

Vol 1

Refugees —
ever present

Refugee is...

Special Issue

**Commemorating
the 25th year of Japan's
Accession to the 1951
Refugee Convention**



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

UNHCR Magazine
January 2006
The United Nations
High Commissioner for Refugees

Special Greetings

Sadako Ogata

The 8th United Nations
High Commissioner for Refugees

This special edition of the UNHCR Magazine commemorates the 25 years of partnership between Japan and UNHCR since Japan became party to the 1951 Convention in 1981. Twenty-five years ago, at the height of the Indochina refugee crisis, Japan decided to accept refugees for the first time with an emerging public support.

Since I became the eighth United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 1991, many Japanese in the government and businesses as well as private citizens have actively supported UNHCR. Japanese government has become the second largest donor next to the United States of America, supporting the agency's global operations, which are entirely funded by voluntary contributions. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Environment have seconded senior officials to UNHCR. When Rwandan refugees fled to Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo) Japan dispatched the Self-Defense Force for the first time under the International Peace Cooperation Law to help support the relief operation for the refugees in Goma. Among the private sector, the four major business organizations led the establishment of the "Refugee Relief Fund." The amount of donations under the Fund reached 2.4 billion yen,



Former High Commissioner Ogata visiting the Rwandan refugees in Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo) during her term.
UNHCR/P.Moumpzis

which enabled many effective projects.

Support and interest among the private citizens have also increased. Over the years, many young Japanese joined "Camp Sadako" to visit refugee camps and brought their experiences back to their friends and communities. Moreover, several Japanese NGOs emerged as UNHCR's implementing partners and actively engaged in humanitarian activities not only in Asia but also in the former Yugoslavia and Africa. In 2000, Japan for UNHCR was also established to handle donations from the general public.

Over the past 25 years the understanding and commitment of the Japanese people toward refugee issues and of the role of UNHCR have grown dramatically. There is, of course, more that needs to be done on refugee protection. Japan received more than 10,000 refugees from Indo-china, but has been restrictive in accepting individual asylum-seekers arriving in Japan. In recent years, however, I feel increasingly hopeful as active efforts have been made through close partnership between the Japanese government and the UNHCR Office in Tokyo to improve asylum policies and practices.

In an interdependent and globalizing world, peace cannot be achieved without assuring the security of others. I sincerely hope the partnership between Japan and UNHCR will develop interest in issues related to refugees and to all those in need and to foster genuine spirit of solidarity among all peoples.

Robert Robinson

UNHCR Representative in Japan

Refugees have always been present over the course of history. In today's world following the end of the Cold War, the situation is characterized by eruptions of ethnic and civil wars and rising terrorism in the 21st century. Despite this changing nature of conflicts, people continue to be displaced. As you will read in this renewed UNHCR magazine, Japan has maintained itself as a huge supporter of UNHCR and our operations. Madam Ogata's presence as High Commissioner in the 1990s served as a significant

dimension to forge the close cooperative relationship between Japan and UNHCR. This cooperation has continued. Today, there are new efforts emerging from Japan which aim to strengthen the network of support provided to refugees. Japan has the potential to play an increased and active role in humanitarian activities, a unique one for which Japan is particularly suited. We hope to continue a long-lasting, collaborative relationship in pursuit of a common goal of finding durable solutions for refugees. Solutions for refugees require not only financial support but new ideas. Japan has much to offer.

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A Bosnian refugee child in the former Yugoslavia.
UNHCR/A.Hollmann

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Commemorating the 25th year of Japan's Accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention

A Brief History of Cooperation between UNHCR and Japan

1980s

Refugees and the Cold War

1. Refugee Situation and UNHCR

During the 1980s, 30 years since the establishment of UNHCR, Cold War tensions persisted and regional wars continued to produce refugees. Civil war erupted in Afghanistan and some 6 million people fled to Pakistan, Iran and other neighbouring countries. In Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador, more than 2 million people fled their homes due to civil wars and most of them remained internally displaced. In the Horn of Africa (such as Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti) and other areas in Africa, conflicts and severe starvation forced millions out of their homes.

Moreover, in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, millions of people started leaving for neighbouring countries after political turmoil and changes in regimes in the mid-1970s. For the first time in its history, UNHCR established and managed camps for Cambodian refugees in Thailand and provided direct assistance.



In Somalia (late 1980s)

UNHCR had to respond to several massive refugee emergencies simultaneously in three different continents in the 1980s. The total number of refugees in 1975 counted 2.8 million, but the number jumped to 15 million by the end of the 1980s. Meanwhile, the UNHCR budget increased eight-fold from USD 76 million to USD 580 million. As the management and maintenance of large refugee camps became one of its important tasks, UNHCR expanded its operation to its largest scale ever.

2. Developments in Japan

At the International Conference on Indo-chinese Refugees in 1979, Thailand and its neighbouring countries agreed to accept Indo-chinese refugees temporarily, provided that the US and European countries would eventually admit them. This made Indo-chinese refugees a rare case as resettlement was determined to be the major solution and 2.5 million people were resettled. Japan also admitted more than 10,000 Indo-chinese refugees and acceded to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees in 1981.

A number of international NGOs headed for Thailand which had received an influx of Indo-chinese refugees. Among them were 3 newly established Japanese NGOs. They operated as UNHCR's implementing partners and are considered to be the Japanese pioneers in humanitarian and refugee assistance.

Throughout the 1980s, the dire situations of refugees in Indochina and Africa triggered expansion of support among the Japanese public. An increasing number of individuals and organisations made donations to UNHCR.

Indo-chinese refugees waiting to be rescued at sea (1984)
©UNHCR

1990s

End of the Cold War and the Continued Complexity of Refugee Issues

1. Refugee Situation and UNHCR

As the Cold War came to an end, the 1990s saw a significant increase in the number of internal conflicts triggered by inter-ethnic hostilities, while inter-state wars decreased. People fled from or became internally displaced particularly in Iraq, Rwanda, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and East Timor, escaping severe fighting and massacres.

In the 1990s, UNHCR's activities were not limited to protecting refugees in the countries of asylum, but expanded to protecting refugees in areas of on-going conflicts. During this period, UNHCR was also required to improve its ability to respond and provide prompt assistance in large-scale emergencies, coordinate with armed forces (especially in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda), and ensure its staff's security in conflict-affected areas. Mrs. Sadako Ogata, who assumed the post of High Commissioner for Refugees in 1991, dealt with such serious issues for the next ten years of her term in office.

Meanwhile, the end of the Cold War brought peace agreements in Namibia, Mozambique, Cambodia and three Central American states. Refugees began to repatriate home to these countries. Up until the 1980s, returnees were considered to be the responsibility of the countries of origin and UNHCR provided only limited assistance. However, promoting returnees' reintegration



In Bosnia (1996)

into a war-torn society became recognized as an important agenda to prevent further eruption of conflicts and refugee outflow. Therefore, UNHCR broadened its activities to assist returnees to reintegrate and re-establish their livelihoods.

The 1990s experienced emergency refugee outflows within a short period of time and massive repatriations. UNHCR counted close to 28 million persons of concern at its peak. This led UNHCR to focus on interventions that would prevent refugee outflow and returnees falling back into refugee situations. In order to strengthen the cooperation with NGOs as well as governments and other UN agencies, UNHCR started Partnership in Action (PARinAC) in 1993 in various locations around the world, including Japan. At the time, UNHCR had implementing agreements of USD 300 million with nearly 300 NGOs across the world. Reflecting its expanding scope of activities, UNHCR's expenditure reached USD 1 billion for the first time in 1992.

2. Developments in Japan

Throughout the 1990s, the Government of Japan strongly supported UNHCR, as the second largest donor after the US. Contributions constituted 9 to 13 percent of UNHCR's annual budget. It also started a new form of cooperation, responding to High Commissioner Ogata's appeal for assistance packages consisting not only of financial and material assistance but also human resource assistance. In accordance with the International Peace Cooperation Law, the Japanese government provided assistance such as tents, plastic sheets and sleeping bags to the Rwandan refugees in 1994 and the Kosovar refugees and displaced persons of East Timor in 1999. The Japanese Self-Defense Force was in charge of airlifting these materials. The Self-Defense Force was also deployed to Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo)

to provide medical assistance to Rwandan refugees.

The business sector, centered around Nippon Keidanren, established the Refugee Relief Fund in March 1991 after the appointment of High Commissioner Ogata and called for donations from the public at large. This fund served as a basic financial source to respond to crises and emergencies in the 1990s.

Such assistance from both the public and private sectors in Japan supported UNHCR's activities focusing on prevention of refugee outflow, response in the countries of origin, and provision of solutions, in addition to its traditional activities in the countries of asylum, dealing with refugee outflow and repatriation. During these years, Japanese NGOs gradually gained a greater presence as they exerted efforts in the face of refugee crises in Africa and the former Yugoslavia.

Refugee Agenda for the 21st Century

Consolidating Peace, Revising Protection Functions, and Fighting Against Intolerance

1. Refugee Situation and UNHCR

Today, while refugees are returning home in some areas, there are protracted refugee situations and newly developing crises which compel people to flee their homes. UNHCR is required to respond appropriately to various situations.

Two major events in the new century included the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001 in the US and the establishment of a new government in Afghanistan after a prolonged state of internal conflict. An unexpected scale of repatriation was triggered in Afghanistan after the end of twenty years of civil wars. 3.5 million people have returned home so far. In southern Sudan where the Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) reached a peace agreement in early 2005, some 550,000 refugees and another 4 million internally displaced people are expected to return home in the near future.

Meanwhile, new conflicts erupted in Ivory Coast, Central African Republic and the Darfur region in western Sudan. In partic-

ular, Darfur, where armed militias conducted extremely brutal attacks against local civilians, experienced the "worst humanitarian crisis in the world." More than 200,000 fled to neighbouring Chad as refugees and nearly 2 million people were internally displaced.

In these situations, UNHCR has been struggling to tackle numerous issues such as ensuring security for its staff, finding durable solutions for protracted refugee situations, bridging the gap between the emergency assistance phase and the development assistance phase, strengthening its protection functions in countries which receive a mixed flow of refugees and immigrants, and fighting against the globally rising culture of "intolerance" towards refugees.

In countries such as Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia and southern Sudan, refugees are starting to return home but basic infrastructures are non-existent after years of devastating armed conflicts. Under such conditions, rebuilding local communities becomes essential to consolidating peace. As part of the efforts to build environments for sustainable return and peace, UNHCR has been taking the 4Rs approach (Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction), aimed at making an uninterrupted transition from repatriation to development of the places of return.

The *Agenda for Protection* was a product of the Global Consultations on International Protection which was held for two years from 2000, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the 1951 Convention. The Consultations reviewed key issues of international protection which were not stipulated in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. At the same time, environments surrounding refugees have become more severe, affected by frequent terrorists attacks such as the events of September 11th. Mr. António Guterres, who assumed the post of



Refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo in Zambia (2002) ©UNHCR



Sudanese refugee building a tent in Chad (2004)
UNHCR/E.Cue

High Commissioner for Refugees in June 2005, while not underestimating the need to combat terrorism, has repeatedly stressed the difference between refugees in genuine need of protection and terrorists or illegal migrants and called for tolerance towards refugees to the international community.

2. Developments in Japan

Japan's support to UNHCR has continued with new initiatives, even after High Commissioner Ogata's departure from office at the end of 2000.

In the political arena, the supra-partisan association, Parliamentary League for UNHCR was established in February 2001 by the initiative of then Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori who had visited the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya the previous month. In November 2005, Mr. Ichiro Aisawa, Secretary General of the League, also visited the Kakuma camp. At the press conference after the visit, he emphasized that refugees, particularly those in protracted situations, must not be forgotten. Japan Association for UNHCR was established in October 2000 and has been active in publicity and fund-raising activities.

The cooperation between UNHCR and JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) has marked its fifth year and will be further strengthened through supplementary development activities for refugees and local communities in Zambia and field operations in Afghanistan and Sudan, in addition to regular meetings and staff exchanges.

The eCentre (Regional Centre for Emergency Training in International Humanitarian

Response), which was established at the UNHCR office in Tokyo, aims at networking and capacity building of government officials and NGO workers in the Asia-Pacific region who cooperate with UNHCR in humanitarian activities. A number of Japanese NGO workers who participated in security and other training programmes by the eCentre are now actively working in Africa and Asia. Since 2005, with the support from JICA, the eCentre has been organizing workshops to help transition from humanitarian assistance to development.

UNHCR also seeks partnership with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on human security. UNHCR considers self-sustaining efforts of refugees and their latent potentials as a means to reach durable solutions in protracted situations. This approach is in line with the notion of "protection and capacity building" upheld in the concept of human security. The Trust Fund for Human Security established by the Government of Japan in 1999 has contributed to UNHCR's various operations in the former Yugoslavia (including Kosovo), Rwanda, Zambia and Colombia. This fund also helped establish the eCentre. As of 2004, Japan remains to be the second largest donor to UNHCR. It also provides non-financial support such as airlifting of relief supplies to Afghanistan, Iraq and Sudan.

Noting this history of cooperation, High Commissioner Guterres, during his visit to Japan in October 2005, declared the wish to establish a strategic partnership between UNHCR and Japan which would go beyond financial cooperation, as well as to reinforce close cooperation with Japanese NGOs and JICA. He expressed his expectation for Japan to utilise its political influence for the cause of refugees and increase acceptance of refugees.



Myanmarese refugees receiving vocational training at a camp in Thailand (2004) ©UNHCR

Asylum in Japan

Japan acceded to the 1951 Convention in 1981, has basic domestic legislation in place (the Immigration Act contains provisions relating to asylum), and has an administrative procedure for identifying refugees. This resulted in the recognition of 330 Convention refugees until 2004. It also admitted about 11,000 Indo-chinese, without giving them formal refugee status, and local integration has been generally achieved. In 2004, the law was amended¹ to drop the time limit for asylum applications,² provide temporary legal status to asylum-seekers and introduce non-immigration counselors into the appeal process.³ In addition to the development of laws, asylum also needs a flexible implementation of the rules with a humanitarian spirit.

It is important that the general public understands the reasons refugees flee, the uncertainty of their plight, and the valuable contribution they can make to their host countries. Burden and responsibility sharing arrangements, including resettlement, is also an important component of the solutions to the problem of refugees world-wide. Many countries have well-established resettlement programs.⁴ Apart from its acceptance of Indo-chinese, Japan has otherwise not become involved in the resettlement of refugees from precarious circumstances in camps overseas. Such a resettlement program would be another strong manifestation of Japan's humanitarian commitment.

- 1 The revised Immigration and Refugee Recognition Act entered into force in May 2005.
- 2 The "time limit for applications" refers to so called "60-day rule", which stipulated that the asylum application must be made within 60 days after the day the person landed in Japan or the day he became aware of the circumstances in connection with which he may become a refugee. The abolition of the time limit is in line with standards of fair asylum procedures.
- 3 The appeal process is a procedure whereby an asylum-seeker whose application was rejected on first instance examination can request a re-examination on his/her refugee claim. Prior to the revision of the law, the appeal examination was conducted exclusively by the staff of the Immigration Bureau, Ministry of Justice.
- 4 Because of an ongoing threat of persecution or other reasons, some refugees cannot repatriate and are unable to live permanently in their country of first asylum. In those circumstances, resettlement in a third country may be the best solution.

Refugee Situation - UNHCR and Japan 1981-1989

Number of refugees and others of concern to UNHCR **10,700,000**
(As of 31 December 1984)

UNHCR

Budget:
USD **445 million**
(1985)

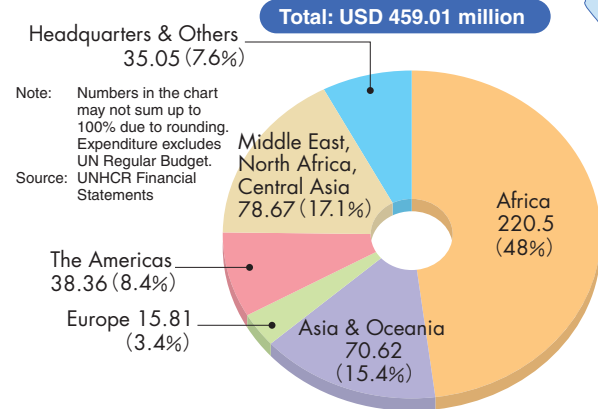
Expenditure:
USD **459.01 million**
(As of 31 December 1985)

Number of offices
94 offices in 67 countries
(1985)

Total number of staff
(International staff)
2,043 (596)
(As of December 1985)

North America
1,400,000

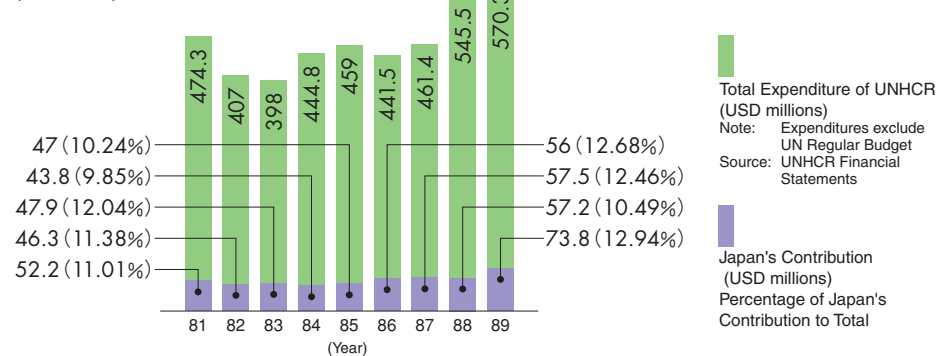
Expenditures of UNHCR by Region (1985, USD millions)



Top 5 Donors to UNHCR (1985, USD millions)

1. USA	122.6
2. EC (European Commission)	53.2
3. Japan	47
4. Germany	30.4
5. United Kingdom	18.1

Japan's Contributions to UNHCR (1981-1989)



Number of refugees and others of concern to UNHCR
(As of 31 December 1984)
Source: *Helping Refugees 2005 Edition*

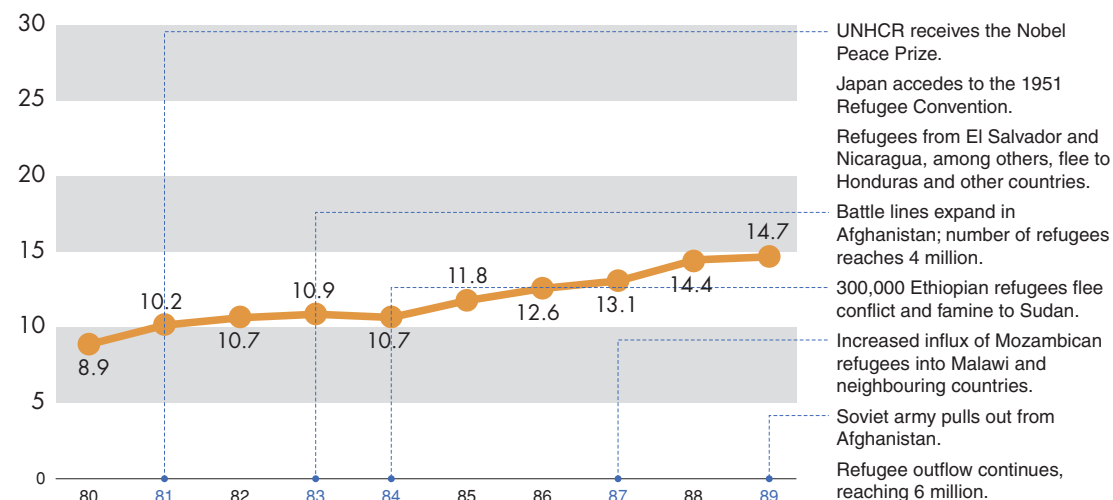
1 million 0.5 million 0.1 million

Total number of Japanese international staff: 20
(As of 30 June 1985)

★ Male ★ Female

Number of Refugees and Others of Concern to UNHCR

(In millions, as of 31 December of each given year)
Source: *The State of the World's Refugees 2000*



Japanese international staff
Male: 1 Female: 2

Japanese international staff
Male: 6 Female: 4

Europe
1985
700,000

Asia
1985
5,100,000

The Americas
1985
Japanese international staff
Male: 2 Female: 0

Africa
1985
3,000,000

Japanese international staff
Male: 4 Female: 1

Latin America & Caribbean
400,000

A B C
D E F

UNHCR's Implementing Partners - Japanese NGOs (1985)

Name of NGO	Countries in Operation
A Caritas Japan	Japan
B International Social Service Japan (ISSJ)	Japan
C Japanese Red Cross Society	Japan
D Japan Legal Aid Association (JLAA)	Japan
E Risho Kosei-kai	Japan
F Refugee Assistance Headquarters (RHQ), Foundation for the Welfare & Education of the Asian People	Japan
G Caring for Young Refugees (CYR)	Thailand
H Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA)	Thailand
I Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC)	Thailand, Somalia

Special Issue
UNHCR-Japan Partnership
Refugee Situation - UNHCR and Japan
1990-1999

Number of refugees and others of concern to UNHCR **27,420,000**
 (As of 31 December 1994)

UNHCR

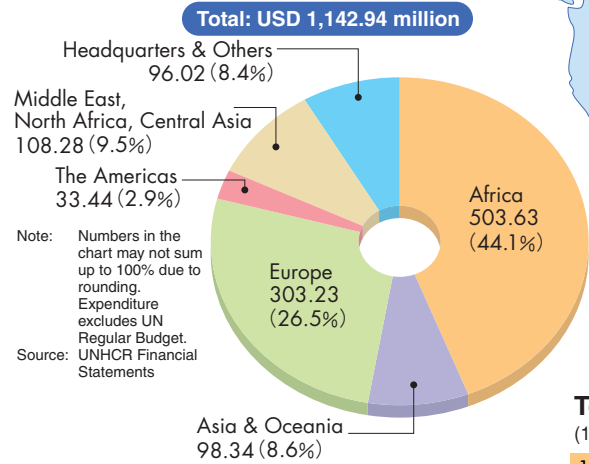
Budget:
 USD 1,269 million (1995)

Expenditure:
 USD 1,142.94 million (As of 31 December 1995)

Number of offices
 258 offices in 118 countries (1995)

Total number of staff (International staff)
 5,441 (1,498) (As of December 1995)

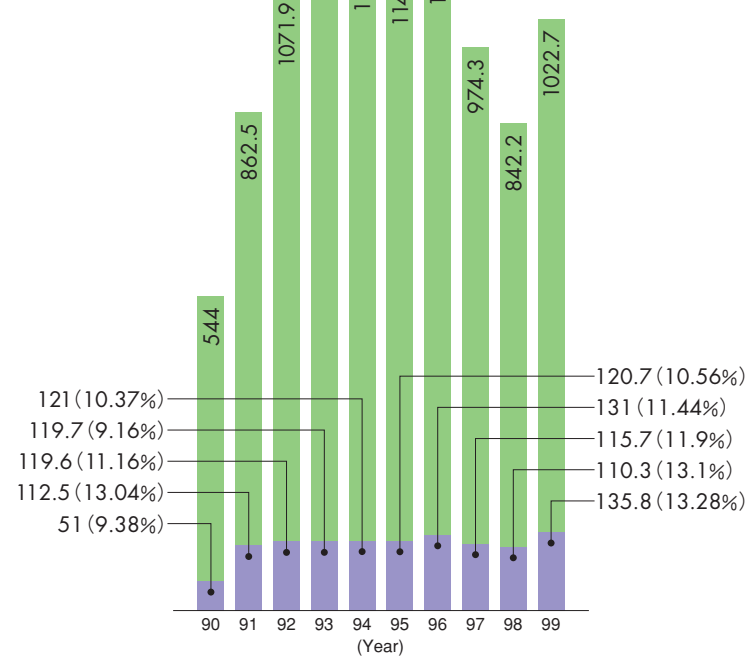
Expenditures of UNHCR by Region
 (1995, USD millions)



Top 5 Donors to UNHCR
 (1995, USD millions)

1. USA	226.2
2. EC (European Commission)	202.6
3. Japan	120.7
4. Netherlands	74.7
5. Sweden	66.3

Japan's Contributions to UNHCR
 (1990-1999)



Number of refugees and others of concern to UNHCR
 (As of 31 December 1994)
 Source: *Helping Refugees 2005 Edition*

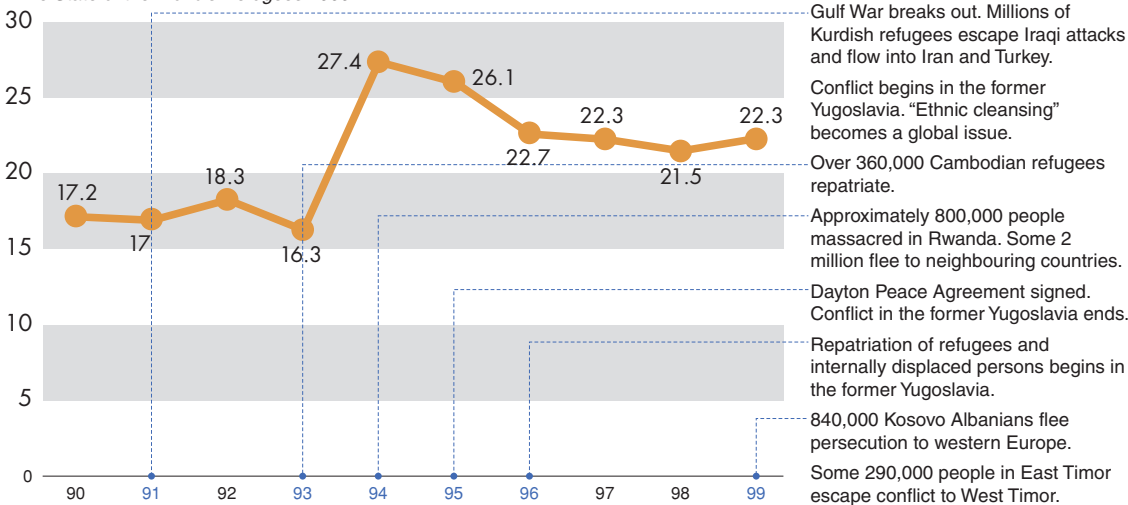
1 million 0.5 million 0.1 million

Total number of Japanese international staff: 47
 (As of 1 January 1995)

★ Male ★ Female

Number of Refugees and Others of Concern to UNHCR
 (In millions, as of 31 December of each given year)

Source: *Helping Refugees 2005 Edition*, *The State of the World's Refugees 2000*



Japan's material assistance to UNHCR

April 1999
 Republic of Albania
Kosovar refugees
 Blankets (10,000)
 Sleeping bags (5,000)
 Tents (1,000)

Japanese international staff
 Male: 11 Female: 16

Japanese international staff
 Male: 7 Female: 5

On Leave, Other 1995

Japanese international staff
 Female: 1

Europe 1995
 6,520,000

Asia 1995
 7,920,000

The Americas 1995
 Japanese international staff
 Male: 1 Female: 2

Africa 1995
 11,810,000

Japanese international staff
 Male: 2 Female: 2

Japan's material assistance to UNHCR

October 1999
 Indonesia
Internally displaced East Timorese
 Tents (500)
 Blankets (9,000)
 Sleeping bags (11,140)
 Plastic sheets (5,120)
 Jerry cans (20,000)

Japan's material assistance to UNHCR

August 1994
 Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo)
Rwandan refugees
 Rubhalls (43)
 Blankets (3,550)
 Sleeping bags (2,600)
 Shovels (1,000)
 Water tanks (213)
 Emergency Health Kit (5 units)
 Medical supplies (1 unit)

UNHCR's Implementing Partners - Japanese NGOs (1995)

Name of NGO	Countries in Operation
A Refugee Assistance Headquarters (RHQ), Foundation for the Welfare & Education of the Asian People	Japan
B International Social Service Japan (ISSJ)	Japan
C Japan Legal Aid Association (JLAA)	Japan
D Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA)	Nepal, Angola, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique
E African Education Fund International (AEF)	Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania
F Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)	Croatia
G JEN	former Yugoslavia
H Asian Volunteers' Network (AVN)	Democratic Republic of Congo
I Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC)	Vietnam, South Africa
J Bridge Asia Japan (BAJ)	Myanmar
K Association for Aid and Relief, Japan (AAR)	former Yugoslavia

Special Issue
UNHCR-Japan Partnership
Refugee Situation - UNHCR and Japan
2000-2005

Number of refugees and others of concern to UNHCR **19,200,000**
(As of 31 December 2004)

UNHCR

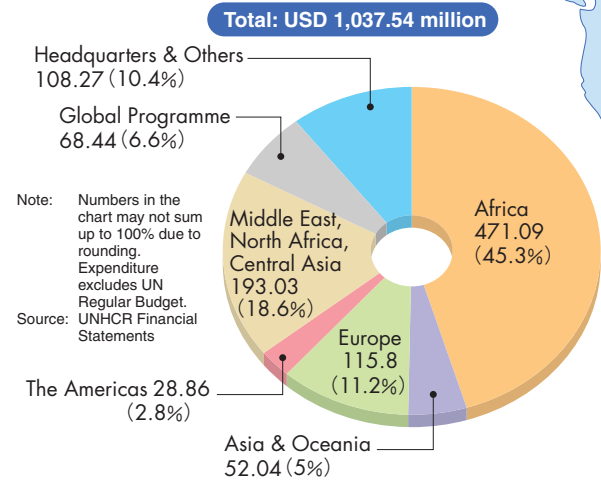
Budget:
USD 1,191 million
(2004)

Expenditure:
USD 1,037.54 million
(As of 31 December 2004)

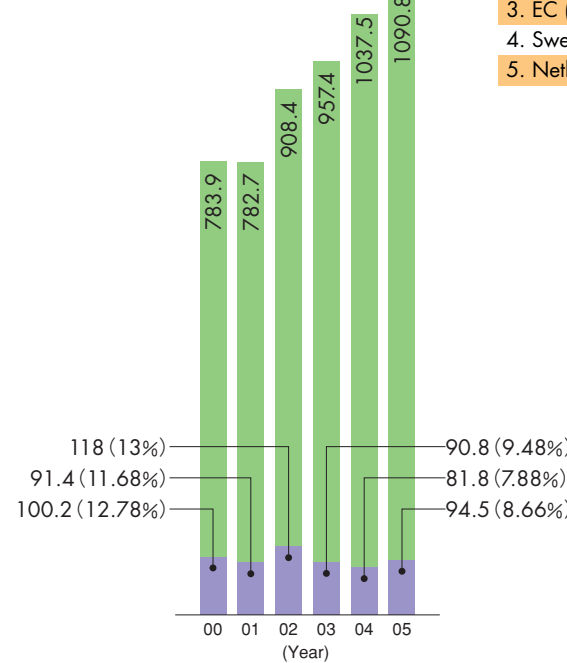
Number of offices
263 offices in 116 countries
(As of 1 July 2005)

Total number of staff
(International staff)
6,824 (2,042)
(As of December 2005)

Expenditures of UNHCR by Region
(2004, USD millions)



Japan's Contributions to UNHCR
(2000-2005)

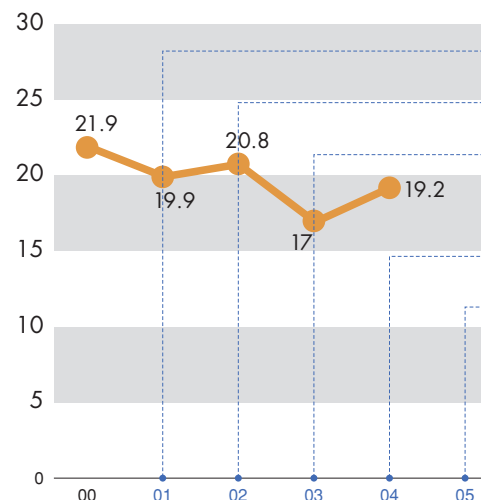


Top 5 Donors to UNHCR
(2005, USD millions)

1. USA	322.7
2. Japan	94.5
3. EC (European Commission)	85
4. Sweden	84.5
5. Netherlands	76.5

Number of Refugees and Others of Concern to UNHCR

(In millions, as of 31 December of each given year)
Source: *Refugees by Numbers 2005 Edition*



Afghan Interim Authority established after events of 9.11.

Full-scale repatriation of Afghan refugees begins.

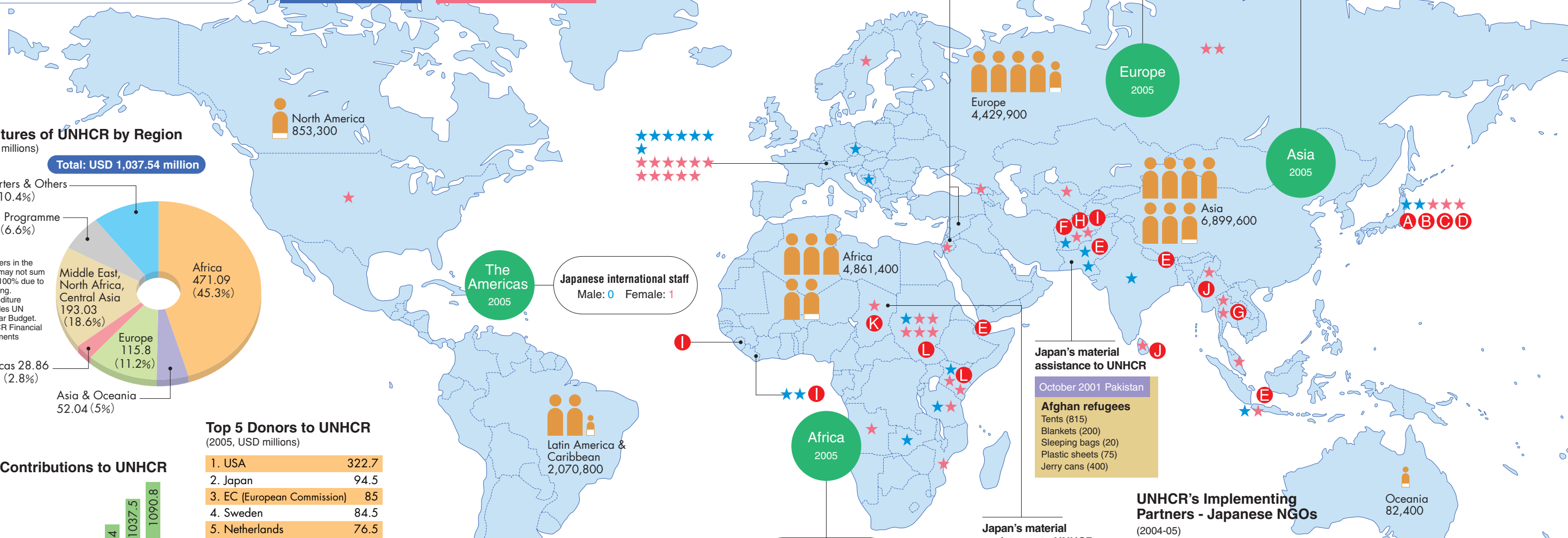
Outburst of more than 90,000 Sudanese refugees and a large number of people displaced due to civil wars in Darfur region of Sudan.

Indian Ocean earthquake occurs, followed by tsunami.

Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in Sudan; refugees from Darfur exceeds 200,000 and internally displaced people reaches 2 million.

Japan's revised Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act enforced.

Afghan refugees hit by earthquake in Pakistan.



Japan's material assistance to UNHCR
March 2003
Jordan and Syria
Iraqi refugees
Tents (160)

Japan's material assistance to UNHCR
October 2001 Pakistan
Afghan refugees
Tents (815)
Blankets (200)
Sleeping bags (20)
Plastic sheets (75)
Jerry cans (400)

Japan's material assistance to UNHCR
October 2004 Chad
Sudanese refugees
Tents (700)

UNHCR's Implementing Partners - Japanese NGOs
(2004-05)

Name of NGO	Countries in Operation
A Japan Association for Refugees (JAR)	Japan
B International Social Service Japan (ISSJ)	Japan
C Japan Association for UNHCR	Japan
D Japan Legal Aid Association (JLAA)	Japan
E AMDA	Djibouti, Nepal, Pakistan, Indonesia
F JEN	Afghanistan
G Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA)	Thailand
H Save the Children Japan	Afghanistan
I Peace Winds Japan (PWJ)	Afghanistan, Liberia, Sierra Leone
J Bridge Asia Japan (BAJ)	Myanmar, Sri Lanka
K Action for Greening Sahel (AGS)	Chad
L World Vision Japan (WVJ)	Kenya, Sudan

Number of refugees and others of concern to UNHCR
(As of 31 December 2004)
Source: *Refugees by Numbers 2005 Edition*

Total number of Japanese international staff : 66
(As of 18 October 2005)

★ Male ★ Female



UNHCR/S. Hopper

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

António Guterres

The UN refugee agency UNHCR faces a wide range of challenges as it works to care for and protect millions of people around the world who have been forced from their homes by conflict or persecution. Among the difficulties my Office confronts today are rising intolerance in many societies, the task of protecting refugees in population movements where genuine asylum-seekers are mixed in with immigrants, and the need to bridge the gap between emergency relief and development aid to ensure refugee problems are resolved in a durable way.

We believe our strategic partnership with Japan can play an important role in helping UNHCR meet these challenges. Japan has long supported UNHCR as its second largest donor and through generous contributions from private citizens. We expect Japan to participate more actively in organizational policy and decision making, using advocacy and diplomacy to help address global refugee issues while continuing to provide

generous financial support.

This year marks a new era of cooperation between Japan and UNHCR as Mr. Ichiro Fujisaki, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office at Geneva, will serve as Chairperson of UNHCR Executive Committee during 2006.

UNHCR is also cooperating closely with the Japan International Cooperation Agency, led by former High Commissioner for Refugees Mrs. Sadako Ogata, to make sure that returning refugees are fully incorporated in post-conflict peace and development. UNHCR shares Japan's great concern for human security, an approach which takes a broad view of assistance and puts the emphasis on the protection and empowerment of individuals.

Japan can also play an important role in the struggle against rising global intolerance. It is my hope that it will soon join the ranks of refugee resettlement countries as another contribution to refugee protection.

These are indeed difficult challenges, but UNHCR is better placed to meet them with the solid support and engagement of Japan and its people.



Photograph: Aisawa Office

Secretary General,
Parliamentary League for UNHCR

Ichiro Aisawa

The Parliamentary League for UNHCR is a cross-party association of politicians, established under the auspices of the former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori in February 2001. The League has worked to improve the situation for refugees. Mr. Aisawa speaks about his visit to the Kakuma camp in Kenya in November 2005.

Visiting the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya

I had the privilege of visiting the Kakuma camp, where I interacted with individuals who are in protracted refugee situations, sometimes held in camps for over 10 years. This experience helped me renew my commitment to refugees. Humanitarian assistance is an important pillar of the Japanese foreign

policy and I believe Japan has a critical role to play within the international community. Together with other members of Parliament and the Japanese public, I intend to exert my efforts to improve the situation and keep alive the spirit upheld by UNHCR on behalf of the "forgotten" refugees.



Photograph: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ambassador, Director-General,
Global Issues Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Takahiro Shinyo

I would like to extend my cordial welcome on the occasion of publishing UNHCR Magazine, commemorating the 25th Anniversary of Japan's Accession to the Refugee Convention. This first issue will serve as informative reference of the overview of Japan's cooperation with UNHCR since its accession to the UN Refugee Convention in 1981 in order to cope with the world situations of the time.

From the viewpoint of human security that promotes protection and empowerment of individuals aiming at self-reliance, the Government of Japan has placed importance on efforts to deal with global issues and challenges for peace-building as part of our major diplomatic agendas. In this connection, Japan has highly appreciated the work of UNHCR and therefore, continuously supported UNHCR which pro-

vides humanitarian assistance to refugees and to some extent internally displaced persons around the world. Under the framework of Human Security Partnership between Japan and UNHCR which was agreed last year, Japan has also worked closely with UNHCR not only in Africa but also in Asia, in such emergencies as Indian Ocean tsunami crisis and Pakistan earthquake. When High Commissioner, Mr. António Guterres visited Japan for the first time in October 2005, in dialogues with then Foreign Minister, Mr. Nobutaka Machimura and other government officials, we confirmed that we would continue and develop our cooperative relationship between Japan and UNHCR, based on human security partnership.

Today, it is expected that Japan plays a more active role in helping socially vulnerable people in the world such as refugees and victims of natural disasters. Japan's international contribution is based on good understanding of and strong support from individual Japanese citizen. I sincerely hope that this magazine will help us further seek support from the people of Japan.