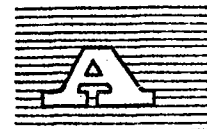


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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

Thirty-third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 350th MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 15 October 1982, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. EWERLOF (Sweden)

CONTENTS

UNHCR assistance activities (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

UNHCR ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES (agenda item 6) (continued) (A/AC.96/606 and Corr.1, 2 and 3)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the participants to resume consideration of document A/AC.96/606, section by section and country by country.

Africa (continued)

Kenya

2. The assistance programmes in Kenya were adopted.

Lesotho

3. Mr. SEKANTSI (Lesotho) expressed the hope that UNHCR would second a senior official to the Government of Lesotho to examine the question of protection.

4. The assistance programmes in Lesotho were adopted.

Nigeria

5. The assistance programmes in Nigeria were adopted.

Rwanda

6. The assistance programmes in Rwanda were adopted.

Senegal

7. The assistance programmes in Senegal were adopted.

Somalia

8. Mr. TARRAH (Observer for Somalia) began by stating that his Government, shocked at the tragic events that had recently taken place in Lebanon, condemned the massacre of innocent persons and urged all the parties concerned to protect civilians against such acts, committed in disregard of the most fundamental human rights.

9. With regard to the refugee problem, the policy pursued by Somalia was based on certain fundamental ideas. Firstly, Somalia was in favour of voluntary repatriation and was contributing to the international efforts that were being made with a view to reaching just and durable solutions. Secondly, it was implementing development-oriented projects designed to enable refugees to attain a degree of self-reliance in various fields (agriculture, small-scale industries, etc.), to engage in income-generating activities and to obtain training. Thirdly, Somalia was endeavouring to improve the co-ordination and follow-up of projects in order to avoid delays and duplication of effort. In that context, he pointed out that the chapter concerning Somalia (A/AC.96/606) contained a number of errors. His delegation would be examining the matter with the competent authorities of UNHCR. Fourthly, in order to prevent the refugees from acquiring a dependency syndrome, the Government of Somalia, in collaboration with UNHCR and governmental and non-governmental organizations, was planning to promote food-for-work projects.

10. Although progress had been made in improving the conditions of refugees in Somalia, the camps were still facing serious problems, particularly with regard to health care. Scurvy was rampant in several camps because the food supplied did not constitute a balanced diet, and urgent action should therefore be taken to avoid another emergency situation. He drew attention to the problem created by the presence of a large number of urban refugees in Somalia, whose already fragile economy had thereby been heavily burdened. The Somali Government appealed to the Executive Committee to address that problem before it was too late.
11. The Somali Government was seriously concerned by the damage caused to the environment in the vicinity of the refugee camps. With the help of UNHCR and some friendly countries, the competent authorities had already taken action in that respect, but it had to be admitted that their efforts would be in vain if the refugees continued to cut down trees in order to obtain firewood and material for the construction of shelters.
12. In conclusion, he felt that the Executive Committee should review the results of the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa for the information of the international community.
13. The assistance programmes in Somalia were adopted.

Sudan

14. Mr. EL AHMADI (Sudan) said that the Sudan was currently hosting 627,000 refugees and that his Government was endeavouring to extend its assistance to all of them. Eleven new settlement areas capable of receiving some 55,000 persons had been established in the province of Kassala in eastern Sudan. The sites had been selected in accordance with the recommendations of the UNHCR/WFP mission which had visited the country at the beginning of 1980. The Sudanese Government was hoping to establish the basic infrastructure before installing the refugees. The Government was also continuing to improve essential services such as education, medical and veterinary services and reforestation in the established settlement areas in order to help the refugees to overcome their daily problems.
15. He fully endorsed the views expressed by the High Commissioner in his opening statement in connection with the integration of refugees and collaboration with other organizations. It was essential that UNHCR should continue to provide basic services for refugees until such time as satisfactory arrangements had been made for specialized agencies to take over, and the refugees should under no circumstances be made to suffer as a result of a lack of co-ordination within the United Nations system.
16. Self-sufficiency, which was a prerequisite for a durable solution, implied that the refugees, apart from providing for their own needs, should also meet certain obligations devolving upon them as part of the community. The Sudanese Government had therefore set up community development and self-help projects aimed at persuading the refugees to participate in community life (establishment of co-operatives managed by the refugees themselves, participation in the administration of their internal affairs, settlement of disputes, etc.).
17. With regard to the question of procurement, he said that, for the past three years, although orders for vehicles, spare parts, pumps, etc. had been placed by UNHCR, there had been considerable delays in the delivery of the material. For example, some of the vehicles for which provision had been made in the 1981 programme

had still not arrived. Moreover, some of the equipment received for the 1981 programme had proved inappropriate to local conditions. The Sudanese Government reiterated its proposal to send a mission of experts to Geneva before material was ordered by the procurement unit. The Government supported the view of the auditors that specialists should be instructed to verify whether material was suited to the country and the purpose for which it was intended. The Sudanese Government also deplored the fact that the transfer of funds by UNHCR was subject to delays which were seriously impeding the implementation of programmes.

18. In conclusion, he proposed that, in view of inflation and the increase in the prices of almost all local materials, the amount saved through the devaluation of the Sudanese currency should be used to help the refugees.

19. Mr. FODA (Observer for Egypt), Mr. TARRAH (Observer for Somalia), Mr. MALOW (Observer for Djibouti) and Mr. CHRAIBI (Morocco) supported the views expressed by Mr. El Ahmadi and hoped that UNHCR would increase its assistance to the Sudan.

20. The assistance programmes in the Sudan were adopted.

Swaziland

21. The assistance programmes in Swaziland were adopted.

Uganda

22. Mr. RWANYARARE (Uganda) said that the slow progress made in assistance activities in Uganda, as referred to in paragraph 286 of document A/AC.96/606, was due to the difficulties that the country had been facing during the last 10 years. Moreover, although the Government had always entrusted the implementation of programmes to its own agencies, in view of reduced absorption capacity it would in future be forced to call on external executing agencies.

23. There was an urgent need to repair and rehabilitate all of the settlement areas which, even if they had escaped devastation during the war of liberation, had nevertheless suffered from 10 years of neglect. Furthermore, the requested allocation of \$US 50,000 for 1983 was far from adequate to meet requirements and would not even finance the necessary feasibility studies. The Government had formulated and begun implementing a national recovery programme based on the promotion of agriculture. There were already some signs of economic recovery in Uganda, and it would be regrettable if the refugees did not benefit therefrom. He therefore appealed to the High Commissioner to provide assistance for the development of agriculture in the settlement areas.

24. Although UNHCR was assisting Uganda in the sphere of secondary and post-secondary education, some refugee families could not afford to send their children to primary school, and there was a risk that illiteracy might give rise to a social problem. He requested that UNHCR make provision for assistance to primary school pupils, community development and adult literacy programmes and the disabled.

25. In conclusion and above all, he noted with concern that, although the High Commissioner, as indicated in paragraph 301 of document A/AC.96/606, anticipated an increase in the number of returnees in the West Nile area (indeed, more were returning every day), he had made no budgetary provision to assist them.

26. The assistance programmes in Uganda were adopted.

27. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the observer for Mozambique had asked to make a general statement on item 6 of the agenda and that it had been necessary to postpone that statement until arrangements could be made for interpretation from the Portuguese. With the permission of the Executive Committee, he wished to give the floor to the observer for Mozambique.

28. Mr. MANUEL HAMUSSE (Observer for Mozambique) said that the apartheid system practised by South Africa lay at the root of the problems of refugees and displaced persons in southern Africa. In the past, Mozambique had received refugees fleeing from the massacres committed by the Ian Smith regime in Zimbabwe and who had been pursued and killed even within Mozambican territory. With a view to forcing Mozambique to cease giving shelter to those refugees, the Ian Smith regime had destroyed Mozambican socio-economic resources such as factories, farms, bridges, schools, hospitals, etc. Nevertheless, Mozambique had continued its support until the final victory of the people of Zimbabwe, after which the refugees had been repatriated with the assistance of UNHCR. With the restoration of peace, Mozambique had been able to give its full attention to its national reconstruction plans. Unfortunately, the respite had been of short duration, since South Africa, which had supported Ian Smith, did not wish Mozambique to become an independent and prosperous country. South Africa had therefore endeavoured to destabilize his country and, to that end, had recruited mercenaries and former Portuguese colonists who, having belonged to the Policia internacional de defesa do Estado (PIDE), feared prosecution in their country. South Africa had also made use of Mozambican malcontents who, in serving the cause of the colonists and PIDE, had committed crimes against the people.

29. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Executive Committee was not an appropriate forum for statements of a political nature. He requested that, in the remaining part of his statement, the observer for Mozambique confine himself to strictly humanitarian aspects.

30. Mr. MANUEL HAMUSSE (Observer for Mozambique) said that he wished to reveal the subtle methods used against refugees and displaced persons. Although those methods were to be denounced at the General Assembly, the Government of Mozambique had thought that UNHCR should also be informed of them. South Africa had kidnapped refugees in Mozambican territory and, in the area of Matola, had assassinated defenceless refugees and a Portuguese worker. The survivors had been psychologically affected by the sight of the disfigured corpses and the noise of heavy weapons. The Botha regime had claimed thereby to have destroyed ANC "military bases". He had wished to draw the attention of the Executive Committee to the racist provocations of the Botha regime to which Angola, Botswana and Zambia were also exposed.

31. Nevertheless, Mozambique would continue to receive refugees with assistance from UNHCR and also with the help of contributions from governmental organizations such as the Swedish SIDA or from non-governmental and religious organizations such as the Lutheran World Federation, Caritas and the League of Red Cross Societies. He also stressed the extremely important role of the World Food Programme.

32. The Government of Mozambique wanted the whole world to know the truth about the way in which South Africa was treating the refugees. He was grateful to the High Commissioner and his staff for the attention that they had given to that question. He referred, in particular, to the exemplary manner in which the problem of the refugees from Zimbabwe had been dealt with by Mr. Blavo, the representative of the

High Commissioner. He also expressed his gratitude to Mr. Zollner, Director of the Assistance Division, who had solved urgent problems with flexibility, competence and compassion.

33. In conclusion, he said that his Government condemned the massacre of Palestinian refugees and of Lebanese citizens in Lebanon, the war and occupation inflicted on the People's Republic of Angola, the schemes designed to perpetuate the South African occupation of Namibia, and the discrimination and massacres to which the South African people had fallen victim.

34. The CHAIRMAN invited the Executive Committee to resume consideration of section I of the report on UNHCR assistance activities in 1981-1982 (A/AC.96/606) concerning Africa.

United Republic of Cameroon

35. The assistance programmes in the United Republic of Cameroon were adopted.

United Republic of Tanzania

36. Mr. MATIKO (United Republic of Tanzania) said that, although the report on the United Republic of Tanzania was generally correct, he wished to make three observations. Firstly, the number of Zairians who had settled spontaneously along the shores of Lake Tanganyika was substantially higher than the figure given in paragraph 328 of the report. The Tanzanian delegation had informed the Executive Committee the previous year of plans to conduct a survey of those refugees. The survey had shown that they numbered more than 20,000. He hoped that the error would be corrected before the assistance for those refugees was planned.

37. Secondly, he noted that, in paragraph 344, it was proposed to allocate an amount of \$US 395,000 for projects in favour of those Zairian refugees. However, the assistance to those refugees needed to be planned in a much more comprehensive manner. The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania had yet to decide whether those refugees should be left where they were or whether some or all of them should be moved in order to comply with the 1969 OAU Convention governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, which required that refugees should be settled at a reasonable distance from the frontier of their country of origin. Since the border between the United Republic of Tanzania and Zaire was Lake Tanganyika, the question had arisen as to whether the said reasonable distance was the same on water as it was on land. The Tanzanian Government would be taking a decision in that connection in due course.

38. Lastly, the proposed allocations for assistance projects in the United Republic of Tanzania in 1983 were slightly lower than the revised allocations for 1982, while there would be an increase in the programme support and administrative costs. He endorsed the view expressed by other delegations that, in general, there should be no increase in programme support allocations while the total budget was decreasing. His delegation had taken note of the additional explanation provided by the High Commissioner in document HCR/ECE/XXXIII/CRP.1 but hoped that UNHCR would re-examine its staff requirements.

39. In conclusion, referring to the concern expressed by donor countries regarding UNHCR involvement in the so-called "development programmes" in favour of refugees, he supported the suggestion made the previous year and repeated during the current session by the International Council of Voluntary Agencies to the effect that UNHCR should consider the establishment of a commission of experts from a wide range of organizations which would study the topic of refugees and development and begin to define the issues and assign responsibilities in an imaginative and systematic manner.

40. The assistance programmes in the United Republic of Tanzania were adopted.

Zaire

41. Mrs. ESAKI KABEYA (Zaire) recalled that, in his introductory statement, the High Commissioner had laid great emphasis on the non-political and strictly humanitarian nature of UNHCR. She stressed that refugee problems were causing particular concern in Zaire, which had common borders with nine other countries and was providing asylum for half a million refugees, i.e. one-tenth of the total number of refugees in Africa. Recalling the great hopes inspired by the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, she noted that the funds collected at that Conference had been allocated to emergency assistance. There had even been a slight decrease in the assistance provided for Africa. The African countries therefore hoped that the international community would increase its assistance to their continent.

42. She endorsed the view already expressed by several delegations, particularly the Belgian delegation, that protection and assistance were two inseparable elements of the search for practical and durable solutions. In compliance with the provisions of the 1951 Convention, the 1967 Protocol and the 1969 OAU Convention governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, Zaire had opened its borders to thousands of refugees from neighbouring countries and elsewhere and had given them shelter with assistance from UNHCR and a number of international organizations. Zaire believed that the primary objective of UNHCR and the international community should be the voluntary repatriation of refugees. To that end, in 1978, it had promulgated an amnesty law to encourage Zairian refugees abroad to return to their country. Missions had also been organized for that purpose in collaboration with neighbouring countries, particularly Angola, the Sudan and Zambia. Zaire had also made an effort in the social sphere (establishment of several reception centres and hostels), in the field of education (opening of schools with due regard for linguistic differences) and in connection with health (services for refugees, supply of medicines, etc.).

43. The military attacks launched against refugee camps in southern Africa and other regions of the world were confronting the international community with a critical situation for which urgent solutions were needed. At the previous session, the High Commissioner had been requested to undertake a study of the bombardment of refugee camps in southern Africa and elsewhere. The Zairian delegation welcomed the fact that Mr. Snyder, former High Commissioner, had undertaken that study in August 1982. Her delegation sincerely hoped to be informed of all the recommendations resulting therefrom.

44. In conclusion, she emphasized the usefulness of a seminar that had recently been organized in her country with a view to facilitating an exchange of views between UNHCR and the Zairian officials concerned with refugee affairs. More such meetings should take place, since they enabled Governments and UNHCR to find the solutions that were best suited to the problems of refugees.

45. Mr. HILALE (Morocco) supported the strengthening of the assistance programmes in Zaire.

46. The assistance programmes in Zaire were adopted.

Zambia

47. The assistance programmes in Zambia were adopted.

Zimbabwe

48. The assistance programmes in Zimbabwe were adopted.

Other African countries

49. The assistance programmes in other African countries were adopted.

50. Mr. ZOLLNER (Director, Assistance Division) thanked the representatives who had expressed their satisfaction at the improved presentation of the report. He had taken note of the proposals that they had made with a view to further improvements. In reply to those delegations that had advocated a more analytical approach to the various refugee problems, he recalled that it had been agreed that the reporting aspect should not be stressed to the detriment of assistance activities themselves. However, the suggestions made would be taken into account wherever possible. With regard to the information that some delegations had requested concerning the implementation of projects and executing agencies, he said that the latter, and in particular the charitable organizations, were often so numerous that it was difficult to make a complete report on their respective activities. An indication of the number of persons benefiting from the various programmes could be found in the analytical tables concerning assistance activities.

51. In reply to the representative of Sweden, who had requested that UNHCR evaluation reports on its programmes and projects should be distributed to the donor countries, he indicated that, up until then, the detailed evaluations that had been undertaken were intended to meet the internal needs of UNHCR and the substance of their conclusions had been communicated to the members of the Executive Committee. UNHCR evaluation missions were also intended to meet the internal needs of the organization. Consequently, they might not offer the best framework for direct participation by donor countries. Nevertheless, in order to satisfy the need for information, UNHCR would be prepared to participate in any visits that donor countries might wish to organize.

52. In reply to the representatives who thought that there was a need to ensure equal treatment of the various groups of refugees throughout the world, he said that that was a problem of constant concern to the Assistance Division. However, care must be taken to avoid evaluating assistance merely in terms of cost per refugee, since UNHCR was doing its utmost to adapt its assistance to the needs of the refugees and the cost of the same type of assistance might vary substantially between different countries or regions. UNHCR was currently strengthening its team of specialists in various fields (health, education, construction, social services) in order to provide a comparable standard of assistance for all groups of refugees.

53. In reply to the representatives of Sweden and Ethiopia who had advocated a regional approach to assistance to refugees in the Horn of Africa, he confirmed that UNHCR was already thinking along those lines and that, in that context, a programme of assistance to returnees in Ethiopia, amounting to \$20 million, had just been set up.
54. Furthermore, "food-for-work" programmes had already been implemented by WFP, in co-ordination with UNHCR, in Angola, Zaire, the Sudan, China and Botswana.
55. With regard to the questions that had been asked concerning the implementation of the programme of assistance to Sahrawi refugees in Algeria, he acknowledged that the programme had been delayed in 1980 and 1981 due to the difficulty of obtaining full particulars of the purchases to be made. However, the programme was now back on schedule and half of the appropriations allocated for 1982 had already been used. In accordance with the decision taken by the Executive Committee at its thirty-first session, UNHCR was continuing its discussions on the problem of the Sahrawi refugees with the permanent representatives of the Governments concerned and had instructed the Director of the Assistance Division to make a thorough study of the issue. A mission had been sent to Rabat at the invitation of the Moroccan Government and discussions were also continuing at Geneva. The Executive Committee would naturally be informed of the results of those consultations.
56. Mr. NOËL (Chief, Regional Bureau for Africa) said that, in the case of the programmes in Angola, UNHCR had encountered difficulties in planning its medium-term and long-term assistance, and the Director of the Assistance Division, who had visited Angola in August 1982, had consulted with the authorities and SWAPO officials on ways of increasing the ability of UNHCR to assist Namibian refugees and Angolan returnees. The programme of assistance to Namibian refugees amounted to \$4.5 million. Note had also been taken of the proposal made by the Council for Namibia with a view to increasing co-ordination between that body and UNHCR. The UNHCR assistance programmes in Angola were being implemented by SWAPO.
57. In reply to the questions asked by the representative of SWAPO, he said that an agreement had just been concluded for the construction of a centre for refugees in Angola, and the projects relating to that centre should begin in November. The construction of a stock-breeding farm would begin as soon as the plans had been received. Finally, a UNESCO/UNHCR mission had visited the Congo to study the question of the transfer of a number of Namibian students to that country.
58. Burundi had been visited by a mission consisting of representatives of UNHCR, organs of the United Nations and ILO. The High Commissioner himself had also visited the country and had then received its President at Geneva. Those discussions had facilitated a closer study of the assistance provided for Burundi, whose commendable adoption of an amnesty law had heralded the beginning of the process of repatriation.
59. In that context, he also drew attention to the extension of the amnesty law in Ethiopia and the preparations for a tripartite meeting, scheduled for the end of November, to examine the problems facing that country.
60. In reply to the representative of Lesotho, who had requested the appointment of an administrator responsible for protection, he said that the Director of the Protection Division and the Chief of the UNHCR Bureau for Africa attached the greatest importance to the appointment of protection officers in Africa, particularly in southern African.

61. The staff of UNHCR was at the disposal of the Somali delegation to examine any errors that might have crept into the part of the report concerning that country, to consider the possibility of improving co-ordination with a view to a more rapid and effective implementation of programmes and to study problems relating to health and urban refugees.

62. Note had been taken of the Ugandan delegation's comments on rural resettlement centres and education problems and also of the comments made by the representative of the Sudan, a country where there were 627,000 refugees, on the establishment of new settlement areas, the improvement of social services and the development of community activities. The Regional Bureau for Africa would be holding consultations with the Sudanese delegation on matters relating to the procurement of vehicles and problems arising from devaluation and inflation. With regard to the complex problem of project implementation to which reference had been made by the representative of the Sudan, he stressed that joint action was needed on the part of UNHCR and the Governments concerned in order to avoid any break in continuity between the adoption of programmes by the Executive Committee in October, the formulation of implementation agreements in January and the eventual signing of those agreements. In particular, it was to be hoped that specifications for purchases would be received in sufficient time to allow UNHCR to place the necessary orders.

63. The officials concerned with protection had noted with interest the statement by the representative of Mozambique concerning developments in the situation in that part of Africa.

64. The Regional Bureau would also take into account the comments of the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania in connection with Zairian refugees and the statement of the representative of Zaire concerning the efforts made by his Government in the field of voluntary repatriation and assistance to refugees.

65. The CHAIRMAN announced that the representatives of Norway and the United Kingdom who would shortly be leaving Geneva, wished to make statements on the chapter of section V concerning over-all allocations for the promotion of resettlement.

Section V - Over-all allocations

Promotion of resettlement

66. Mrs. NOKLEBYE HEIBERG (Norway) said that, although voluntary repatriation constituted the best and most durable way to solve refugee problems, resettlement remained the only possible solution for large groups of refugees. Norway welcomed the substantial increase in resettlement opportunities obtained through UNHCR. More than 800,000 persons from the Asian region alone had been resettled outside their country of origin since 1975.

67. The resettlement of such a large number of refugees put considerable strain on the host countries. However, since the number of refugees was constantly increasing in some regions, it was not surprising that, despite the efforts made, resettlement opportunities were still insufficient. The situation had become increasingly

difficult for Norway. Since 1975, Norwegian vessels had rescued more than 5,500 boat-people for whom her country had provided resettlement guarantees. Furthermore, 1,200 persons in Viet Nam and in camps in South-East Asia had been granted permission to go to Norway. Her country had also agreed to resettle a number of refugees from Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe. Consequently, it was difficult for Norway to respond in a positive manner to requests by the High Commission that it should accept additional South-East Asian refugees for resettlement.

68. Nevertheless, it was important that the principle of non-refoulement be scrupulously observed. The countries of first asylum should allow refugees to remain in their territory for a longer period in order to facilitate either resettlement or voluntary repatriation. Norway hoped that the coastal States would show greater understanding and regretted that it had not been possible to find durable solutions within the region itself. UNHCR should seek resettlement opportunities in parts of the world other than the traditional host countries in order to ensure more equitable burden-sharing within the international community.

69. It was also important not to forget the responsibility of the country of origin, which should allow the refugees to return safely to their homeland. In that connection, Norway welcomed the initiatives taken to study the root causes of large-scale influxes of refugees.

70. Concerning the rescue of asylum-seekers at sea, Norway was satisfied with the meeting of the Working Group held in July 1982. In the case of the Vietnamese boat-people in particular, the statistics showed that in recent months fewer ships had been stopping to rescue refugees in danger. In other words, a heavier burden was being placed on a smaller number of States, particularly small maritime nations with large merchant fleets, which were fulfilling their humanitarian obligations.

71. With regard to family reunion under the Programme for Orderly Departure from Viet Nam, Norway was pleased to note the Programme in question was proceeding satisfactorily. However, applications were frequently processed too slowly. The Norwegian delegation therefore welcomed the opportunity it had had to discuss that question with representatives of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam during the current session.

72. Mr. WILLIAMSON (United Kingdom), referring to the situation of Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong, thanked UNHCR and the resettlement countries for their assistance and for the efforts they had made to solve the problem in question. More than 100,000 Vietnamese boat-people had arrived in Hong Kong since 1975. Of that number, about 87,000 had been resettled elsewhere, with 56,000 going to the United States and 14,500 to Canada. As a result of those efforts, in April 1982 there had been less than 10,000 boat-people in Hong Kong awaiting resettlement. However, it was already clear that the situation was deteriorating. Since 1979, Hong Kong had been allowing refugees to live in open camps which they were free to leave to go to work, and that policy had aggravated the situation. Moreover, Hong Kong was suffering from the world recession, and the number of unemployed refugees had doubled. It had therefore been inevitable that Hong Kong would follow the example of other countries in the region and install new arrivals in closed camps without any opportunity of working outside.

73. Unfortunately, those measures had not yielded positive results. In July and August 1982, Hong Kong had received 50 per cent of the boat-people from Viet Nam, whereas its normal share had previously been about 10 per cent. Furthermore, there had been a change in the type of arrivals. In 1979, 74 per cent had been ethnic Chinese. In the first eight months of 1982, 97 per cent of the arrivals had been ethnic Vietnamese who, because of language difficulties, would not in any case have found work easily. In the past, Hong Kong had been receiving 25 per cent of the resettlement places offered in the region. The figure for July and August had been a mere 12 to 13 per cent of a substantially smaller number of places available.

74. As a result of that trend, on 13 October 1982 there had been 13,230 refugees in Hong Kong, i.e. 4,000 more than in April. At the end of August, 4,372 of those refugees, representing 34 per cent of the caseload, had been there for more than three years. The situation was therefore giving rise to great concern. Hong Kong was receiving a larger proportion of arrivals at a time when the number of departures was decreasing. It should not be forgotten that, in spite of its extremely high population density, Hong Kong had accepted 15,000 Vietnamese in recent years. Hong Kong could not do more, and it would be regrettable if it were to be penalized in any way for the particularly humane policy that it had always pursued.

75. Since the future did not look encouraging, his delegation urged the resettlement countries to understand the particular difficulties facing Hong Kong and restore to it an appropriate share of the available resettlement places as soon as possible.

76. The CHAIRMAN gave the floor to the representative of the World Food Programme in consideration of the ties of close co-operation linking WFP and UNHCR.

77. Mr. ZEJJARI (World Food Programme) recalled that, within the United Nations system, WFP was responsible for the provision of humanitarian food assistance and emergency food relief. Assistance for vulnerable groups, many of which consisted of refugees, constituted a major component of those priority activities, within the framework of which WFP was combining its efforts with those of UNHCR. Collaboration between the two organizations was essential in order to support the endeavours of the host and donor countries. He was happy to be able to confirm that extremely close co-operation between the two organizations had been achieved both at headquarters and in the field.

78. Despite the fact that its resources were limited in relation to the enormous needs of the developing countries, WFP was devoting an increasing proportion of those resources to projects intended to assist refugees. WFP was providing aid for refugees not only within the context of development projects aimed at facilitating the refugees' settlement but also within the framework of emergency operations wherever such settlement was not feasible. Since the Programme was giving particular encouragement to development activities aimed at making the refugees self-sufficient in food, the main requirement was for emergency relief. Certain figures could be given to indicate the scale of WFP activities: current emergency operations in which the Programme was assisting involved the provision of 650,000 tonnes of food worth \$233 million for 3,300,000 refugees in several countries (principally Somalia, Indonesia, the Sudan, Syria, Pakistan, Zaire and countries in Central America). With regard to settlement projects, WFP was currently helping eight countries to settle 489,000 persons.

79. He drew the attention of the Executive Committee to two important programmes that needed to be continued in Pakistan and Somalia. According to WFP estimates, the food needs of the refugees in those two countries would be more or less covered until the end of 1982 or, at most, until early 1983. In view of the time needed for the dispatch of food supplies, it was important that the various donor countries should study the problem without delay.

Section II - Americas and Europe

Argentina

80. The assistance programmes in Argentina were adopted.

Costa Rica

81. The assistance programmes in Costa Rica were adopted.

Honduras

82. Mr. ROMERO (Honduras) said that his country was concerned with the problems of refugees for several reasons, namely its spirit of open-mindedness and solidarity and its strategic location with regard to conflicts in Central America. Thirty thousand refugees were currently living in Honduran territory. Although each of them was certain to find at least a small plot of land, the problems had been aggravated by the country's stage of development. UNHCR was helping Honduras in its humanitarian work by providing economic aid, resettlement aid and other forms of assistance. The co-operation of UNHCR was essential if Honduras was to pursue its humanitarian policy, as indeed it must since refugees continued to arrive in spite of the problems posed by their presence. The freely elected Government would continue to collaborate with UNHCR in order to ensure that human rights were respected.

83. The assistance programmes in Honduras were adopted.

84. Mr. GONZALES-DUBOW (El Salvador) recalled that, the previous year, the Salvadorian delegation had described his country's socio-economic situation, which was currently being aggravated by an internal conflict. Faced with such difficulties, the Government had established a National Commission for Displaced Persons to implement national assistance programmes, which were mainly intended to benefit farmers. In addition to those national programmes, direct assistance was also being provided by international organizations. With regard to the refugees who had left El Salvador, the Salvadorian Government was endeavouring to help them in the other countries concerned.

85. The previous year, the Salvadorian delegation had announced the democratization of the régime. He was pleased to inform the Executive Committee that, following the elections in March 1981, a constituent assembly had been established with a provisional president, all of the political parties having agreed to form a government of national unity. The agrarian reform and the structural reform of the banking and external trade sectors were continuing.

86. In September 1982, the Minister for Foreign Relations had contacted the High Commissioner, to whom he had given a detailed account of the current situation in El Salvador. The Government was considering accession to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. He hoped that the Executive Committee would agree to his country's requests for assistance for refugees, and he thanked UNHCR, the Governments of the donor countries and the host countries for their action in favour of Salvadorian refugees.

Nicaragua

87. The assistance programmes in Nicaragua were adopted.

Peru

88. Mrs. PANTOJA (Peru) said that her country greatly appreciated the assistance and protection activities of UNHCR. She stressed the non-political and humanitarian nature of those activities.

89. The assistance programmes in Peru were adopted.

Other Northern Latin American countries

90. Mr. DAVEREDE (Argentina) said that he wished to make a general observation in connection with refugees in Central America. Several delegations had emphasized the difficulties faced by host countries as a result of large-scale influxes of refugees. Argentina was therefore disturbed to note that, at the previous meeting, the Executive Committee had decided to postpone the establishment of new posts which Argentina had advocated in its statement before the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters. He hoped that the programmes for Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua, for example, would not be adversely affected by that decision.

91. The assistance programmes for other Northern Latin American countries were adopted.

Other countries of North-Western South America

92. Mrs. RUESTA DE FURTER (Venezuela) said she sincerely hoped that the budgetary restrictions would not jeopardize the implementation of programmes in the region.

93. The assistance programmes in other countries of North-Western South America were adopted.

Other Southern Latin American countries

94. The assistance programmes in other Southern Latin American countries were adopted.

North America

95. The assistance programmes in North America were adopted.

96. Mr. HASELMAN (Director, Regional Bureau for the Americas and Europe) said that the Regional Bureau shared the concern expressed by several governmental and non-governmental delegations with regard to Central America, where it was carefully monitoring the situation in close contact with the Governments of countries of the region and participants in UNHCR activities. A working group had also been established at Headquarters to follow developments in the situation.

97. With regard to Honduras, the presence of UNHCR at the borders had been officially authorized. UNHCR was co-operating with the authorities in order to ensure the safety not only of refugees remaining in the former camps but also of the new asylum-seekers. However, some problems still remained unsolved. In particular, refugees should be provided with land that would enable them to become less dependant on international assistance. Such land, once cultivated, and the infrastructures that would be established thereon would further the process of national development. The problems relating to the liberty of movement of refugees and the establishment of an international agency to take over from UNHCR as operational co-ordinator of assistance programmes still awaited a solution.

98. In Costa Rica, discussions were taking place with the authorities with a view to the rapid solution of the problems posed by the issue of identity cards, work permits and other documents. In Mexico, UNHCR was continuing its work in collaboration with the Mexican National Commission for Assistance to Refugees. UNHCR would be intensifying those endeavours in view of the continued influx of Guatemalan refugees, of whom more than 22,000 were currently in the province of Chiapas.

99. He expressed particular satisfaction at the commitments made by the Honduran and Salvadorian Governments. He was also grateful to the representatives of Argentina and Venezuela for their statements. It would be unfortunate if UNHCR activities in the American continent, and in particular in Central America, were hampered by a decision which, even without being negative, might have the immediate effect of precluding the requisite support for the strengthened presence of UNHCR.

The meeting rose at 6.00 p.m.