**Committee:** UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)
**Topic:** The Question of Integrating Refugees into Host Countries
**Chair:** Charlie Selby

**I. Introduction**

The global refugee crisis has reached unprecedented levels, with over 100 million people forcibly displaced from their homes due to conflict, persecution, and natural disasters. As a result, the issue of integrating refugees into host countries has become a critical challenge for the international community. Integration encompasses the political, social, economic, and cultural processes through which refugees are accepted and become part of the host society. This process, while essential to both the refugees and host countries, presents significant opportunities and challenges, and it requires coordinated efforts among governments, international organisations, and civil society.

**II. Key Issues**

1. **Economic Integration**

 Economic integration is a cornerstone of refugee assimilation. Refugees often arrive in host countries with few resources, and their ability to find work, access healthcare, and build economic independence is crucial. Refugees may face legal and bureaucratic barriers to employment, including restrictive visa requirements, lack of work experience recognised by host countries, or language barriers. Many refugees possess valuable skills, but these may not align with the needs of the host country's job market. Additionally, refugees often require language training and educational support.**:** Host countries may have limited ability to provide sufficient social services, leading to resource strain. Governments must balance refugee support with the needs of their own populations.

1. **Social and Cultural Integration**

 Refugees often face significant cultural and social challenges when integrating into a new society. Refugees may encounter prejudice from the local population, which can create tensions and hinder integration. Public perception of refugees may be influenced by negative stereotypes or political rhetoric. Refugees often face difficulties learning the language of their new country, which limits their ability to communicate, access services, and fully participate in society. Ensuring social cohesion requires fostering understanding and tolerance between refugees and host communities. Efforts must focus on promoting inclusivity, diversity, and the acceptance of refugees as contributing members of society.

1. **Political and Legal Challenges**

Integration also involves legal and political considerations. Refugees may not have full access to political and civil rights in host countries, such as the right to vote or the ability to freely move within the country. The process of seeking asylum and the determination of refugee status can be lengthy and burdensome, leading to prolonged uncertainty and vulnerability for refugees**:** Policies on refugee integration can vary widely between local governments and national governments. A lack of coordination can undermine efforts to ensure refugees are properly supported.

1. **Health and Psychological Well-being**

 Refugees often face health challenges both upon arrival and during their integration journey. Many refugees suffer from trauma related to war, persecution, and displacement. Access to mental health services is crucial but often lacking.Refugees may struggle to navigate unfamiliar healthcare systems or lack access to necessary medical care, especially in countries with limited resources. In some cases, there may be fears in host countries regarding public health risks associated with large refugee inflows, particularly concerning infectious diseases or the strain on health systems.

**III. Proposed Solutions**

1. **Enhanced Legal Frameworks for Refugee Rights**
Countries should strengthen legal frameworks that protect refugees' rights, including the right to work, access education, and health services. Clear pathways to permanent residency or citizenship should be established to provide long-term security for refugees.

2. **Economic Empowerment Programs**
Integration should focus on empowering refugees economically through job training, language acquisition, and recognition of foreign qualifications. Host countries should facilitate access to the job market while ensuring refugees' rights to fair working conditions.

3. **Community Integration and Public Awareness Campaigns**
Governments and civil society organisations should invest in public awareness campaigns to combat xenophobia and promote the benefits of refugee integration. Programs should also encourage refugees to engage with their new communities through volunteerism, cultural exchange, and local decision-making processes.

**IV. Relevant Passed Resolutions**

1. **UN General Assembly Resolution 2198 (XXI) - 1966**

• **Title**: *"The Protection of Refugees and Displaced Persons"*

• **Context**: This resolution acknowledged the importance of integrating refugees into the societies of host countries, emphasising the provision of basic rights, such as education and employment, for refugees.

• **Significance**: It marked a shift towards considering the long-term integration of refugees, not just their protection and temporary assistance

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**2. UN General Assembly Resolution 45/151 - 1990**

• **Title**: *"International Cooperation to Address the Refugee Problem"*

• **Context**: This resolution urged host countries to take steps towards the integration of refugees into their societies, particularly focusing on economic, social, and cultural integration.

• **Significance**: It called for the adoption of policies and practices that would allow refugees to rebuild their lives through self-sufficiency, access to education, and employment opportunities.

 3. **UNHCR Executive Committee Conclusion No. 91 (L) - 1999**

• **Title**: *"Refugee Protection and Solutions"*

• **Context**: This document underscored the importance of the long-term integration of refugees into host societies, not just through legal means but also through social and economic inclusion.

• **Significance**: The conclusion set out practical guidelines for host countries, including promoting local integration as one of the solutions to the refugee situation, rather than relying solely on resettlement or repatriation.

4. **UNHCR Executive Committee Conclusion No. 109 (LXI) - 2010**

• **Title**: *"Local Integration"*

• **Context**: This conclusion focused specifically on the local integration of refugees, calling for host countries to create an enabling environment for refugees to integrate economically and socially into their new communities.

• **Significance**: The document offered guidelines for governments on how to integrate refugees in ways that respect their dignity and human rights, and emphasised the role of international cooperation in supporting host countries in these efforts.

**V. Conclusion**

The integration of refugees into host countries is a complex but essential process that requires comprehensive strategies addressing economic, social, legal, and psychological challenges. Host countries, international organisations, and refugees themselves all have key roles to play. Effective integration not only helps refugees rebuild their lives but also contributes to the social and economic development of host countries. A coordinated, rights-based approach is essential to ensure that refugees can live with dignity and contribute to their new communities.