

**REMARKS GIVEN BY H.E. MR. PAUL HEINBECKER
TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL
ON THE OCCASION OF THE BRIEFING
BY THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES
November 10, 2000**

Monsieur le Président,

Ma délégation se félicite de cette occasion qui est offerte au Conseil de sécurité de participer à un dernier dialogue de fond avec Madame Ogata, Haut Commissaire des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés.

Nous sommes reconnaissants envers ses efforts, par lesquels elle a plaidé inlassablement et vigoureusement la cause des réfugiés et des populations touchées par la guerre.

Elle a décrit avec éloquence et profondeur les défis auxquels sont confrontés les réfugiés et les organisations humanitaires dans les pays qui figurent à l'ordre du jour du Conseil de sécurité, et dans d'autres pays qui en sont absents, peut-être à tort.

Chaque fois que Madame Ogata a informé le Conseil, elle a fait des évaluations sans équivoque.

Nous avons toujours été reconnaissants de son analyse honnête des difficultés qui risquaient d'entraver les efforts déployés par le Conseil afin de rétablir la paix, facilitant ainsi le retour des populations déplacées.

Tout comme le Haut Commissaire, je suis déçu de constater que malgré quelques succès notables au cours des dix dernières années, dans bien des cas et pour nombre de réfugiés, il n'existe pas de solutions durables.

La République démocratique du Congo, l'Angola, la Sierra Leone, l'Afghanistan et le Soudan en sont de bons exemples.

Ces situations ont des graves répercussions sur les pays voisins et sur les communautés d'accueil.

We must express our gratitude to those states, such as for example Tanzania, Guinea, Iran and Pakistan, which continue to provide much needed refuge.

While the parties to conflict which precipitated the initial displacement retain paramount responsibility, the Security Council has also been complicit in, at times, failing to engage fully in addressing the political dynamics of crises before they reached disastrous

humanitarian proportions.

In recent months, some positive steps have been taken by the Security Council to be more pro-active in trying to address the political causes of humanitarian crises around the world.

We're trying to learn the lessons-learned.

But, as noted by the High Commissioner, we can and must do better.

Implementation of recommendations on conflict prevention and on the Brahimi panel will help.

As Member States, we must do a better job facilitating the transition from conflict to development, nurturing both reconstruction and, as the High Commissioner has put it, "co-existence."

For the Security Council, that means early, active and enduring engagement in conflict-ridden countries so to avoid cycles of population movements and resumption of hostilities.

It also means careful attention to key human rights questions in the design of comprehensive peace support mandates.

I would welcome the views of the High Commissioner on how the Security Council might be more sensitive to these questions, particularly in the design of peace support mandates.

Mr. President,

In praising High Commissioner Ogata's efforts, we also commend the work of UNHCR's staff worldwide.

National and international staff have striven for the last fifty years to promote respect for refugee rights and well-being, often, and increasingly, at great risk to their own lives.

Their courage and commitment have enabled vulnerable populations to gain

access to needed protection and material assistance.

The safety of UN and other humanitarian personnel and the environment in refugee camps are priority issues for Canada.

We agree fully with the High Commissioner that these issues should likewise pre-occupy the Security Council.

States must support the implementation of necessary preventive measures to enhance staff safety.

When acts of violence occur, States must ensure that those who perpetrated them are brought to justice.

In this regard, let me note that Canada strongly supports the report of the Secretary-General recently released on this subject.

At the same time, however, humanitarian agencies must make staff security a key concern.

I am interested in hearing, therefore, more about UNHCR's recent efforts to review its own security arrangements.

In particular, we would welcome any information the High Commissioner may be able to offer on the inquiries conducted into the deaths of staff in Atambua and Macenta.

The Council has increasingly recognized its own role and responsibility in strengthening the safety and security of those we send into harms way.

This pro-active trend can be reinforced and made systematic.

The same is true of the circumstances in refugee camps and settlements.

As noted by the High Commissioner, we have learned painful lessons from eastern Congo, Guinea, Albania and West Timor, where combatants inter-mixed with the civilian refugee population can wreak havoc and compound regional instability.

Canada welcomes High Commissioner Ogata's persistence in challenging the

Security Council to deal with the question of refugee camp insecurity, refusing to allow it to be left with humanitarian organizations alone.

Resolution 1296 builds on the ladder of options concept first suggested by the High Commissioner in 1997.

It commits the Security Council to consider situations where armed elements pose a threat to refugee camps, peace and security, and to take appropriate steps to help restore a secure environment for affected civilians.

This, along with resolution 1208 and measures suggested by UNHCR at the Standing Committee in July, go some way towards identifying practical strategies for addressing this complex challenge.

Canada has participated actively in these discussions, including by exploring ways to enhance local law enforcement capacities, inter alia through the deployment of civilian police and other experts.

We are under no illusions that such strategies are easy to implement, but the status quo alternative leaves the international community, aid workers and the refugees themselves far too vulnerable.

We must build on the critical mass of interest now focused on this important question.

I would like to close by highlighting an important sub-component to this issue - the inter-action between humanitarian and military operations.

As was evident in Kosovo, military engagement in humanitarian activities can negatively effect the perceived impartiality of humanitarian organizations, like UNHCR.

And yet a clear lesson of the last several years has been the importance of

adopting holistic and comprehensive approaches to peace support operations.

In light of the recommendations of the Brahimi report, I would be most interested in the High Commissioner's assessment of how the military can most effectively support humanitarian action.

Mr. President,

Let me reiterate Canada's appreciation for the contribution Sadako Ogata has made to the cause of refugees in these last ten years, and to the search for international peace and security.

The world has been fortunate to have her service.

We wish her all the best in her retirement from the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.