

Background on UNHCR presence

Established in 1985, ROBNC is one of the largest regional UNHCR offices covering 8 countries including Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden, with 13 full-time staff, 12 in Stockholm and one in Vilnius. With this modest complement of workforce countries in the region are covered through mission travel, by regular telephone, email and other contacts.

The Baltic and Nordic countries have traditionally been supportive of UNHCR with regard to its global mandate, the global protection situation, funding and EU-related issues. This has been reflected in the level of their contributions to UNHCR. In 2007, the contributions of four of the five Nordic countries (USD 223 million) amounted to nearly 18 per cent of all contributions to UNHCR. In contrast to most other donors, Nordic contributions continue to be predictable, and are either un-earmarked or lightly earmarked. This gives UNHCR a welcome degree of flexibility. In the field of assistance during emergencies, the Nordic countries account for a significant proportion of UNHCR's standby arrangements. The three Baltic countries, having recently become (ad hoc) UNHCR donors, are encouraged to maintain and/or increase their contributions.

At the same time the Nordic countries tend to be very sensitive to UNHCR criticism on domestic policies and practices.

The overall goal and rationale for UNHCR's presence and involvement in the region are to:

- advocate for accessible, fair and efficient asylum procedures in asylum law, policy and practice as well as improvement of the quality of national asylum systems in line with international protection standards; and
- enhance the visibility of and increase the level of support for UNHCR from governments, the general public and the private sector.

Core activities for the new year 2008 will include: (1) monitoring and addressing gaps and changes in asylum legislation, policy and practice; (2) enhancing protection partnerships and strategic protection capacity building; (3) advocating for awareness of protection activities and gaining visibility to governmental contributions; and (4) monitoring and engaging the media and public with respect to UNHCR's protection mandate and priorities.

By focusing on these mission critical activities it is anticipated that the overall favorable protection environment in the region will be maintained and, indeed, improved – especially through the continued development of the protection orientation and capacity of both government and NGO partners. Moreover, external relations and fundraising activities will not only enhance the visibility and viability of UNHCR and its mandate, but will contribute to moving the public debate on important asylum issues in a favorable direction. Taken together, these focused protection and external relations activities of the Office are critical to maintaining UNHCR's important influence over the asylum debate and practice in a region which has, traditionally, been a model of refugee protection and continues to be an important supporter of UNHCR and its global mandate.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Name Hans TEN FELD

Date of Birth 18 March 1955

Nationality Dutch

Marital Status Married

Studies

1973 - 1978 University of Utrecht, Utrecht, the Netherlands
International Law
Master

Languages Dutch, English, German, French

Functions with UNHCR

2007 – present Regional Representative, UNHCR Regional Representation in Sweden, Stockholm

2006 - 2007 Deputy Regional Representative (Protection), UNHCR Regional Representation in Sweden, Stockholm

2002 - 2006 Chief of the Recruitment and Postings Section, Division of Human Resources Management, UNHCR Headquarters, Geneva

1997 - 2002 Senior Liaison Officer, UNHCR Liaison Office in New Zealand, Auckland

1994 - 1997 Senior Programme Officer, then Deputy Chief of Mission (Programme), Office of the UNHCR Chief of Mission in Myanmar, Yangon

1989 - 1994 Deputy Representative, UNHCR Representation in Germany, Bonn

1986 - 1989 Protection Officer, Office of the UNHCR Chief of Mission in India, New Delhi

1984 - 1986 Associate Field Officer, Office of the UNHCR Chief of Mission in Cambodia, Phnom Penh

1981 - 1984 Associate Programme Officer, UNHCR Representation in Zambia, Lusaka

Previous professional activities

1979 - 1981 Assistant Programme Officer, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Lome, Togo

1981 Programme Officer, Ministry of Development and Cooperation,

The Hague, the Netherlands