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at 10.30 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 54th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GARVALOV (Bulgaria)
later: Mr. NORDENFELT (Sweden)

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 78: OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES: REPORT OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER (continued) (A/35/3/Add.21, A/35/12 and Add.1, A/35/63, 73, 84, 154, 169, 239, 255, 275, 292, 328, 353, 354, 374, 441, 457, 469, 594; A/C.3/35/L.47, L.51, L.52)

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/35/149, 303, 360 and Corr.1-3, A/35/409, 410, 502, 606; A/C.3/35/L.45/Rev.1, L.46/Rev.1, L.48, L.49, L.50)

1. Mr. ERDŐS (Hungary) said that the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/35/12) presented a complete picture of the situation of refugees and displaced persons all over the world. The refugee problem had become more severe after recent events in several continents. At the same time, there had been some fortunate developments, such as the positive change in Zimbabwe, which would undoubtedly help to bring a satisfactory solution of the problem of refugees in Africa, the continent where most refugees were found. His delegation was conscious of the growing role of the Office of the High Commissioner (UNHCR) in dealing with the problem as well as the possible organizational implications resulting from the growth of that role. Although it was obvious that the refugee situation stemmed from political causes, UNHCR should concentrate strictly on the humanitarian and social aspects of its actions. His delegation appreciated the work of UNHCR all the more because it was attempting to make a humanitarian contribution, in very political circumstances, to the easing of the difficulties confronting millions of refugees throughout the world.

2. The phenomenon of refugees resulted as much from natural disasters as from human action, and the United Nations should use prudence and moderation in identifying the causes of particular events. Common sense and realism demanded an avoidance of unduly simplistic and categorical generalizations and speculations. For example, the report had mentioned 150,000 Kampuchean refugees who had sought asylum in Viet Nam until the end of 1978. In order to understand the events which had occurred in that part of the world, and especially to offer a remedy for its troubles, it would be necessary to look beyond the comfortable horizons of easy solutions, to see reality and attempt to take into account all the factors which had led to the current situation. Unfortunately, the Kampucheans in Viet Nam were hardly ever mentioned, for to speak of them would evoke the reasons for their exodus, and the repatriation of most of them in 1979 would not fit the political game which some countries apparently still intended to play in Indo-China. In spite of established facts, some did not hesitate to depict the situation in Kampuchea as continually deteriorating and obstinately closed their eyes to the daily realities of that country. Such an attitude only exacerbated passions and prevented the eventual restoration of external and internal conditions which would make possible the return of those who had left their country.

3. The underlying political causes of the refugee problem must not be forgotten. So long as there was injustice, racial discrimination, religious intolerance,

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(Mr. Erdős, Hungary)

exploitation, foreign interference, aggression, occupation or oppression of national liberation movements, there would always be refugees. The task of the United Nations was to take up the challenge, to try to make the precarious conditions of refugees and displaced persons more bearable and facilitate the satisfaction of their basic needs.

4. Mr. SALEK (Bangladesh) said that his delegation attached particular importance to the agenda item relating to refugees. In the recent past, Bangladesh had provided shelter to many displaced, uprooted and homeless persons, including Burmese refugees. In a spirit of co-operation, friendship and good-neighbourliness, the Governments of Bangladesh and Burma had concluded an agreement paving the way for the voluntary repatriation of the refugees, and the last Burmese refugee who had taken shelter in Bangladesh had left for home in December 1979. Voluntary repatriation was the most effective and natural way to deal with the humanitarian problem of refugees. He expressed his delegation's gratitude to UNHCR and other organs of the United Nations system for helping the Governments of Bangladesh and Burma in their efforts to alleviate the sufferings of homeless men, women and children.

5. Hundreds of thousands of Africans had been dispossessed by the brutal apartheid régime and forced to seek shelter in neighbouring countries in quest of freedom. A major event in the international effort to deal with the refugee problem in Africa at the regional level had been the holding of the Arusha Conference on the Situation of Refugees in Africa, which had reaffirmed a number of fundamental principles concerning the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers. It was gratifying to note that the recommendations of the Arusha Conference had been approved by the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at Monrovia in July 1979. UNHCR should direct more of its efforts towards the continent of Africa, the home of the largest number of refugees in the world.

6. During the period under review, the refugee situation in South-East Asia had been aggravated and a new refugee situation had been created in Pakistan. His delegation wished to appeal to the international community for a speedy resettlement of the refugees or for creating the necessary conditions for their return to their own country. The sudden influx of refugees into a developing country posed a serious problem, straining its limited resources and hampering its development activities. His delegation shared the concern of the High Commissioner over the problems of asylum, prevention of refoulement, and protection of the refugees' human rights, especially in those areas where severe infringements had taken place. It was of vital importance that UNHCR should pursue the humanitarian objectives of its mandate. Individual Governments also must take it upon themselves, in a spirit of co-operation and good-neighbourliness, to enter into agreements for solving the problems of refugees. It was the duty of every State to protect minorities and ensure their full security. All States were precluded under international law from forcibly expelling any of their citizens and must avoid any action which might result in the fleeing of nationals into a foreign country. A durable settlement of the refugee problem could not be achieved unless the international community addressed itself to its underlying causes. The two components of the refugee

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(Mr. Salek, Bangladesh)

problem - humanitarian and political - were indivisible. Priority should therefore be given to finding a political solution for the existing differences between nations, in conformity with the United Nations Charter.

7. Miss CAO-PINNA (Italy) recalled the High Commissioner's comment that UNHCR, whose efforts had been initially concentrated in a few well-defined geographical areas, mainly in Europe, had grown into a universal organization concerned with 10 million people. Notwithstanding some positive developments in recent months, the refugee problem was likely to grow worse in the near future. The international community should therefore make renewed and committed efforts to foresee possible emergency situations and to respond to them immediately and effectively. The human tragedy of millions of refugees and persons displaced as a result of man-made disasters was rooted in political events connected with violations of human rights. The importance of that link in defining the international community's policy towards the victims of such violations should not be underestimated. Her delegation fully concurred with the Executive Committee of the Programme of the High Commissioner in its conviction that the human and social aspects of emergencies involving refugees must be kept separate from United Nations activities concerned with the political causes of such emergencies. However, that was room in all appropriate United Nations forums for political action. In other words, parallel efforts should be made in both directions, political and humanitarian.

8. As a member of the Executive Committee, Italy had noted that during its last session there had been broad participation by Member States and observers, United Nations programmes and specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations and African national congresses. There was universal concern within the international community over the plight of the refugees; however, most of one entire region continued to be absent from the Executive Committee's work and from participation in the purely humanitarian action of UNHCR. Her delegation hoped that a time would come when human solidarity with those who had borne the consequences of political conflict would become really universal.

9. The question of co-ordinating the international action carried on by the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations was very complex. It included co-ordination of emergency assistance, which required a high degree of speed, flexibility and effectiveness, and co-ordination of large-scale voluntary repatriation, which required supportive measures at the reception, initial relief and rehabilitation stages. Consultations were taking place with regard to the co-ordination of emergency assistance, since neither UNHCR nor the specialized agencies had initially been conceived as organizations entrusted with large-scale operations.

10. The possible hazards of any further expansion of the operational structure of UNHCR must be taken into account. Her delegation agreed with the view expressed by the representative of Sweden that in many cases the best co-ordinator in the field might well prove to be neither United Nations agencies nor donor Governments but

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(Miss Cao-Pinna, Italy)

the receiving country. Co-ordination of emergency assistance might well be achieved, in some cases through co-operative efforts of the United Nations and experienced voluntary organizations. The co-ordination of large-scale repatriation efforts required the participation of all States in the regions concerned as well as that of UNHCR. Her delegation wished to commend the African Governments for having assumed heavy commitments in that direction. Appropriate initiatives at the regional level were the most valid initial response to the search for solutions to the problem of large-scale voluntary repatriation of refugees.

11. Italy attached primary importance to the implementation of all instruments relating to the international protection of refugees and was deeply concerned over numerous infringements of international standards on the principles of asylum and non-refoulement.

12. Mr. Nordenfeld (Sweden) took the Chair.

13. Mr. von TRESKOW (Federal Republic of Germany) said that the High Commissioner, in carrying out his global activities to provide assistance for refugees, had met with particular understanding in the Federal Republic of Germany, which, because of its own sorrowful experience with such problems, had a deep sympathy with the fate of the refugees. Since the catastrophic situation in Europe following the Second World War, the refugee problem had become world-wide, and its weight had shifted especially to the third world. Some 37 countries had been identified as sources of refugee movements, and the global refugee population totalled some 10 to 12 million people. After the tragic events of recent years in Indo-China and Afghanistan, Africa had taken the lead in refugee movements. The same attention that the international community had paid to the situation in Asia would have to be directed towards the plight of millions of refugees in Africa. Latin America also continued to be of concern with regard to present and possible future refugee movements.

14. His Government had taken the initiative in the General Assembly in urging international co-operation to avert new refugee flows. It was the responsibility of the United Nations to take the necessary measures within the framework of a common policy. His delegation was pleased that the Special Political Committee was going to consider that proposal. His Government had done and would continue to do its utmost to provide all possible support for the work of the High Commissioner. However, more humanitarian aid was needed, not simply out of sympathy for the refugees but because all Governments had a political and social responsibility to bear. Appeals for more aid should be heard particularly by those who were responsible for some of the present grave situations and who had the economic capacity to increase their assistance to UNHCR.

15. His delegation wished to congratulate the High Commissioner on the outstanding work he and his Office had done in the past year and the results of their efforts, which were felt by millions of homeless people. But there was, of course, no institution that could not be improved. The High Commissioner was working in the direction of adapting his organization and operations to the new challenges he had described in his opening statement. Another administrative problem which could

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(Mr. Treskow, Federal Republic of Germany)

not be solved by the Organization alone was how the administrative costs relating to UNHCR's activities should be apportioned between the United Nations regular budget and UNHCR's voluntary funds. It was difficult both for parliaments and for the many private contributors to understand that a large part of the money provided voluntarily for general or special programmes was used not directly to alleviate the fate of the refugees but for administrative purposes. The important question of co-ordination between different humanitarian activities was complicated by the differences existing in refugee movements and **would** be the subject of a study, based on a Swedish initiative, to be undertaken by the Secretary-General at the request of the Economic and Social Council. His delegation hoped that it would be possible to find a method which left each organization its own responsibility according to its own statutes, but which at the same time guaranteed the highest efficiency in helping the refugees. All efforts to widen and deepen such contacts aimed at enabling Governments to follow UNHCR's activities and plans for future activities more closely should be encouraged. Governments should adopt a dual strategy in their attempts to alleviate and, if possible, to prevent the plight of refugees: they should try to identify the causes of refugee movements and to find political remedies, and at the same time they should give increased support to the High Commissioner and his Office in carrying out their task.

16. Mr. JANI (Zimbabwe) said that the proclamation of Zimbabwe's independence had brought to an end a long and bitter struggle which had cost thousands of human lives and severely disrupted the country's economy. Nearly 1 million people had been displaced. A third of them had found asylum in Mozambique, Zambia and Botswana; of the remaining two thirds, some had found refuge in the towns as squatters, but the majority had been herded like animals into the so-called "protected villages". Following the so-called unilateral declaration of independence in 1965, a gross affront to the noble and just political aspirations of the black majority, the Ian Smith régime had introduced an arsenal of draconian laws denying blacks political expression or any meaningful participation in the country's economic planning and development and relegating them to tribal trust lands. After 1972, with the intensification of armed struggle, even more repressive laws had been enacted and had been accompanied by the indiscriminate slaughter of innocent civilians, savage torture, arbitrary detention without trial and the looting and burning of crops. The flow of refugees to neighbouring countries had steadily increased until the signing of the Lancaster House agreement in December 1979. That agreement had marked the beginning of the repatriation of the refugees to enjoy a secure life under their own elected Government.

17. Zimbabwe was deeply indebted to UNHCR, which had played an indispensable part in accommodating the refugees and alleviating the refugee problem during the war. Substantial assistance, amounting to about \$15 million in 1979, had been extended to refugees in Mozambique, Zambia and Botswana for a number of purposes, and a variety of items, including food supplies from the World Food Programme, had been made available to rural settlements. Assistance had been provided for educational centres and refugee transit centres and funds had been made available to Zimbabwean student refugees to enable them to continue their studies.

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(Mr. Jani, Zimbabwe)

18. At the time of the signing of the Lancaster House agreement there had been over 200,000 refugees - 23,000 of them in Botswana, 160,000 in Mozambique and 60,000 in Zambia. During the interim administration of the country by the United Kingdom, UNHCR had co-ordinated the international effort to assist in the repatriation of Zimbabwean refugees, and the High Commissioner had issued an appeal to the international community for \$22 million. That appeal did not cover reinstallation and reconstruction, which were considered a matter for discussion and decision by the independent Government. By the time of independence, UNHCR had assisted in the repatriation of over 33,430 refugees. The interim régime had complicated the operation by restricting the number of males of "military age" and by detaining and torturing some of the refugees, although the situation had improved slightly after the intervention of the UNHCR chargé de mission at Salisbury. The second phase of the repatriation had begun after the elections and the flow of refugees back into the country had increased substantially.

19. In addition to the problem of repatriating refugees from neighbouring countries, the new Government was confronted by the problem of rehabilitating a large number of citizens who had been displaced during the hostilities. The task was made even more difficult by the fact that homes and essential infrastructure had been destroyed and needed to be rebuilt as a matter of priority. In March 1980, at the request of the Prime Minister, the High Commissioner had drawn up a programme for the resettlement and rehabilitation of refugees and displaced persons. The programme involved the transportation of displaced persons to their homes, help in rebuilding and re-equipping their homes and in farming and education, and also rural reconstruction in the areas in which refugees and displaced persons were being settled. The estimated cost of the programme for the initial one-year period was \$110 million for non-food items and \$30 million in food, and an international appeal for funds had been launched in 1980 by UNHCR. The response to the appeal had been encouraging, and approximately \$19.3 million had been contributed through UNHCR by the end of September. In addition, \$81.5 million had been pledged or contributed bilaterally in grants or soft loans. Thus far, very little food or pledges for the food programmes had been received.

20. His delegation was grateful to all the nations and organizations which had contributed to the programme and to UNHCR for its efficiency in co-ordinating the programme and launching appeals for assistance. It appealed to all Governments to continue to support UNHCR to enable it to carry out its work in all areas in which refugees lived.

21. Mr. SUONG (Democratic Kampuchea) said that the refugee problem was a source of deep concern to the international community. The repercussions in the political, economic and social fields posed particular problems for the countries of first asylum, particularly those situated near hotbeds of tension and war, which deserved the full understanding and assistance of the international community. They included countries such as Somalia, the Sudan, Djibouti, Pakistan and Thailand, which, in

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(Mr. Suong, Democratic Kampuchea)

addition to their already difficult development problems, had the responsibility of receiving increasingly large numbers of refugees. In Somalia there were over 1 million refugees, with 1,000 more arriving every day, and their presence constituted a factor for social, economic and political destabilization which was being deliberately manipulated by the enemies of Somalia's independence and territorial integrity. In Pakistan, thousands of Afghan refugees were continuing to arrive, fleeing the massacres and famine resulting from the invasion of their country by over 100,000 Soviet soldiers, and the Power now occupying Afghanistan was using that flood of refugees to destabilize Pakistan. Democratic Kampuchea was a victim of the war of aggression and genocide waged by the Vietnamese regional expansionists, and almost all of its population had been reduced to the status of refugees outside and inside the country. He declared his country's solidarity with Somalia, Pakistan, the Sudan and Djibouti and called upon the international community to increase its aid and support to those countries.

22. In 1979 the world had been appalled by the tragedy of the "boat people"; over 1 million Vietnamese refugees had fled to escape repression, racial discrimination and conscription as cannon fodder for the Hanoi authorities' policy of aggression and expansion. Although their numbers had now diminished, they continued to pose serious problems for the countries of South-East Asia. With the occupation of Kampuchea by the Vietnamese forces, additional thousands of Vietnamese, the "wheel people", had fled across Kampuchea to seek refuge in Thailand. Besides the Vietnamese refugees, Thailand had already received about 300,000 Laotian refugees, or one tenth of the population of Laos, fleeing from Hanoi's oppression and colonialist domination of their country, which since 1977 had been no more than a Vietnamese province.

23. The problem of Kampuchean who had become refugees through the invasion and occupation of Kampuchea by the Vietnamese forces continued to be tragic. There were over 170,000 Kampucheans in Thailand, 200,000 other refugees in camps near the Thai-Kampuchean border and 1,500,000 Kampucheans fleeing from enemy-occupied zones to escape massacre and famine and now living in the frontier regions in the western part of Kampuchea. That famine was the result of a deliberate policy which, together with mass murder and the use of chemical weapons, was part of the systematic and genocidal plan of the Hanoi authorities to break down the resistance of the people of Kampuchea. Of the millions of Kampucheans who had become refugees in their own country in their flight from enemy raids and combat areas, hundreds of thousands, particularly children and old people, were dying. The Vietnamese attempt to exterminate an entire nation had led to immeasurable suffering for the Kampuchean people and appalled the international community.

24. His delegation was deeply grateful to all donor countries, specialized agencies and other international humanitarian bodies which had helped the people of Kampuchea, and to all representatives in the Committee who had expressed sympathy and solidarity with the tragic fate of that people, victim of the greatest war criminals since Hitler. He also expressed deep gratitude to the people and Government of Thailand, whose consistent humanitarian policy had enabled assistance from donor countries to reach the hundreds of thousands of Kampuchean refugees in Thailand and in the areas under the control of the Government of Democratic

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(Mr. Suong, Democratic Kampuchea)

Kampuchea. The concern shown by Thailand contrasted sharply with the sordid manoeuvres of the Vietnamese occupiers who were continuing to divert nearly all international humanitarian assistance to their occupation army. The Foreign Minister of Democratic Kampuchea had drawn attention to that situation in his memorandum of 8 September 1980 (A/35/457). The amount of assistance sent now totalled over \$500 million, but the bulk of it was not reaching the suffering Kampucheans, hundreds of thousands of whom were still making long and dangerous journeys from the centre of the country to the Kampuchea-Thailand border to receive meagre portions of rice to feed their starving families. Every day, in the villages of the areas temporarily controlled by the enemy, hundreds of Kampucheans were being deliberately starved to death by the Vietnamese occupiers. The Vietnamese military posts captured by the national army of Democratic Kampuchea had all been found to hold substantial supplies of international humanitarian assistance. At the same time, the Vietnamese occupiers were engaged in manoeuvres of all kinds to close the Kampuchea-Thailand frontier and prevent the starving population from going there to receive assistance. They had not hesitated to resort to massacres of the population and armed incursions into Thai territory. Many examples of Vietnamese crimes in Kampuchea could be given. They clearly showed that the present administration at Phnom Penh had been installed and was able to survive only because of 250,000 Vietnamese soldiers sent by the Hanoi authorities whose regional expansionist ambitions and policy of genocide against the people of Kampuchea were well known to the entire world.

25. The Vietnamese regional expansionists had gone so far as to ask for international assistance amounting to \$15 million to resettle in Kampuchea 300,000 so-called refugees who had returned to the country. The Foreign Minister of Democratic Kampuchea had drawn attention to that situation in his memorandum. Thus, the Hanoi authorities were asking the international community to help them in their criminal attempt to colonize and annex Kampuchea. His delegation wished to urge the United Nations and the international community not to play into the hands of the Hanoi expansionists.

26. No lasting solution to the refugee problem in Kampuchea could be found unless the Vietnamese occupation forces left and the people of Kampuchea regained their fundamental national rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 34/22 and 35/6. Meanwhile, his delegation hoped that all peace-loving and justice-loving countries would increase their assistance to the Kampuchean people. He reaffirmed his Government's agreement with the proposal put forward by the ASEAN countries for the establishment of a "safe haven zone" in Kampuchean territory along the Kampuchean-Thai frontier, so as to enable the Kampuchean civilian population, as a transitional measure, to receive the humanitarian assistance distributed across the frontier. Donor countries should take the necessary steps to ensure that all aid actually reached the people of Kampuchea by distributing that aid directly through international humanitarian bodies or the United Nations. It was essential that no humanitarian aid should be used by the Vietnamese occupiers to wage their war of genocide against the Kampuchean people and to install their settlers in Kampuchea.

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27. Mr. CASCAIS (Portugal) said it was cause for concern that over the past year, the refugee situation around the world had deteriorated. Although in some instances the mass displacement of persons was caused by accidents of nature, in most cases it was the consequence of political or military action that disregarded the will of the peoples involved and their most fundamental human rights. UNHCR had made commendable efforts to provide assistance to displaced persons in all parts of the world and had performed its task with remarkable independence in situations in which delicate political connotations made purely humanitarian action difficult. Besides providing assistance in emergency situations, UNHCR played a leading role in the international protection of refugees. The 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, to which Portugal was a party, set the legal basis for the work of the High Commissioner, and his delegation welcomed UNHCR's efforts to promote further accessions to those two important instruments.

28. Portugal had recently approved a statute for the protection of refugees, elaborated in close co-operation with the representative of UNHCR at Lisbon, which laid the legal basis for governmental measures concerning assistance to refugees seeking asylum in Portugal.

29. On a number of occasions, Portugal had underlined the gravity of the mass exodus of refugees from South-East Asia, of which it had first-hand knowledge in Macao. The sensitivity of the situation in that territory was the result of its small size and its consequently limited capacity and resources. UNHCR had a representative in Macao to help direct the flow of refugees receiving first asylum there to countries of permanent asylum. Every effort was being made to assist the refugees arriving in Macao, and UNHCR had been very helpful in those endeavours.

30. His Government viewed the voluntary repatriation of refugees to their countries of origin, wherever that was possible, as the best solution to the refugee problem. It not only met the deepest aspirations of the refugees themselves but also testified to the solution of the problems that had led people to leave their countries. Some of the refugees that Portugal had received were now returning to their countries of origin, with the assistance of UNHCR.

31. Portugal fully supported the work of UNHCR. It would announce an increase in its financial contribution for 1981 at the pledging conference.

32. Mrs. PHIRI (Zambia) said that the increase in the number of refugees in many parts of the world was the direct result of increasing conflicts and tensions and had grievous consequences for the refugees themselves, their families and the countries of asylum. Her delegation believed that the solution lay in preventing the causes that gave rise to refugee problems. The major cause of such conflict and tension was the deliberate failure on the part of those concerned to recognize the importance of every individual's enjoyment of basic human rights, including the right to determine his own destiny.

33. Before 1980, Zambia had had a large population of refugees, mostly from the racist régime of South Africa and the oppressive régime of southern Rhodesia under Ian Smith. The influx of refugees from those and other neighbouring countries had been the result of the intransigence of régimes determined to suppress by violence

(Mrs. Phiri, Zambia)

the majority black population's legitimate demands for the exercise of the inalienable right to self-determination. The victims had been largely old women and children unable to defend themselves against the police and military forces of Smith, Vorster and Botha. While the refugee population had been considerably reduced after the independence of Zimbabwe, Zambia still had to deal with a refugee problem: the intensification of the liberation wars in South Africa and in Namibia produced an increasing number of refugees from those countries into Zambia.

34. Zambia's policy of humanism required it to discharge its responsibility of welcoming refugees. However, the responsibility was an enormous one, since Zambia had to provide services of all kinds in accordance with the principles of protection and refugee rights. Many more services which were not spelled out under those rights had to be made available. There were immediate needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, health services and security, which host countries had to provide. There were also long-term needs, such as education and vocational training, and Zambia worked hard to meet those requirements. However, Zambia was a developing country, with serious limitations on its capacity to meet fully and satisfactorily all the needs of the refugees.

35. Those problems had been further aggravated by the repeated acts of aggression committed against Zambia by the racist minority régime of Pretoria. Such acts had been particularly intensified between September and December 1979, when the former minority régime of Ian Smith, with the help of South Africa, had destroyed Zambia's economic infrastructure. The burden of taking care of refugees had increased further with the bombing and destruction of refugee camps. Resettlement activities had to be undertaken and were still being carried out in Zambia. UNHCR had been very helpful in alleviating some of the problems that arose in that connexion.

36. Zambia realized that with the intensification of the liberation struggle in southern Africa, the problems of refugees would continue to escalate. It was against that background that her delegation urged the United Nations, through UNHCR, to give increased assistance to Zambia in order that it might meet the challenges it faced. Similar problems were being experienced by many countries in Africa, and meetings had been held in an attempt to find solutions. One such meeting had been the Conference on the Situation of Refugees in Africa, held at Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, in May 1979. The recommendations of that conference had been adopted by the OAU Council of Ministers and subsequently had been endorsed by the Heads of State and Government. In that connexion, the Council of Ministers had adopted resolution CM/Res.314 (XXXIV) on the situation of refugees in Africa. The Economic and Social Council had taken note of that resolution in its resolution 1980/55. Her delegation was gratified to note that efforts were being made to implement the OAU resolution. The convening of a pledging conference for African refugees under the auspices of the United Nations would go far towards finding solutions to the pressing problems of refugees in Africa.

37. Mr. PHEDONOS-VADET (Cyprus) said that events in 1979 and 1980 had revealed the enormity of the problem of refugees and displaced persons in almost every part of the world, especially in Africa and Asia. At the same time, it had become abundantly clear that what was required was not only a better response to

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(Mr. Phedonos-Vadet, Cyprus)

fund-raising appeals but also much better co-ordination in the field between the various agencies and organizations, in order to ensure better utilization of available funds, avoidance of duplication - with consequent savings in administrative expenditure - and more effective and swift action. Cyprus welcomed a number of initiatives taken in that direction and hoped that appropriate decisions would be taken for the solution of the problem, one of the most serious facing the world today.

38. Thousands of Cypriots had fled from their homes, abandoning all their belongings, following the invasion of 1974. According to established terminology, those Cypriots were now called displaced persons; they constituted one third of the population of Cyprus. Despite repeated resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council for their speedy return to their homes and properties, the displaced persons of Cyprus were still destitute and uprooted in their own country. Greek and Turkish Cypriots alike had been the victims of a common tragedy. In that connexion, he thanked the High Commissioner for the humanitarian assistance provided to Cyprus by UNHCR. His Government also wished to express its appreciation to the United States of America, which had provided the bulk of the economic assistance, and to the Governments of the European Economic Community countries and all other donors.

39. He appealed to all Governments to contribute their valuable assistance to the displaced Cypriots, both Greek and Turkish, through UNHCR. Although the intercommunal negotiations currently being held in Cyprus on the political future of the country provided some hope for an agreed solution, Cyprus needed assistance today as much as it had in 1974 because not one of the displaced persons had returned to his home and, if anything, their numbers were larger today than in 1974. However, his delegation wished to stress that while humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced persons could temporarily alleviate their plight, the solution to the problem lay solely in the exercise of their inalienable right to return to their ancestral homes in conditions of safety.

40. Mr. GARVALOV (Bulgaria) resumed the Chair.

41. Mrs. de BROMLEY (Honduras) said that her Government, in co-operation with the Honduran Red Cross and other national humanitarian institutions, was supporting the efforts to provide ample assistance to more than 50,000 Nicaraguan refugees who had arrived in Honduras in 1979. In that connexion, various agreements had been signed with the High Commissioner in order to provide expanded facilities in the refugee camps; operations there had continued until July 1980, when the great majority of the refugees had returned to their country. Recently Honduras had had to provide humanitarian assistance to hundreds of families from El Salvador, and her Government had initiated contacts with the High Commissioner and humanitarian organizations in order to provide those displaced persons with health facilities, food and shelter. Honduras, like other developing countries, faced major economic difficulties, as a result of which its humanitarian efforts on behalf of Central American refugees inevitably affected its own development programmes. Consequently, her Government believed that it was urgent for the international community to organize programmes guaranteeing ample and efficient co-operation to complement Honduran efforts.

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(Mrs. de Bromley, Honduras)

42. The report of the High Commissioner clearly demonstrated the enormity and complexity of the problem facing UNHCR, with about 5 million refugees or displaced persons in Africa and many thousands in Asia and the rest of the world. That was depressing and profoundly sad because each refugee was a human being with his essential needs for shelter and food and his individual aspirations and sorrows. UNHCR, in the three decades since its establishment, had become perhaps the most indispensable organization in the world, and all must continue to give it their support. The United Nations and non-governmental organizations must provide UNHCR with the means for maximum mobility and access to funds in cases of emergency. Member States would contribute to it within their means, even if only as a token of their support. Her delegation, which intended to become a sponsor of draft resolutions A/C.3/35/L.45/Rev.1, A/C.3/35/L.46/Rev.1, A/C.3/35/L.47 and A/C.3/35/L.48, commend the High Commissioner and his Office for the objectivity and dedication they had demonstrated in carrying out their tasks.

43. Mr. AZHARUL ABIDIN (Malaysia) said that the items under consideration were of particular interest to his delegation because Malaysia, as a result of its geographical location, had been providing assistance since 1975 to hundreds of thousands of Indo-Chinese illegal immigrants and displaced persons. Despite limited resources, and primarily for humanitarian reasons, Malaysia had extended first-transit facilities to a total of well over 120,000. Being a small country, it could not make more than minimal efforts, and it had therefore sought understanding and assistance from the international community. The response had been commendable. Recognition of the principle of equitable burden-sharing by the international community in order to relieve the burden on countries such as Malaysia had done much to improve the situation. He expressed his country's gratitude to the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner and the major resettlement countries - the United States, Australia, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, France and others. Malaysia was also gratified that the Government of Viet Nam had undertaken to prevent illegal departures and was co-operating with UNHCR in regulating the orderly flow of refugees. His delegation hoped for a more expeditious and successful implementation of that endeavour by all parties concerned.

44. While the situation in Malaysia was under control, his country could not remain complacent, for arrivals continued at an average of 300 per month. On the basis of humanitarian principles, Malaysia would extend assistance by providing transit facilities to those persons. He hoped that the momentum of resettlement in third countries would be maintained and further enhanced, so that Malaysia would not be saddled with the problem of residues.

45. The tragic situation of thousands of Kampucheans exposed to starvation, disease and misery deserved the continued and urgent attention of the international community. His delegation believed that pending the settlement of the conflict in Kampuchea, the implementation of the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 35/6 would facilitate the task of saving precious lives.

46. Malaysia shared the concern of the High Commissioner and other delegations about the large-scale movements of refugees in other parts of the world,

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(Mr. Azharul Abidin, Malaysia)

particularly in Africa. It welcomed the High Commissioner's statement that developments in 1979 and early 1980 had contributed to the resolution of several refugee problems in that continent.

47. Concerted international efforts should be further consolidated in order to deal with the tragic problems of refugees according to their needs. However, Malaysia also believed that the international community should address itself to the root causes of refugee problems. They constituted a growing and tragic phenomenon resulting from instability and conflict in many areas of the globe. The solution to such problems could be found only at the source. The refugees' countries of origin bore a special responsibility and obligation not only to themselves and to their peoples but also to the world community at large. They must make definite and serious efforts to prevent or stop the exodus. They must become aware of adverse consequences in neighbouring countries and must not presume that their neighbours or the world community would care for refugees who might be regarded by many as undesirable and maladjusted elements. Malaysia believed that the world community should apply the necessary pressure to stress the obligation and responsibility of the countries from which those unfortunate people originated.

48. Mr. RIGIN (Indonesia) said that it was the task of the international community to continue to seek all possible means not only for extending humanitarian aid to refugees but also for finding a lasting and satisfactory solution to their problems. Failure to deal resolutely with that human crisis could have serious consequences throughout the world.

49. It was heartening to note that in spite of the deteriorating refugee situation in general, specific progress had been recorded in the past, including positive developments with regard to voluntary repatriations to Bangladesh and Zimbabwe. However, those encouraging developments had been overshadowed by the emergence of a new refugee problem in Pakistan, where there were at present over 1 million refugees. In addition, the refugee situation in the Horn of Africa and the Sudan also required continued special attention.

50. In South-East Asia, while the number of arrivals of "boat people" had decreased and resettlement opportunities in third countries had alleviated the case-load pressures, the situation with regard to refugees fleeing by land had worsened as a result of the exodus of Kampucheans into neighbouring Thailand. Naturally, the presence along the Thai-Kampuchean border of so many refugees, who were in desperate need of international assistance for their survival, posed a considerable problem for Thailand, placing a heavy burden on the country's resources and putting its economy in jeopardy. It was therefore important to institute a system of voluntary repatriation of refugees in the area, such as had already proved useful in Bangladesh and Zimbabwe. The Committee was well aware of the contribution Indonesia had made to international efforts to find a durable solution for the problem of the boat people fleeing from the Indo-Chinese peninsula.

51. In order to enable the international community to respond quickly to any sudden emergence of a refugee situation requiring prompt action, his delegation supported the establishment by UNHCR of a Policy, Planning and Research Unit and an Emergency

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(Mr. Rigin, Indonesia)

Unit. Since the refugee problem had both a humanitarian and an international aspect, his delegation believed that it required international action; in other words, it should not be left solely to the resources of the countries of first arrival. His delegation would continue to support the efforts made by the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner in that connexion.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

52. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the Committee to the decision by the General Assembly that any draft resolution with financial implications should be approved by the Main Committee concerned before 1 December. Accordingly, he suggested that the Committee should agree that the deadline for submitting draft resolutions on the remaining items should be Wednesday, 19 November at 6 p.m.

53. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.