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## **UN lauds Latin America's declaration on refugee protection**



Latin America nations pledge more for protection of the displaced and stateless

12 November 2010 – The United Nations refugee agency today [welcomed](#) a landmark declaration by 18 South American countries to protect refugees, the displaced and stateless persons in the region, saying the proclamation was a model for other parts of the world to emulate.

The “[Brasilia Declaration](#) on the protection of refugees and stateless persons in the Americas” was adopted in the Brazilian capital yesterday at the end of a meeting hosted by Brazil’s Justice Ministry on refugee protection, statelessness and mixed migratory movements in the Americas.

“This is a landmark declaration that I hope will result not only in better protection for refugees and other displaced people across the Americas, but also accelerate global efforts to improve the situation of displaced people and end the scourge of statelessness,” said António Guterres, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

“I encourage governments in other regions to take note of the pioneering leadership that has been shown today by Latin America in making this Declaration. This is a valuable international precedent,” said Mr. Guterres, who heads the agency known as UNHCR.

The Declaration will help promote the values of solidarity, respect, tolerance and multiculturalism “in a world where racism and xenophobia are on the rise,” he added.

The document is also a demonstration of the political will to take a regional approach on displacement and protection of refugees and stateless people in Latin America, UNHCR spokesperson Adrian Edwards told reporters in Geneva.

He highlighted three important elements of the declaration, which he said were particularly significant – respect for the principle of non-refoulement, including non-rejection at borders and non-penalization of illegal entry; support for the incorporation of gender, age and diversity considerations into national laws on refugees and the displaced; and the encouragement of States to adopt mechanisms to address new situations of displacement not foreseen by the [1951 Refugee Convention](#), the key legal document in defining who is a refugee, their rights and the legal obligations of States.

In response to UNHCR's appeal last month for increased international efforts to address the plight of the world's estimated 12 million stateless people, government officials at the Brasilia meeting also pledged to accede to the two international conventions on statelessness.

The Brasilia Declaration was adopted by Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. The United States and Canada participated in the meeting as observers.

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[UN agency appeals for better protection for world's stateless people](#)