

Fair and Fast: Best practices in prima facie and manifestly well-founded asylum processing

Concept Note and Agenda

Date: Thursday, 21 September 2023

Time: 3:30 to 5:30 pm CET (with English, French and Spanish interpretation)

Format: Virtual

Background and objectives

In the face of consistently high numbers of new asylum applications across all regions (2.9 million individual asylum applications in 2022, exceeding 2021 figures by 68 per cent and nearly 30 per cent more than reported in 2019), States are looking for solutions to address these applications promptly and effectively, while still ensuring necessary safeguards. With the drivers of displacement such as conflict, generalized violence, political instability, and ongoing insecurity mixed with factors relating to climate change, natural disasters, poverty and inequality on the rise, it is unlikely that this trend will be reversed in the near future. The search for efficient asylum processing by States is further challenged by onward and mixed movements which require the identification of individuals with international protection needs among individuals moving for other reasons.

Although the benefits of prima facie and manifestly well-founded asylum processing approaches are widely recognized, their implementation remains limited and their potential under-utilized. In an effort to further explore prima facie approaches to the recognition of refugee status and the processing of manifestly well-founded asylum applications, the Asylum Capacity Support Group will host a virtual event and discuss the diverse contexts within which States around the world adopt different case processing modalities to manage backlogs and address large scale arrivals that contribute to the fairness, efficiency, adaptability, and integrity of asylum systems. Against this backdrop, the objective of the event is twofold:

- a) Highlight State practices in the application of a prima facie approach to refugee status determination and the processing of manifestly well-founded asylum applications and emphasizing the benefits of doing so.
- b) Discuss the challenges, lessons learned and way forward to enable a wider and more effective implementation of such measures.

Draft Agenda

The event will start with welcome and opening remarks followed by a presentation and global overview of a prima facie approach to refugee recognitions and manifestly well-founded procedures. The discussion will be interactive and structured around four thematic areas. Participating States will be invited to share experiences and insights of engaging and/or implementing prima facie and manifestly well-founded procedures. There will also be time for more informal comments and feedback. The programme will be structured as follows:

- i. Opening remarks.
- i. Global overview: Presentation offering a global overview of prima facie and manifestly well-founded procedures, highlighting the progress made, challenges and opportunities.
- ii. Registration Systems and data management for efficient prima facie procedures: Presentation by a State (TBC) on the importance of robust registration systems and data management in implementing prima facie procedures including best practices, impact and lessons learned.

- iii. Prima facie procedures during large-scale arrivals: Presentation by a State (TBC) into the challenges and successes of implementing prima facie procedures in the context of managing large-scale refugee arrivals including lessons learned and practical recommendations.
- iv. Recognitions via paper-based approaches: Presentation by a State (TBC) on examining the significance of paper-based decision-making in refugee status determination and the advantages and limitations of this approach.
- v. Manifestly well-founded procedures with an interview: Presentation by a State (TBC) on strategies for determining manifestly well-founded procedures.
- vi. Floor opens for questions and comments.
- vii. Summary and closing.

Outcome

UNHCR will produce a document which draws from the good practices and lessons learned showcased during the event with the goal of enabling States to adapt them to their own contexts. It is intended to support and guide States in the adoption and implementation of prima facie/manifestly well-founded approaches. The document will be circulated to all States and other relevant stakeholders and will be available on the [ACSG portal](#).

Asylum Capacity Support Group Secretariat, August 2023