UNHCR staff could start a consultation process of their own. The views and opinions of refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR could then be transmitted to the office of the Secretary-General. ICVA would also be pleased to provide another open forum to share these views more openly in the coming weeks if this idea were to be taken up.

Bringing UNHCR Staff into the Process

The interview process described by the Spokesman includes having "a panel of senior management officials, who will refer the finalists to the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General for final interview." In many organisations, a staff member is invited to participate in the interview process to ensure that the persons being considered are asked questions of relevance and concern to the staff. A similar process might be followed in this case, using current (and not former) UNHCR staff.

UNHCR staff seem not to have been asked their opinions as to what kind of a leader they would like to see take the helm of their organisation. While staff have initiated their own process to provide some "words of wisdom" to the next High Commissioner in their March *Dialogue* newsletter, there seems to have been little consultation with staff on their opinions. Not only should the SG consider consulting UNHCR staff, but should also formally engage (a) HCR staff representative(s) in the interview process.

Keeping the Process as Open as Possible

Continuing with the tradition that ICVA started during the 2000 selection process, ICVA wrote to each of the candidates of which it was aware in order to provide them with an opportunity to express their views on the position of High Commissioner and the challenges facing the office. Candidates were informed that the ICVA Secretariat would not edit the length or content of the views provided.

Seven out of the eight candidates were written to prior to the issuance of the shortlist last week. Of those seven, one — Mr. Mark Verwilghen (Belgium), Minister of Economy, Energy, Foreign Trade, and Scientific Politics — was sent the letter mid-last week, but his office replied that since he was out of the office this week, they would not be able to distribute the Minister's views on refugee issues.

One candidate — Mr. António Guterres (Portugal), Former Prime Minister — only received the letter offering the open forum after the shortlist was published, as his candidature was previously unknown.

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Talk Back Editorial Team

Manisha Thomas, Editor-in-Chief, ICVA Policy Officer
Ed Schenkenberg van Mierop, ICVA Coordinator

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As such, he has noted that he was unable to respond in time for this issue of *Talk Back*. If he does reply, his views will be shared at a later stage as an addendum to this issue.

As noted above, two of the candidates put forward by ICVA unfortunately, did not make the shortlist. They, nonetheless, took the time to respond to the ICVA Chair's letter. A note was received from Dennis McNamara (the current Director of the inter-agency Internal Displacement Division) explaining that he was not in a position to respond.

Ian Martin, Vice-President of the International Center for Transitional Justice, wrote back to the ICVA Chair with the following:

I greatly appreciate the suggestion by members of ICVA that I should have been a candidate for the post of High Commissioner for Refugees, and I congratulate ICVA on the role you have played in promoting an open and transparent recruitment process.

Now that an announcement has been made of a shortlist for the post on which I am not included, I think it is no longer useful for me to respond to your invitation to provide you with a response for publication to your letter of 10 March.

I very much hope that your efforts will prove to have contributed to a good appointment, and that the next High Commissioner will remain open to the views of civil society.

*Best,
Ian Martin*

Another candidate who had written back to ICVA, but who did not make the shortlist, is Mr. Fernando M. Valenzuela Marzo of Spain. He decided to withdraw his reply once the shortlist was announced. He did, however, note in his response that he shared the "view that stakeholders should have the opportunity to know as much as possible about the views the different contending candidates take on the main questions at stake and how they envisage to cope with

the major challenges the UNHCR is going to face in the coming years."

This issue of *Talk Back* includes the responses of the six candidates who did reply, in alphabetical order (and with the titles provided by the SG's office):

- Ms Emma Bonino (Italy), Member of the European Parliament, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Committee on Budget, Sub-Committee on Human Rights;

- Mr. Hans Dahlgren (Sweden), State Secretary for Foreign Affairs;

- Mr. Gareth Evans (Australia), President and Chief Executive of the International Crisis Group;

- Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen (Denmark), Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo;

- Mr. Bernard Kouchner (France), Former Minister of Health and former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo; and

- Mr. Kamel Morjane (Tunisia), Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees.

A copy of the letter that was sent to them is also included. The original deadline set for reply was 22 March, but this was extended by one week when it became clear that the shortlist would be announced either last week or this week.

The only things that have been done to the replies are to copyedit them to ensure the same standards as the rest of *Talk Back* and to format them to fit into *Talk Back*. Otherwise, the replies stand as received by the ICVA Secretariat.

We hope that by providing such a forum, the stakeholders of UNHCR will be able to get a better idea of who the candidates are. At the same time, we hope that the views of the candidates will help to inform the final process of selecting the next High Commissioner for Refugees. ♦

Manisha Thomas and Ed Schenkenberg van Mierop

UNHCR CANDIDATES TALK BACK

Ms EMMA BONINO (ITALY)

Elizabeth Ferris
Chair
ICVA Executive Committee

Dear Elizabeth,

Thank you very much for your letter of 11 March 2005 concerning the interest of ICVA in the views of candidates for United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on some of the key issues facing the organisation. I would like to express my personal appreciation for this initiative, which contributes to the transparency of the selection process.

I believe that the many specific issues raised in the special *Talk Back* issue of 9 March are critical to the future of the UNHCR, its mandate, and place at the centre of humanitarian relief efforts. While I do not wish to address every detail, bearing in mind that it will be for whoever is elected by the General Assembly to set, in collaboration with all the relevant actors, detailed policy for UNHCR, I am pleased to have the opportunity to articulate some of the points that I can see may be important for the work of UNHCR.

Protection is at the heart of UNHCR's role. UNHCR must be robust in its efforts to protect people under threat; to provide relief and refuge; and to intervene on behalf of its member states. The key point for protection is often presence: protection means, first and foremost, being there. UNHCR has never been a remote organisation and it must never become one. Another important element of protection is the development of durable solutions. Durable solutions, however, should never come at the expense of principles. UNHCR should avoid tasks that could potentially place it in conflict with its protection mandate. For example, UNHCR voluntary repatriation needs to be just that, voluntary. Finding long-term solutions also means working with states to encourage the adoption of effective refugee legislation and best possible practices. When necessary, resettlement options must be considered and it is important for states to recognise and reaffirm that the protection of refugees and the principle of non-*refoulement* is part of their international responsibility. As a European, I feel this very keenly and, when I was European Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs, I found that Governments can be willing to fulfil international obligations when engaged constructively.

While maintaining its responsibility for protection, UNHCR should continue to work with other actors to find broad-based solutions to refugee problems. The United Nations and its agencies can be a beacon for hope, a meeting place for ideas, and for mediation and settlement. Over the last 10 years, with the establishment of OCHA, steps have been taken to coordinate the response of humanitarian organisations in emergency situations. There is great value in continuing these efforts within the UN, taking into account also the recent commitment of the Secretary-General to strengthen further the UN inter-agency response capacity to complex humanitarian emergencies, and there is great value in strengthening relations with others in the humanitarian field, including IOM, development agencies and, of course, NGOs, and civil society.

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Ms Emma Bonino (Italy)

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From my experience both as European Commissioner responsible for Humanitarian Aid and as a long-standing activist, I understand and value the role that NGOs can and do play in these critical issues. In particular, I believe that NGOs play an important role in the often-complex inter-relation between institutions and society at large. NGOs, local civil society organisations, women's groups, traditional leaders, politicians, local authorities, and others need to be part of the solution, not only in terms of implementation, but, most importantly, they need to be part of strategic planning. UNHCR should always try to strengthen these local actors, and act as a catalyst for a positive local and national response.

To achieve its mission, UNHCR must have the right people in the right places at the right times: I understand the personnel issues involved, including the fact that UNHCR staff are increasingly required to work in insecure environments. Due to my own personal experience, I recognise that one of the important assets, if not the most important asset, of any organisation, and of UNHCR in particular, is its own staff. We need to look after UNHCR personnel, to take care of their working environment, their physical security and their well-being, to ensure that they are in the best possible position to do what they do best: protect and assist refugees. This also means continuing the policy of zero tolerance for misconduct: it is crucial for public confidence, crucial for staff morale and, ultimately, crucial for the protection of refugees and their rights.

I am honoured to be considered for this post and I thank you again for the opportunity to share with members of the NGO community some thoughts on the challenges ahead for advocates and activists committed to fostering human rights and refugee rights worldwide.

Best wishes,

Emma Bonino

UNHCR CANDIDATES TALK BACK

MR. HANS DAHLGREN (SWEDEN)

Hans Dahlgren

On selecting the next High Commissioner for Refugees

Throughout my entire professional life, dealing with Swedish and international political issues and projects, there is one set of principles that I have learned to consider as quite fundamental.

To achieve results, one must first of all focus on policy – define what you want, and be clear in describing your goals. But equally important, in my mind, is to make sure that one has the capacity to make those ideas materialise, to implement the goals that one has set up.

Your ideas may be the best and the brightest – but if you don't have the organisation and the resources to put them into practice, then they will remain just ideas.

And likewise – even if you may run the most capable and the best staffed organisation possible, that will not help much if you don't have a vision and a will to use this organisation for a purpose.

So, they go hand-in-hand, policy and organisation. I believe that this is an important consideration also when selecting the next UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

My country has for many years been among the top four individual donor countries to UNHCR's activities, in the field and at headquarters. We have taken a leading role in ExCom's deliberations on current priorities and the future course of the organisation.

For the past five years, I have myself had the opportunity to be involved in a significant part of UNHCR's operations. Since 2001, I have been representing the EU Presidency in the Mano River Union countries. Much progress has been made there recently – the civil war in Sierra Leone is well behind us, there is now peace also in Liberia, and Guinea will hopefully soon have a real political dialogue between government and opposition.

But many in this region have suffered greatly from a decade or more of internal armed conflict. Among these, the hundreds of thousands of refugees have had to face the most serious difficulties. They have been forced to leave their villages, they have often been divided from their families, and they have been fleeing in various directions, depending on where rebels or mercenaries or other combatants have appeared.

I have seen first hand, on the ground, the work that the men and women of UNHCR have done – and are still doing – and how decisive these efforts have been for the protection of these most vulnerable persons. It has saved numerous lives, and it has made the future possible for thousands of children.

From this experience, I realise that UNHCR must be a truly protection-based organisation. While protection must be fully operationalised in the field, it also needs to be mainstreamed throughout the organisation. Some of the most difficult refugee situations have been there for a long time. Those who find themselves in these protracted refugee situations are often forgotten, and often among the most vulnerable. The need to find comprehensive solutions to these protracted situations has already been identified, for example through the Convention Plus Initiative. It is now time to redouble the efforts to reach those solutions.

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Mr. Hans Dahlgren (Sweden)

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In Liberia, most of the refugees from the most recent civil war are now back in the country. But there are still perhaps as many as 500,000 internally displaced persons, in a country with just three or four million inhabitants. The IDPs also need protection and assistance. In collaboration with the Emergency Relief Coordinator, the Inter-Agency Internal Displacement Division, and other humanitarian organisations, UNHCR will need to further define and clarify its role in relation to IDPs.

I am convinced that this organisation has a key role to play in the protection and welfare also of this highly vulnerable group. But I am also well aware that any increased UNHCR role with regard to IDPs must not be at the expense of the protection of refugees.

To be forced to flee from one's country is a catastrophe in itself, for each individual concerned. But not having any country at all to return to must be even worse. That is the fate of the many stateless persons - men and women deprived of their citizenship. To me, this issue is high up on the list of UNHCR's designated areas of responsibilities. There is a need to consider new initiatives, and to seek creative solutions to protect the rights of stateless persons.

In the efforts to offer refugees protection and a return back to normalcy, the search for permanent solutions should have a clear priority. Resettlement, local integration, and voluntary repatriation can all be used. In all cases, there is a need for dialogue with states and other partners concerned, as well as for practical assistance. UNHCR must be involved in both.

* * *

Much more could be added about the goals and tasks of UNHCR. But as I stated in the beginning, one must also find the means to make all this happen. And one must make sure that there is capacity to carry out the work.

Adequate funding is naturally key. UNHCR cannot act on borrowed money. It has to get as much income as it spends on activities. And its management must at all times ensure that there is a sustainable balance between fiscal resources and commitments to activities.

A more predictable and reliable flow of income is essential for the organisation to fulfil its mandate, and to operate effectively. Therefore, fundraising is fundamental. In my own case, I learned this firsthand, in the early '90s, as Secretary-General of the Commission on Global Governance. That Commission was totally dependent on contributions that we could obtain from governments, organisations, and foundations.

I appreciate that the financial situation of UNHCR is more stable now than in the past few years. But the annual budget is still not fully funded. The minimum humanitarian needs of refugees are still not met. UNHCR will therefore need to increase its efforts to seek new and additional sources of funds. Meanwhile, efforts to explain to more traditional donor countries the importance of contributing to UNHCR must also continue, with full force.

Even if the funds are available, very little can be done without the committed contributions of a devoted staff. UNHCR is privileged to have such a staff, in the field and at headquarters. For successful future operations, the organisation will need a modern approach to management. The recognition of the key role of individual staff members is central. Placing increased accountability on managers and staff is also natural. A more open and inclusive climate of discussion within the organisation should be encouraged.

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Careful use, even stringent, of the funds available is the best way to make the resources last, and also to attract new contributions. UNHCR needs to speed up its ongoing efforts to become a truly results-based organisation. I would like to see particular emphasis on conducting rigorous needs assessments in the field, based on established standards and indicators.

Working hand-in-hand with NGOs is also another key condition for ensuring capacity. I have been involved in a series of international projects – from disarmament initiatives in the '80s, to efforts to promote global governance in general in the '90s, to the more recent work for peace in Sierra Leone and Liberia – where in each and every case international NGOs have been instrumental in achieving concrete results. UNHCR will need to continue its commitment to work closely with NGOs as operational partners, both in the field and at headquarters. And in numerous cases, the success of UNHCR is clearly dependent upon the devoted contributions of NGO staff and volunteers, all over the world.

No humanitarian organisation can successfully go it alone in complex emergencies. Within the UN system, UNHCR has its obvious partners in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, chaired by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and head of OCHA. However, there is still plenty of room for enhanced UN coordination at the country level.

Being among the largest members of the team makes the responsibility to act together with others even more important. That's a conclusion I have drawn from my own background in coordination – within the Swedish government offices, as well as in our own Ministry of Foreign Affairs. And I have certainly seen the need also in the UN family, both as UN ambassador in New York and during my years in Geneva.

To advocate a policy which aims to enhance the protection of refugees and others of concern for UNHCR is one key responsibility of the next High Commissioner. To make the implementation of that policy possible is the other necessary element to achieve real results. Whoever is appointed to this position will have a formidable task in front of him or her. To me, it implies a responsibility and a challenge that I would undertake with respect, with energy, and with enthusiasm.

Hans Dahlgren has been Sweden's State Secretary for Foreign Affairs for the past five years. Since 2001, he is also the Special Representative of the EU Presidency for the Mano River Union countries (Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea). He co-chairs the International Contact Group on Liberia with the Foreign Minister of Niger.

In the late 1990s, Hans Dahlgren served as Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, and represented Sweden in the Security Council 1997-98. He was Secretary-General of the Commission on Global Governance, which in 1995 published its report "Our Global Neighbourhood". In 1990, he was one of the initiators of the World Summit for Children, and led the drafting of the final declaration from that summit.

In Sweden, Hans Dahlgren has worked in the Prime Minister's Office for a total of twelve years, serving two prime ministers as their state secretary. In 1977-86, he was press secretary and foreign policy adviser to the late Prime Minister Olof Palme.

Hans Dahlgren graduated from the Stockholm School of Economics in 1971. In the 1970s, he worked for several years as a television news correspondent. Born in 1948, he is married, with four children.

UNHCR CANDIDATES TALK BACK

MR. GARETH EVANS (AUSTRALIA)

For International Council of Voluntary Agencies Talk Back March 2005

UNHCR Candidates Forum

Gareth Evans

Formidable challenges face the next High Commissioner, some relatively new but others long familiar:

- At the basic conceptual level, issues have to be resolved as to whether UNHCR's traditional mandate sufficiently meets contemporary human protection needs (including in relation to the internally displaced).
- At the organisational level, there is the continuing task of ensuring that UNHCR operates internally at the highest level of effectiveness and integrity, and has the most effective possible cooperation externally with all the NGOs, governmental, and intergovernmental bodies with which it works.
- At the funding level, there is the problem of maintaining donor commitment (including for regional capacity-building) at a time when the numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers are falling.
- At the political level, there is the never-easy path to walk between, on one side, maintaining financial and policy support from governments, and on the other holding them to account when they fall short of meeting their legal and moral obligations to protect and assist all those men, women, and children whose welfare is UNHCR's responsibility. States' perceived national interests and their international responsibilities are often in uneasy balance.

So what, if anything, needs to be done differently, and how? It is not very wise to make confident pronouncements before one is immersed in an organisation, gets to know its key staff at all levels, and listens to all its other stakeholders (not least, here, refugees themselves). All I can say at this stage is that the most pressing tasks for UNHCR seem to me to be:

- Ensuring that, whatever direction the broader migration debate takes (with governments increasingly wanting to bundle together all kinds of would-be entrants), *refugee* interests are effectively protected.
- Ensuring that programme interventions are even more sensitive to the special vulnerabilities of women, children, and the elderly.
- Ensuring that the sense of achievement associated with refugee numbers declining (largely as a result of the international community's improved record in conflict prevention and resolution) does not translate into complacency about the huge task which remains of finding durable solutions for the 17 million identified persons of concern, and the uncounted millions of stateless, who remain.
- Ensuring that in finding those solutions an approach is adopted of genuine burden-sharing (with, for example, expanded resettlement availability), rather than burden-shifting (back to those countries already least able to manage).
- Ensuring that the organisation retains, operationally, the surge capacity – with all the complex and sensitive human resource management issues this involves – to respond quickly and effectively to

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new crisis situations as they arise (with this being even more crucial if the pressing international policy question of who has primary responsibility for IDPs results in an important new operational role for UNHCR).

- Ensuring that the organisation is seen universally, for good reason, as being competent and purposeful – with clear and well understood objectives, high staff morale, powerful accountability systems and an excellent delivery record – and that, through effective advocacy, this perception translates into strong funding support from government and private donors, and strong policy commitment from governments.

As to my suitability for the High Commissioner's role – with all the policy, management, and advocacy skills and experience this obviously requires – I can only ask that my record speak for itself.

Political and Diplomatic Experience. I was a Cabinet Minister for 13 of my 21 years in Australian politics, serving in the Hawke and Keating Labor Governments as Attorney General (1983-84), Minister for Resources and Energy (1984-87), Minister for Transport and Communications (1987-88) and Foreign Minister (1988-1996). As Foreign Minister I was closely associated with, among other things, the UN peace plan for Cambodia, bringing to a conclusion the Chemical Weapons Convention, founding the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), initiating the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, and the general issue of UN reform (especially with the publication in 1995 of the 'blue book', *Cooperating for Peace*).

Since January 2000, I have been President and Chief Executive of the Brussels-based International Crisis Group, an independent multinational non-governmental organisation which works, through field-based analysis and high-level policy advocacy, to prevent and resolve deadly conflict. Publishing over 80 freely-available reports and briefings a year on some 50 crisis areas, and with nearly 2 million visitors a year to our website: <www.crisisgroup.org>, we are now widely regarded as the leading analysis and advocacy organisation in this field.

I have served on a number of blue-ribbon international commissions and panels, most recently the UN Secretary-General's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, whose report *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility* was published in December 2004. In 2000-2001, I was co-chair, with Mohamed Sahnoun, of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), appointed by the Government of Canada, which published its report, *The Responsibility to Protect*, in December 2001. I had previously served as a member of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, co-chaired by Cyrus Vance and David Hamburg (1994-97), and am currently a member of the Commission on Weapons of Mass Destruction sponsored by Sweden and chaired by Hans Blix; and of the International Task Force on Global Public Goods, sponsored by Sweden and France and chaired by Ernesto Zedillo.

Management Experience. As a Cabinet Minister responsible over 13 years for four large, complex, and very diverse departments of state with many thousands of employees between them, overseeing some particularly complex organisational changes (e.g., completing the amalgamation of Foreign Affairs with Trade, and corporatising then state owned enterprises in the transport and communications

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sector), and withstanding regular grillings from parliamentary appropriations committees all that time, I probably became as familiar as any non-public servant or non-corporate CEO could be with contemporary management best practice.

The International Crisis Group, an NGO with a full-time staff of 110 spread across 25 offices worldwide is an organisation of a completely different type and scale, but one requiring a full range of professional and inter-personal skills to successfully manage, not least because of its diversity (with the staff between them having 41 different nationalities and speaking 51 languages) and the number of completely different cultural contexts in which we operate.

My basic approach to the management of organisations, both large and small, is to insist on a high level of professional performance, but to try to lead by example in this respect, not demanding of anyone any more effort than I am prepared to put in myself. I see it as critical in this sense to try to generate a strong and clear sense of mission, common purpose, and the worth and relevance of what we are all doing, creating workplace environments where people do their best, not because they are driven to do so, but because they want to.

Advocacy and Fund Raising. I have been involved in advocacy and public campaigning of one kind or another throughout forty years of public life, writing hundreds of published opinion pieces and making countless radio and television appearances. The International Crisis Group itself is quintessentially an advocacy organisation, essentially of a direct access rather than high-profile media variety, although this has been changing, particularly with our efforts in 2003-4 to capture international attention for the Darfur crisis.

As to building consensus and producing results: as the former long-time representative of a middle-sized country without the economic or military clout to impose its views on anybody; as the former long-time leader and business manager in the Australian Senate of a governing party lacking a majority in that chamber; and now as head of an NGO with no formal power at all, I have spent most of my professional life depending on coalition-building skills – essentially persuasive communication, creativity, and stamina – to get things done.

With respect to fund-raising skills, the International Crisis Group has grown 500 per cent – from a \$2 million to nearly a \$12 million organisation over my five year presidency, with over 40 per cent of that income coming from government contributions (from, now, 20 countries), some 45 per cent from major foundations, and around 15 per cent from individuals and corporates. I have had considerable experience – albeit on a much smaller scale than that necessary for UNHCR – in extracting voluntary contributions from fiscally reluctant governments.

Involvement in Refugee Issues. Australia is a significant resettlement country and UNHCR donor – and traditional target for asylum-seekers – and in my years in the Australian Cabinet (nearly two of them as Attorney-General and nearly eight as Foreign Minister) I was regularly engaged at a high policy level in issues of resettlement numbers, screening, and appeal procedures, ODA allocations and the like, as well as having the moving experience of visiting refugee camps in a number of countries.

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Beyond that, at a direct personal level I was involved in working with refugee welfare organisations during the nearly four years I held a lower-house Parliamentary seat in an electorate containing an extremely high proportion of recent migrants: 52 per cent of my constituents were born overseas, in – extraordinarily – 140 different countries, with particular concentrations of refugees from South East Asia, the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Horn of Africa. And as President of the International Crisis Group, I have been directly personally involved in the production and promotion over the last five years of 20 substantial reports dealing wholly or in significant part with refugee and IDP issues in Africa, the Balkans, Middle East, and Afghanistan.

Personal Commitment. Throughout my student days and subsequent career I have been passionately committed to migrant justice, anti-racism, and related causes: my first published journal article, in 1972, was an assault on the remnants of the 'White Australia' immigration policy, and I was actively involved for decades with anti-apartheid, Aboriginal rights, and general civil liberties organisations and issues. In more recent years I have been closely personally associated with the genesis and promotion of the concept of the "responsibility to protect" populations at risk within their own country, now being recognised as an important emerging international norm. The High Commissioner's responsibility to protect refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees, the stateless, and, where mandated, the internally displaced, is one that sits naturally alongside all these past involvements, and is one that I will embrace with complete comfort and conviction.

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UNHCR CANDIDATES TALK BACK
MR. SOREN JESSEN-PETERSEN (DENMARK)

Dear Beth,

I should like to thank ICVA for proposing me as a candidate for the position of High Commissioner for Refugees. I appreciate your confidence in me, and I welcome your transparent process in attempting to identify the best qualified candidate for this important post.

Unfortunately, I am at this stage not in a position to contribute actively to your process. As the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Kosovo, my focus during the next few months is to manage the crucial process leading towards the beginning of talks on the status of Kosovo. As such, I cannot divert my attention from Kosovo right now.

At the same time, I am evidently attracted by the challenges of UNHCR, and I do believe that my long experience and background in political and refugee issues, management exposure, resource mobilisation, and communication skills could be useful for UNHCR.

Let me reiterate my appreciation for the support from ICVA which will be very important for the candidate eventually selected for the post.

Sincerely yours,

Søren Jessen-Petersen
Special Representative of the Secretary-General

Ms Elizabeth Ferris
Chair, ICVA Executive Committee
Geneva

UNHCR CANDIDATES TALK BACK
MR. BERNARD KOUCHNER (FRANCE)

I) Thank you for this welcome open forum. What is really at stake are the refugees themselves. I know them. I know how different they are as individuals, but linked by the same distress and uncertainty about their future.

During my first humanitarian mission (war in Nigeria Biafra – 1968), I discovered the plight of the refugees. This is why we founded *Doctors without Borders* in 1971. I paid my first visit to the High Commissioner in Geneva that very year. Since then, I've always been working with fellow travellers and good friends from UNHCR, including Sergio Vieira de Mello, whom we lost in Baghdad and whose memory is dear to our hearts.

For the past 35 years with the "*French doctors*", I've been involved with almost all the UNHCR protection and relief programmes, around the world. I know the field as a volunteer for several missions, from Central America (Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, etc.) to South East Asia (Cambodia borders, Burma border, Poulo Bidong with the hospital ship *Ile de Lumière*...), including Africa (Eritrea, Sudan, Angola, etc.), Middle East (Palestinian camps, Kurdish camps...) and, of course, the Balkans.

I know the fragile status of those men and women who are the most fragile. A better protection for the refugees is a never-ending challenge, even after they go back home. I've been fighting in France and in Europe to improve the way we welcome those who try to escape from conflicts of dictatorships. In those years, I succeeded in enlarging by thousands the quota of refugees in my country.

We still have to convince the wealthiest countries that refugees and economic migrants do not need the same kind of protection. They must implement all the obligations of the Geneva Convention.

II) When I was a minister in the French government, I succeeded in passing several UN resolutions regarding the duty and the right of interference (UNGA Res. 40/131, Dec. 88 and Res. 45/100, Dec. 90.)

With Saddrudin Aga Khan and Javier Perez de Cuellar, we originated Security Council Res. 688 which gave protection to the Iraqi Kurdish people, including after their return home.

With Mohamed Sahnoun, we set up several operations of protection in and outside Somalia – and with Sadako Ogata, conducted a lot of missions from the Balkans to Rwanda.

These various methods and actions have contributed to establish what Kofi Annan now calls humanitarian intervention and what Mohamed Sahnoun and Gareth Evans have called "the responsibility to protect".

In 1973, in a more theoretical approach, within the framework of the French University, I created a Masters degree on emergency medicine. It includes courses on "organisation and hygiene of refugee camps", on "legal protection", on "the right to return", etc. I still teach at Paris University on "health and development", teaching the rights of the refugees and human rights together with Prof. Mario Bettati, Dean of Paris Law University.

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UNHCR CANDIDATES TALK BACK
Mr. Bernard Kouchner (France)

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III) My first aim would be to give UNHCR members confidence and pride, destabilised as they have been by recent internal crisis. They are the keepers and practitioners of the right to protect. They are the first allies of the refugees. They deserve sustainable attention. We'll have to debate about the best ways to reform and improve this unique institution for the benefits of the refugees and, also, the best internal conditions for all those involved. The annual UNHCR report must become a worldwide political event, in the framework of the globalisation process.

Assistance and protection of displaced persons is one of UNHCR's main concerns. But I want to insist on the necessity to solve the problem of the lack of legal tools to do so. I would set up a high level task force to tackle the problems of adapting international law to the contemporary aspects of the refugees' problems – including the necessity of a zero tolerance approach. I would launch immediately two programmes after consultation with the partners: (1) improving the mission of assistance and protection of the refugees and the displaced persons from Darfur; (2) a program of visits/missions wherever it's necessary, staying long enough on the field to get a deep knowledge of the situation.

For elaborating and implementing a strategy, I have always used the same method: participation of all those concerned, including other UN agencies, and NGOs, which draw the lines of the future.

IV) We shall need more and more money. I'm used to this funding obligation. I know how to find money – from governments, foundations, civil society... – for international peace missions.

I know how to manage big administrations. I have been the SG's Special Representative in Kosovo for nearly two years in a situation of permanent turmoil. For eight years, I have run the French health system (800,000 persons). I have created and chaired several major NGOs (like MSF or MDM) – but I am still convinced of the efficiency of small structures.

One of my permanent goals is to reconcile the field with the headquarters. I want to give the staff the will and the means to go to the field and vice versa.

Finally, I have the conviction we could open together a new era in the process of protecting all refugees and displaced persons in the world.

Bernard KOUCHNER

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UNHCR CANDIDATES TALK BACK
Mr. Bernard Kouchner (France)

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CV Dr. Bernard Kouchner

Profession: Docteur en médecine, Gastro-entérologue à l'hôpital Cochin de Paris. Spécialiste d'endoscopie digestive.

Date de naissance: 1^{er} novembre 1939

Nationalité: Française

Principales qualifications:

Enseignant à Harvard School of Public Health

Enseignant au CNAM, Paris. Professeur titulaire de la chaire "Santé et développement"

Expériences professionnelles:

Politique

Ministre de la santé (1992-93) (1997-99) (2001-2002)

Représentant spécial du Secrétaire Général des Nations Unies au Kosovo, chef de mission. 1999-2001

Secrétaire d'Etat à la santé et à l'action sociale, 1997-1999

Fondateur et Président du mouvement Réunir 1995

Député au Parlement européen. Président de la commission du développement et de la coopération.
19 juillet 1994

Ministre de la santé et de l'Action humanitaire, 1992-1993

Secrétaire d'Etat chargé de l'Action humanitaire auprès du ministre des Affaires étrangères, mai 1991

Secrétaire d'Etat chargé de l'action humanitaire auprès du Premier ministre, 1988-1991

Secrétaire d'Etat chargé de l'insertion sociale auprès du ministre des Affaires Sociales.

Action humanitaire

1971-1979 Fondateur, animateur et président de "Médecins sans frontières"

1980-1988 Fondateur, animateur et président de "Médecins du monde"

Fondateur des Volontaires européens du développement

Fondateur de "Globus", le service national humanitaire

Fondateur, Président puis président d'honneur de l'Association pour l'Action Humanitaire

2003 Fondateur de « malades sans frontières » (World health security)

Depuis 1968, missions au Nigéria-Biafra, Pérou, Tchad, Bangladesh, Maroc, Tunisie, Sénégal, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Burkina Fasso, Mali, Niger, Thaïlande, Guatemala, Salvador, Honduras, Uruguay, Somalie, Liban, Cambodge, Viet-Nam, Mer de Chine, Jordanie, Kurdistan d'Iran, Kurdistan d'Irak, Bosnie, Kosovo, Arménie, Azerbaïdjan...

Publications:

1970 La France sauvage (avec M.A Burnier), Editions Jean-Claude Lattès

1974 Les Voraces (avec M.A Burnier), Editions Balland

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UNHCR CANDIDATES TALK BACK
Mr. Bernard Kouchner (France)

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1980 l'Île de Lumière, Editions Ramsay
1986 Charité Business, Editions le Pré aux Clercs
1987 Le devoir d'ingérence (avec M. Bettati), Editions Denoël
1989 Les nouvelles solidarités, Editions des PUF
1991 Le malheur des autres, Editions Odile Jacob
1993 Dieu et les hommes (avec l'Abbé Pierre), Editions Robert Laffont
1995 Ce que je crois, Editions Grasset
1996 La dictature médicale, Editions Robert Laffont
2003 Le Premier qui dit la Vérité, Editions Robert Laffont
2004 Les guerriers de la paix, Editions Grasset
2004 Quand tu seras Président (avec D. Cohn-Bendit), Editions Robert Laffont

Co-fondateur des journaux l'Événement et Actuel.

Auteur de très nombreux articles dans Le Monde, Libération, Le Figaro, Nouvel Observateur, New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, La Repubblica, Corriere della Serra, El País...

Prix:

Lauréat du prix Dag Hammarskjöld 1979 en faveur des droits de l'homme
Lauréat du prix Louise Weiss pour l'Île de Lumière
Lauréat du prix Athinaï pour les droits de l'Homme de la Fondation Alexandre Onassis
Lauréat du Prix Europe 1984
1999 Médecins sans frontières reçoit le Prix Nobel de la Paix
Prix Miguel Onanu des Droits de l'homme au Pérou
Eléphant d'or du Cambodge
Prix de la tolérance, Varsovie 2002
Highest award "men and women for peace"
Prix européen des Droits de l'Homme (Cour Européenne des Droits de l'Homme – 2005)
Knight Commander of the British Empire

Honoris causa, Université Erasmus Rotterdam, Hollande
Honoris causa, Université Rodham, UK
Honoris causa, Université de Sarajevo
Honoris causa, Université de Pristina
Honoris causa, Université Ben Gourion de Negev, Israël

UNHCR CANDIDATES TALK BACK

MR. KAMEL MORJANE (TUNISIA)

ICVA Open Forum for the Candidates: Responses from Kamel Morjane,
UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees

General position

I believe that a new High Commissioner must preside over an organisation that provides dependable responses to changing humanitarian needs. The new High Commissioner must enable UNHCR to evolve while maintaining stability. He or she should be able to do so through forward and innovative thinking, strategic, and complementary partnerships, and consistent operational excellence. The High Commissioner should be sensitive to the political and humanitarian contexts in which he or she works, and take due account of new initiatives and reforms.

The vision: reinforcing protection

The challenge for UNHCR is to reinforce refugee protection in a changing world. UNHCR must remain the pre-eminent advocate for refugee protection worldwide; an effective and efficient deliverer of protection and assistance in both emergency and static situations; and a powerful force for enabling solutions. This requires:

- Strengthening UNHCR's capacity to respond to displacement emergencies
- Effectively and innovatively addressing the needs of refugees, particularly those in protracted situations
- Assertively seeking durable solutions for refugees
- Taking on greater responsibility for internally displaced situations, in a predictable and collaborative manner that does not endanger the principle of asylum
- Tackling the asylum/migration nexus in a principled but open manner

The means: performance, partnership, accountability, and openness

To attain this vision, UNHCR must:

- Involve refugees – particularly women refugees – in all activities
- Reinforce professionalism, and deliver measurable results
- Work in complementary and responsible partnership with governments, UN agencies, the ICRC, NGOs, and the private sector.
- Adopt a workforce strategy that places the best people in the right places, that rewards excellent performance, and that manages surplus capacity
- Embrace new technologies and working methods
- Be accountable for results, and open to scrutiny and change

Personal qualities

I would humbly state that I am well-qualified for the post of High Commissioner, for the following reasons:

- My experience is broad and diverse: I have served in many regions and functions with UNHCR, as well as with my country's diplomatic service and the UN. I have a sound knowledge of refugee issues, and their global context.

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UNHCR CANDIDATES TALK BACK

Mr. Kamel Morjane (Tunisia)

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- I value partnerships, and always attempt to build bridges
- I will usher in change with stability; and will use my knowledge of the organisation to build upon successes and alter non-performing initiatives
- I have been associated with some of UNHCR's greatest challenges and successes during 23 years of service to refugees
- I try always to maintain a human touch in my dealings with staff
- I do not forget that UNHCR is, ultimately, about individual human beings

Responses to ICVA concerns

In addition to my overall platform, which also deals with some of the issues below, the following are some specific responses to the ICVA concerns.

Keeping UNHCR relevant

I mentioned above that UNHCR's challenge is to reinforce protection in a changing world. By this I mean that UNHCR must maintain its focus on protection, while at the same time being aware of and accounting for change, be it in migration or other domains. UNHCR is a non-political, humanitarian organisation, yet refugee issues are inherently political. In order to reinforce its impartiality, and prevent UNHCR from being manipulated, the High Commissioner must have a keen understanding of displacement dynamics, their root causes, and the political factors that will help to resolve them.

It is the job of a good High Commissioner to gauge the current climate, and ensure that UNHCR remains relevant while sticking to its principles. Past High Commissioners have instituted different initiatives and concepts, such as human security and Convention Plus. I would not at this point propose any new initiatives – that would be premature – but underline my commitment to both safeguarding our core protection and solutions mandate while dynamically adapting to changing circumstances.

I believe that one of UNHCR's great strengths is its emergency response capacity. This capacity was developed and refined over many years, beginning in particular with the first Gulf War. While the function remains superb, UNHCR has lost its pre-eminence in recent years. As AHC, I have invested much effort in bolstering this capacity, and were I given the opportunity to be High Commissioner, I would redouble these efforts.

The new High Commissioner must also ensure that UNHCR plays its part as an important and valuable component of the UN system and the humanitarian family. UNHCR should learn lessons from past and current UN reform initiatives, and should strive always to ensure that the Office is seen as a centre of excellence, openness, and achievement – a true asset to the United Nations.

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UNHCR CANDIDATES TALK BACK Mr. Kamel Morjane (Tunisia)

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Responding to the restrictive policies of governments, and fulfilling UNHCR's supervisory role

I agree with the ICVA assessment of the problems of restrictive policies, and would go further and observe that restrictive policies adopted by wealthy countries are increasingly being copied by previously generous, less wealthy, countries. It is the role of a High Commissioner to be courageous, forthright, and principled in safeguarding refugee rights. As High Commissioner, I would take a firm stance, but use my political acumen and diplomatic skills to ensure that governments do not feel preached at, but realise that we all have a stake in a just and humane system of refugee protection. The suggestion to use the High Commissioner's Forum to better supervise the Convention and improve the protection responses of States and UNHCR is a promising one.

Operationalising protection

I believe that all UNHCR staff, from the High Commissioner downwards, are protection officers. While international protection is grounded in law, it is also a living concept, and a means of helping the desperate and the needy. All good UNHCR staff recognise this, and have over the years provided tangible and practical protection to millions. As High Commissioner, I would encourage and cultivate this spirit, and approach to protection.

As you mention, and as a recent Independent Study of UNHCR's Senior Management Structure also points out, the interface between protection and operations is not trouble-free. I agree with the study's conclusion, which states that while our structural design is sound, the relations between organisational entities do not always function correctly owing to cumbersome processes, organisational culture, and leadership. The report challenges UNHCR to have the 'determination to resolve the challenges facing it in the areas of protection and durable solutions'. As High Commissioner, I would happily accept this challenge.

IDPs and protection

I have long believed that it is imperative for the international community to respond predictably and robustly to the issue of IDPs and their protection, and that UNHCR has a central role to play in this regard. My view is encapsulated in my speech at this year's Standing Committee:

UNHCR's position is straightforward. We have what could be called a 'predisposition' to deal with IDPs, fully respecting the collaborative approach. This means that when IDPs situations arise that are linked or similar to refugee/returnee situations, and where there is a need for intervention, we will intervene, provided that this is at the request of and in collaboration with our UN and other humanitarian partners. We help IDPs because they need to be helped, because it is often neither ethical nor practical to distinguish between human beings because of a border they may or may not have crossed, and because we have a unique capacity and expertise with which to respond to IDP needs, particularly in the protection sphere. We also feel that IDP situations do not lend themselves to uniform responses: to a greater extent than in refugee situations, IDP needs – in particular protection needs – vary greatly from situation to situation, and so too must the international response.

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UNHCR CANDIDATES TALK BACK

Mr. Kamel Morjane (Tunisia)

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Threats to humanitarian space and humanitarian action

Since the tragedy of 19 August 2003, when the UN Headquarters in Baghdad was bombed, humanitarian personnel the world over have found themselves facing various threat levels, and restrictions on their movements. As AHC, I oversaw an overhaul of UNHCR's staff security system, which attempts to create an organisational culture in which safety and security are ingrained in all aspects of our operations. Ultimately, though, heads of humanitarian agencies must regain the moral high ground; as the late Sergio Vieira de Mello put it to the Security Council, less than a month before his death, "our security continues to rely significantly on the reputation of the United Nations". I do not believe that we are in the midst of a clash *of* civilizations, although we may be in the midst of a clash *about* civilization. As High Commissioner, I would be in a good position to dispel the sense that the UN has in any way a *parti pris*, and instead work to show that our programmes are intended to bring hope, protection, and succour, and re-establish our reputation in troubled regions.

Regarding the question of integrated missions, it is perhaps alarmist to term them threats. The issue is one of humanitarian space, effectiveness, and accountability. I strongly believe the integration must begin in the planning phase, and that each proposed mission will have a unique set of circumstances, which dictate different structures. As High Commissioner, I would guide UNHCR through the different pitfalls and opportunities afforded by the approach, and would make sure that individual agency strengths would be primed and not stifled, and that lines of accountability would be precise.

Partnerships (NGOs, UN, IOM, ICRC)

Those who know me and my record recognise that I am a firm believer in strong and mutually respectful partnerships. It is not desirable for UNHCR to 'go it alone'; in today's world: we are all connected, and have our strengths, weaknesses, and specific niches. I believe that we should recognise these, and collaborate in such a way that our strengths complement and reinforce each other.

As you mention, UNHCR's relationship with NGOs is perhaps unique in the UN system – indeed, NGOs are specifically mentioned in the UNHCR Statute. International NGOs are today well-funded, and any UN agency must be able to forge alliances with them. However, I also feel that UNHCR must equilibrate the picture, and reinforce our efforts to engage with and cultivate Southern NGOs.

Regarding the UN system, as AHC I have made it a priority to ensure smooth and practical relations with our main humanitarian partners – in particular WFP and OCHA. I also believe in, and throughout my career have worked towards, deepening UNHCR's collaboration with the ICRC.

On the question of IOM, while I have, as AHC, tried to maintain useful contacts with it, I admit that UNHCR has at times been at odds with certain of its policies, and would state that it is time to move on. If chosen as High Commissioner, I would reinvigorate our continuing dialogue with IOM, with a view to refreshing and reconceiving our relationship in a principled and practical manner that accounts for the important cultural and organisational differences between the two agencies.

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UNHCR CANDIDATES TALK BACK Mr. Kamel Morjane (Tunisia)

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Zero tolerance

As AHC, I helped put in place a series of measures designed to improve UNHCR's ability to respond to cases of sexual abuse. Personally, I am simply disgusted at the notion that any humanitarian might take advantage of the very people he or she is supposed to protect, and as High Commissioner would take all steps to ensure that the lives of innocent refugees are not ruined, and UNHCR's reputation not blemished, by any such happenings.

I also believe that more sensitivity amongst UNHCR staff to gender concerns goes a long way towards changing mentalities. The United Nations represents some of the highest ideals and aspirations of humankind, and as UN staff we have to begin with ourselves, and commit to personally embodying such ideals in order to set the example.

The final challenge

UNHCR is an organisation that helps states to help refugees. The Refugee Convention depoliticises the act of providing asylum, and transforms it from being a potentially sensitive political statement into a pure humanitarian response. UNHCR provides the architecture for states to protect refugees, and ensures that states do live up to their obligations.

Thus, UNHCR is in the first instance an organisation in favour of refugees, that works through states. Where states renege on their obligations, the High Commissioner has a role and obligation to intervene in favour of the refugee. In today's world, state responsibilities go beyond treaty obligations, and encompass what the Secretary-General terms the responsibility to protect. A new High Commissioner must be ready to both challenge and collaborate with states in a quest to provide protection and durable solutions for those most in need of it: refugees and other uprooted persons. I stand ready to accept this daunting, vital function.

* * *

Kamel Morjane has served as UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees since October 2001. He came to this post following a diverse and distinguished career at UNHCR, the United Nations, and the Tunisian diplomatic service.

In his current position, Kamel Morjane oversees worldwide UNHCR operations, as well as the operational support, emergency and security services, and evaluation and policy analysis. Emphasising accountability and performance, he has inaugurated and overseen a number of important initiatives during his tenure as AHC. These include reinvigorating UNHCR's early warning system and emergency response procedures; a total review and updating of UNHCR's staff security arrangements, particularly in the wake of the 19 August 2003 Baghdad bombing; intensifying the use of standards and indicators to measure performance and results; mainstreaming gender and age concerns into UNHCR programmes;

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UNHCR CANDIDATES TALK BACK
Mr. Kamel Morjane (Tunisia)

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robustly combating sexual and gender-based violence; and adopting a vigorous new evaluation policy. He has travelled extensively to all major UNHCR operations around the world, ensuring that they are well run and that the rights of displaced persons are upheld.

A firm believer in partnerships, Morjane has also focused on strengthening UNHCR's cooperation with major partners, including WFP, the ICRC, OCHA, and NGOs.

Prior to assuming the position of Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees, Kamel Morjane held a number of senior positions in UNHCR and elsewhere. He was appointed by the Secretary-General as his Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of Congo from 1999-2001, during which time he established the United Nations Observer Mission in the Congo (MONUC) and succeeded, under adverse circumstances, in deploying peacekeeping troops. He served as Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations at Geneva, from 1996 to 2000. During that period, he chaired the World Trade Organisation's Disputes Settlement Body and, previously, its Committee on Administrative and Financial Affairs.

During a long career with UNHCR that began in 1977, he has served as Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa; Director of the Regional Bureau for South-West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East; Head of Personnel Services; and UNHCR Representative in Egypt and Djibouti. He was also elected as Chair of UNHCR's Staff Council in 1985.

Kamel Morjane earned Degrees in Law and Public Administration at the University of Tunis, and a Diploma of Advanced Studies in International Relations at the Graduate Institute for International Studies in Geneva. Aged 56, he is married with two children.

LETTER FROM ICVA CHAIR TO THE CANDIDATES

Re: The Next High Commissioner for Refugees

Dear _____,

I am writing to you with regards to the position of High Commissioner for Refugees. As you may know, in 2000, ICVA wrote to the candidates of whom we were aware offering them a public forum to express their views on the challenges facing the organisation and how they would tackle them.

This year, despite the sudden vacancy, the process to select the next High Commissioner has been made more open with the offer by the Secretary-General's office to states and NGOs to put forward candidates for the position. While this more open process is welcomed, we would like to ensure that the transparency of the process does not end with the submission of candidates.

ICVA is once again writing to the candidates of whom it is aware in order to provide a similar forum through its newsletter *Talk Back* for the candidates to express their views on how they meet the criteria set forth by the Secretary-General's office. In addition, you may wish to read our recent issue of *Talk Back*, 7-1 which was a special issue that highlighted a number of concerns and priority areas for the office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, as seen from the perspective of NGOs. We hope that you will also comment on the issues raised in this issue, a copy of which is attached for your reference.

We would like to invite you to provide us with your views on why you feel that you would make a good High Commissioner for Refugees and how you will tackle the various challenges facing the organisation. We would also like to hear how you feel your experience will contribute to your ability to carry out the tasks at hand. In addition, we would be interested to hear of the areas and issues that you would prioritise should you become High Commissioner.

We are requesting that candidates write back to the ICVA Secretariat by Tuesday, 22 March 2005, 18:00 Geneva time (GMT+1), at the latest, by both e-mail (talkback@icva.ch) and fax (+41 22 950 9609). The

responses will then be published in another special issue of *Talk Back*. The ICVA Secretariat will not edit the length or content of the views that you provide.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or the ICVA Secretariat (Mr. Ed Schenkenberg van Mierop, Coordinator) if you have any questions or would like further clarification.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Sincerely yours,

Elizabeth Ferris
Chair, ICVA Executive Committee

Encl.

ICVA's Newsletter Talk Back # 7-1, 9 March 2005
Press Release, 10 March 2005

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ICVA has been producing *Talk Back* since April 1999. *Talk Back* is primarily distributed via e-mail and is also available on the ICVA website: www.icva.ch. Articles are written with information gathered from various sources, including from member agencies and partners.

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