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Deborah Tyroler

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Conferences Focus On Central American Refugee Women

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Feb. 13 in Tegucigalpa, women from Salvadoran refugee camps, Honduran legislators and feminist organization leaders met to discuss issues pertaining to women refugees, repatriates and internally displaced persons. The meeting was organized by the UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP). Flor Rojas, UNHCR representative in Honduras, said women and their children account for 70% of the region's displaced. According to Rojas, in addition to inadequate food, education, health care and housing, to obtain food, education, health care and housing, women refugees are subjected to "twice as much social discrimination" as average women in Central American societies. Rojas said a regional forum on women's issues scheduled for Feb. 19-21 in Guatemala City, also sponsored by the UNHCR and UNDP, was aimed at "directly involving repatriated, refugee and displaced women in the administration of development programs." According to Salvadoran refugee Mercedes Escobar, men in refugee camps "direct the aid projects without considering women's needs." (Basic data from Inter Press Service, 02/13/92; Agence France-Presse, 02/19/92)

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