

## **Incorporation of Female Refugees Into the Post 2015 UN Development Agenda**

### **I. PROPOSAL**

To fully achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Post-2015 Development Agenda, refugee women and girls must have access to rule of law, work rights, and political participation. Development and poverty alleviation strategies should contribute through inclusive or targeted programs that fulfill dignity and human rights.

### **II. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Promote the right to work – access to safe, lawful employment – for refugee women and girls
- Include forced migrants in the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda
- Include refugees in national poverty reduction strategies and development projects
- Increase integrated development programs benefiting both refugee and host communities, including:
  - Access to public services like health, education and vocational training
  - Access to financial products, including micro credit, savings and insurance
  - Access to and training in political participation
  - Strategies for integration of refugees with local communities
- Support development strategies promoting rule of law, a refugee's right to work, and access to justice
- Evaluate programs to ensure the rights and needs of both refugees and host communities have been met

### **III. BACKGROUND**

There are nearly 8 million women and girl refugees in the world, more than 80% of whom live in the world's poorest countries for an average of 20 years and have no chance of returning home or resettling in a third country.<sup>i</sup> Many live in constant threat of detention and deportation and without access to basic legal protection and services, and one third live in closed refugee camps where human rights are severely restricted, including the right to move freely and access employment. Despite the impoverished and disenfranchised state of refugees and other forced migrants, refugee populations have been largely left out of the MDG discussions, national development plans and poverty eradication strategies.<sup>ii</sup>

Refugees have the potential to play an important role in the development of their host communities and should be treated as more than passive recipients of humanitarian aid. By providing targeted development assistance and integration to refugees, host countries will be able to enjoy the socio-economic benefits that refugees bestow upon their asylum countries, and refugees will be able to access their basic human rights.

Refugee women and girls are particularly in need of the attention of development actors. Market research confirms that when women are given an opportunity to earn an income and achieve self-sufficiency, they invest in their families and communities, serving the development objectives of countries. Development programs that permit and strengthen female refugees' access to lawful employment, education and health services will serve the development needs of refugee hosting countries and will support a female refugees' right to live a dignified life in exile.

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<sup>i</sup> World Refugee Day: UNHCR report finds 81 per cent of world's refugees in developing countries. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/4dfb66ef9.html>.

<sup>ii</sup> UNHCR: Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers- A Displacement Perspective at 3 (October 2004). Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/41b079fe4.pdf>.