

No. 919

**UNITED NATIONS
(UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR REFUGEES)
and
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION**

**Memorandum of understanding for co-operation. Signed
at Geneva on 21 October 1983**

Authentic text: English.

Filed and recorded by the Secretariat on 21 October 1983.

**ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES
(HAUT COMMISSARIAT DES NATIONS UNIES
POUR LES RÉFUGIÉS)
et
ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DU TRAVAIL**

**Protocole d'entente concernant la coopération. Signé à
Genève le 21 octobre 1983**

Texte authentique : anglais.

Classé et inscrit au répertoire par le Secrétariat le 21 octobre 1983.

MEMORANDUM¹ OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES AND THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

WHEREAS the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (hereinafter referred to as “UNHCR”) is entrusted with responsibilities for refugees by its Statute annexed to General Assembly Resolution 428 (V) of 14 December 1950² and with responsibilities for displaced persons in refugee-like situations under subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS the International Labour Organisation (hereinafter referred to as “ILO”) is entrusted with the promotion of social justice for working people everywhere and the improvement of their working and living conditions through the framing of standards, research and policy formulation and technical co-operation, in accordance with its Constitution; and

WHEREAS in regard to standards for the treatment of refugees as well as assistance to refugees there are areas of common concern in which the present co-operation between the two organisations should be further strengthened and developed;

NOW THEREFORE UNHCR and the ILO have agreed on the following:

INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

1. In the exercise of its international protection function, UNHCR is called upon to ensure that refugees are treated in accordance with recognised international standards, including standards concerning economic and social rights which are defined, *inter alia*, in the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.³ Under Article 35 of this Convention, States are called upon to facilitate the duty of UNHCR to supervise the application of the provisions of the Convention. A corresponding provision is to be found in Article II of the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.⁴

2. In areas such as access to employment, conditions of work, equality of treatment and acquisition or preservation of social security rights, the standards defined in International Labour Conventions also apply to refugees in so far as they are workers.

3. Both UNHCR and the ILO recognise the basic importance of accepted international minimum standards for the protection of refugees, particularly as regards economic and social rights. Both organisations will co-operate closely in the application of existing standards and in the framing of new standards in this field. In developing such new standards, the vulnerable situation of refugees will be given special consideration.

¹ Came into force on 21 October 1983 by signature, in accordance with paragraph 11.

² United Nations, *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/1775)* p. 46.

³ *Ibid.*, *Treaty Series*, vol. 189, p. 137.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 606, p. 267.