

Report on
UNHCR 2002 Activities in the Balkans
As a Contribution towards the Secretary-General's Report to the General Assembly
Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/110 of 14 December 2001 entitled
"Economic Assistance to the Eastern European States affected by the developments in
the Balkans"

xx. The **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** has continued implementing its regional transitional strategy as endorsed and adopted at the last Humanitarian Issues Working Group in June 2002. Humanitarian assistance needs arising from the crises of the 1990's will be basically completed by mid-2004. Humanitarian activities in response to the conflicts in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia were largely concluded at the end of 2002, with the return of more than 95 % of all displaced persons and refugees to their homes of origin. More broadly in the Balkans, long-term sustainability needs for returning minority refugees and displaced persons are not being fully met, particularly in the repair of private accommodation, in economic development and assistance, in restoration of basic public services and in education. Large investments in economic recovery and development are still needed if the significant gains in achieving the objectives of the Dayton Peace Accords are to be retained. Equally, with significant political changes in the region, durable solutions *in situ* are now possible for many of the remaining refugees and displaced persons who do not wish to return home. Stabilization of these populations will also require significant bilateral and multilateral financial support. The strategy for addressing these outstanding needs has been outlined in the Stability Pact's Agenda for Regional Action (AREA II), which has been endorsed by the three regional government signatories to the Dayton Peace Accords. Of concern is the widening gap each year between these still significant requirements and available resources. In co-ordination with the EU CARDS country and regional programmes and the Stability Pact Migration and Asylum Initiative, UNHCR is advancing its medium to long-term strategy of establishing effective national asylum systems, through building institutional capacity, within appropriate legislative frameworks and implementation procedures, which are consistent with international and European standards.

xx. UNHCR's contribution to these efforts over the years has been diminishing in line with the overall transition strategy and with the achievement of immediate humanitarian objectives. In 2002, UNHCR programme budgets for the subregion total some \$87.0 million, covering Albania (\$2.0 million), Bosnia and Herzegovina (\$22.4 million), Croatia (\$10.4 million), Serbia and Montenegro (including Kosovo, \$47.5 million), and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (\$4.7 million.) Within the budgets and programmes, emphasis is placed on local procurement whenever possible. These local contracts, totaling some \$ 6.9 million, have been awarded as follows: Albania (\$ 87,000), Bosnia and Herzegovina (\$ 1,453,000), Croatia (\$ 1.1 million), Serbia and Montenegro (including Kosovo, \$ 2,628,000) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (\$ 1.4 million).