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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 432nd MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 6 October 1988, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. H.E. JAMAL (United Republic
of Tanzania)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN UNHCR ACTIVITIES RELATING TO:

- (a) ASSISTANCE
- (b) DURABLE SOLUTIONS
- (c) REFUGEE AID AND DEVELOPMENT (agenda item 6) (continued)
(A/AC.6/708, A/AC.96/709, A/AC.96/XXXIX/CRP.1, 3 and 6)

1. Mr. KISHINGO (International Council of Voluntary Agencies) said one problem faced by UNHCR was securing substantial contributions for refugee-related development projects. The level of the Project Planning Fund proposed was very modest. A possible solution might be a larger fund, to be used for financing technical missions and feasibility studies, as well as for pre-investments and technical assistance.
2. Another problem was the current lack of clear division of responsibilities within the United Nations system in dealing with internally displaced persons. The voluntary agencies hoped that the International Conference on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa (SARRED) would lead to speedy decisions being taken on both relief programmes and development projects for those persons.
3. The role of the voluntary agencies was not clearly spelt out in the Conference Room Paper on refugee aid and development (A/AC.96/XXXIX/CRP.3). The approach whereby UNHCR formulated development projects, and then entrusted their implementation to non-governmental organizations as executing agencies, might not be the most productive one. The voluntary agencies would like to be able to participate more fully than in the past in assessing needs and formulating projects.
4. ICVA had recently undertaken a study on how to incorporate uprooted people in the development process of the area in which they lived. As part of that study, it had assessed the results achieved under two funds created at the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (ICARA II): the United Nations Development Programme's Trust Fund for Assistance to Refugee-Related Development Projects, of some \$9 million, and the Official Development Assistance (ODA) Fund for ICARA II-type projects, of some \$5 million. Both funds had been almost totally committed, and most of the projects they supported had been planned and implemented by non-governmental organizations in co-ordination with the Governments concerned.
5. On several points the conclusions of the ICVA study had coincided with those of UNHCR. ICVA had noted the lack of adequate mechanisms for accommodating a development approach when supporting large groups of uprooted people, as well as the need for structural changes on the part of the host countries, the donor community and the United Nations system alike. One possibility envisaged in the study had been the establishment of a fund. The question of whether that fund should be large enough to finance projects themselves, or limited to cover the costs of formulation of programmes,

whether there should be a global fund or several regional ones, whether the fund should be administered by a single organization or by a group comprising representatives of host Governments, the donor community, the United Nations system and the non-governmental organizations, would require discussion by all parties concerned.

6. With those considerations in mind, the ICVA Governing Board had proposed that a meeting be held to identify the measures to be taken at all levels to ensure that refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons were included in the mainstream of development from the very beginning of each new situation.

7. Mr. KLINGENBERG (Denmark) said that it was no secret that States, despite the fact that they were all bound by exactly the same international legal instruments in regard to refugees, tended to view the problem in a different light according to whether they themselves belonged to the category of country of origin, country of first arrival, or country of resettlement. It was the responsibility of the Office of the High Commissioner to try to ease those differences and to reconcile conflicting interests, with a view to bringing about solutions which would benefit the individual refugee.

8. The country of origin tended to take the stance that the refugee problem did not exist, and that people who were leaving the country were doing so in search of a better life. The international community, on the other hand, tended to regard the country of origin as having violated fundamental human rights and freedoms.

9. The country of first arrival, especially if its resources were limited and numbers of refugees high, often felt that it was carrying a disproportionately heavy burden, and expected the international community to come to its aid, both in financial terms and in terms of offering resettlement to at least some of its refugees in accordance with the principle of international solidarity and burden-sharing.

10. The country of resettlement had to take on the difficult task of integrating refugees of different ethnic origin and background into the community, a costly operation both in terms of human resources and in terms of public expenditure.

11. Debate in the Committee had shown that those three different perceptions of the refugee problem still predominated. An effort should be made to tackle the problem from a common standpoint.

12. In the country of origin, efforts should be directed towards creating favourable conditions for repatriation. In the country of first refuge, the emphasis should be on repatriation, financial assistance and resettlement, and in the country of resettlement the aim should be to offer a sufficient number of resettlement places to the High Commissioner's Office. The number of traditional resettlement countries should be expanded in order to ensure equitable burden-sharing among all Member States of the United Nations. Once a country had provided a number of resettlement places corresponding to its capacity for integration, it should not at the same time be expected to receive unregulated numbers of spontaneous asylum-seekers.

13. A workable system of financial assistance to countries of first arrival, combined with increased offers of resettlement places to the UNHCR Office, presupposed that the movements of bona fide asylum seekers should be channelled into the new scheme; it would then be left to States to deal effectively with illegal immigration. His delegation believed that a more positive trend could be achieved by asking all Members of the United Nations to offer UNHCR resettlement places. Once a sufficient number of such places were at the Office's disposal, asylum-seekers would be motivated to seek UNHCR assistance instead of continuing their uncontrolled movements around the world. That would also be to the benefit of bona fide refugees registered with UNHCR who had been waiting for years for a resettlement place.

14. It followed that UNHCR should be prepared to play a more active operational role in the screening process in the different regions of the world. A strong UNHCR presence in all refugee-affected regions would serve a dual purpose: it would provide welcome assistance to countries in dealing with flows of refugees and asylum-seekers, and secondly it would help to develop much-needed guidance to States in deciding who could qualify as a refugee. Such an effort should be combined with a global resettlement scheme for refugees who, in the opinion of the UNHCR, were in need of resettlement in a third country.

15. Experience had shown that such a system could be workable. For example, the so-called Rescue at Sea Resettlement Offers (RASRO) scheme for refugees rescued at sea, with the participation of 16 countries and the co-operation of UNHCR, had been operating successfully since 1985. There was also a mechanism established by the Thai Government in co-operation with UNHCR to determine the status of Lao asylum-seekers, referred to in paragraph 40 of the Overview of UNHCR activities (A/AC.96/709). Consultations between UNHCR and 12 European countries with a view to establishing a mechanism for dealing with specific refugee situations had led to encouraging results. The mechanism envisaged was one in which the UNHCR regional office would play an active role in the processing of asylum-seekers, and in which participating States, for their part, would undertake to make increased resettlement offers, and also to endeavour to contain unregulated movements of asylum-seekers out of the country of first arrival.

16. His Government had approved a special contribution to the Office of the Co-ordinator for Intergovernmental Consultations on Asylum Seekers in Europe and North America, and it would continue to work towards the establishment of a scheme such as he had just described, which in his view represented a pragmatic approach towards the solution of the world's refugee problem.

17. Mr. HAMMOND (Canada) suggested that in future important programme issues such as refugee women and aid and development, which were of major significance in planning the future direction of UNHCR, should be discussed in the Sub-Committee on Administration and Finance under a separate item to be entitled "Major trends".

18. The Note on Refugee Women (A/AC.96/XXXIX/CRP.1) was an important milestone in the process of institutionalizing the needs of refugee women, and was useful in identifying the activities which should be undertaken in the coming year if UNHCR was to respond to the Committee's request on the issue.

19. He was pleased to note that UNHCR recognized refugee women as a vital economic resource, rather than as passive victims of circumstance. In order to encourage the concept of self-sufficiency, the Office should give priority to involving refugee women as agents as well as beneficiaries in its assistance programmes. For example, more refugee women could be trained as primary health care workers and extension workers, and women's associations could play a catalytic role in protection and assistance programmes.

20. His delegation favoured the establishment of improved baseline data collection systems with particular emphasis on statistics broken down by gender, the data thus collected should be specifically related to the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects. Regional bureaux should include women's issues when reporting to the Executive Committee, and the programme manual should include a specific reference to the need to take account of the needs of refugee women at all stages of project planning and implementation.

21. His delegation noted the need for UNHCR to build on the combined experience gained by other United Nations bodies, the donor community and non-governmental organizations when implementing women-oriented programmes. As a priority, the Office should obtain sectoral checklists for inclusion in its own technical sector guidelines. He was encouraged to note the emphasis given to critical issues such as environment and family planning; that emphasis should be reflected in specific programme activities.

22. He fully supported the development of training modules for staff responsible for project planning and implementation, in order to sensitize them to the specific needs of refugee women. The Office should explore the experience gained in that area by other organizations and donor countries, including Canada.

23. His delegation had noted the public dissemination activities being carried out by UNHCR to create increased awareness of the needs of refugee women, and particularly commended the recent edition of "Refugees", which focused on that subject. UNHCR should pursue that activity by addressing specific sectoral assistance needs, and documenting its own response to those needs. The Division of Refugee Law and Doctrine should continue to focus special attention on the particular problems faced by refugee women.

24. Canada called on host Governments, other donors and non-governmental organizations to support UNHCR's efforts on behalf of refugee women. For its part, his country had undertaken to provide a Senior Adviser on Women in Development, who was expected to play a leading part in preparing a strategy document that would form the basis of a detailed plan for integrating the specific needs of refugee women into all UNHCR's activities. He urged that the Office should give priority to that initiative, and support it to the fullest extent possible. His delegation looked forward to hearing the progress report on the issue to be submitted at the Committee's fortieth session, as well as the report to the 1991 session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

25. Canada had long supported the linkage between refugee aid and development. Host countries and development agencies alike should consider the presence of substantial numbers of refugees as a major factor in their development planning. For UNHCR to plan refugee programmes in isolation

risked not only incurring unnecessary costs, but also losing a valuable opportunity of benefiting from the experience of Governments and organizations involved in development work in the same region.

26. Document A/AC.96/XXXIX/CRP.3 suggested that UNHCR should initiate suitable projects, promote their development and their financing, and monitor the results for refugees. His delegation would prefer that UNHCR's role should be to identify, rather than to initiate, suitable projects. In the early stages, it should concentrate on identifying projects which already had obvious linkages with ongoing development programmes, and which could therefore provide it with an experienced partner in the form of a development agency or a ministry of the host country.

27. In the same document, UNHCR called for the establishment of a trust fund to provide seed money for undertaking technical planning missions. He was concerned that without a clear indication of proposed initiatives prior to the establishment of such a fund, there might be a disproportionate allocation of scarce UNHCR resources for the identification of projects. Also, a great deal of preparatory work needed to be done by host Governments and development agencies in order to create a climate responsive to projects of the kind proposed.

28. He therefore recommended that UNHCR should concentrate initially on a positive response from the international community, while at the same time identifying specific small-scale interventions which could be suggested to donors on an ad hoc pilot basis. The lessons learned from that process, the constraints identified, and any proposals for future initiatives, could then be submitted to a future session of the Executive Committee, with various options for the funding of future aid and development projects. One of those options might be the establishing of a revolving fund within UNHCR, but he believed that more attractive alternatives could be found if the Office took the lead in suggesting possibilities to host Governments and to the donor community.

29. Mr. MTANGO (United Republic of Tanzania) recalled that the ICARA II had declared that the condition of refugees was a global responsibility, and had emphasized the need for equitable burden-sharing by all members of the international community. Those statements had been reaffirmed by the Oslo Declaration and Plan of Action on Refugees, Detainees and Displaced Persons, adopted earlier that year.

30. Although it might be argued that countries of one region ought not to be asked to share the burden of caring for refugees in another, it should be realized that the majority of asylum countries in the developing world faced particular difficulties. Many had suffered from drought and other natural disasters, and were victims of a hostile external economic environment. They were heavily indebted, and spent a large portion of their foreign exchange earnings on debt servicing. Most were exporters of primary commodities, the prices of which had been on a downward spiral for more than a decade. There was a net outflow of capital resources from such countries to the rich industrialized countries.

31. Under those circumstances, it was difficult enough for most asylum countries to cope with the needs of their own nationals, let alone the additional burden of refugees. Refugees weighed heavily on the fragile infrastructure of such countries, and were a drain on scarce resources. Assistance sought in that connection could justifiably be considered as restitutorial.

32. In a spirit of burden-sharing and humanitarian concern, his country had allotted more than 5,050 square kilometres of land to six refugee settlements and given citizenship to approximately 35,000 refugees. It also allocated a substantial sum from its budget for the settlements handed over to it by UNHCR. However, it needed additional support in particular to maintain and expand infrastructure and foreign currency input, and additional international support for the refugees in those settlements and other refugees who had spontaneously settled among its communities. If assistance were not forthcoming, deteriorating conditions might tempt refugees to migrate within and outside the region with obvious undesirable consequences.

33. For that reason, he advocated a clear policy directive to UNHCR addressing the question of refugee aid and development during the current session. Its vital components would include the following: UNHCR should remain the focal point for actively promoting technical and capital assistance involving development agencies and NGOs in the process; it should assist countries of asylum to make assessments of needs, plans of action and preparation of concrete projects; a Project Planning Fund for Refugee Aid and Development should be established in UNHCR to facilitate the planning and preparation of development-oriented projects; the Executive Committee should call upon the governing councils of development agencies to establish a special refugee account for financing projects aimed at assisting refugees, returnees and refugee-impacted low-income asylum countries; and the principle of additionality should be reaffirmed, i.e. assistance should be additional to and not at the expense of that earmarked for development programmes.

34. Mr. KERLL (Federal Republic of Germany) said that he wished to reiterate his delegation's repeatedly expressed concern at the considerable deterioration in the overall refugee situation. As the main countries giving refuge to the more than 12 million refugees worldwide were developing countries in Africa, Asia and Central America, in 1985 and 1986 his Government had channelled a total of DM 102 million to developing countries in humanitarian assistance, over 70 per cent of which had been refugee aid, giving priority to Indochina and Africa. During the same period it had pledged about DM 285 million for bilateral and multilateral development projects on behalf of refugees, including food aid, transport, infrastructure such as water supply, health programmes and vocational skill training. It had spent DM 160 million on refugee-related projects in 1987 and had intensified its efforts in 1988. Ranking third on the list of contributions to UNHCR assistance programmes with a total amount of \$42.5 million, it would do its utmost to maintain that level and raise its contribution for 1989. It also intended to make a very substantial contribution to special programmes relating to Afghan refugees, but not at the expense of other urgent programmes in Africa, Asia and Central America.

35. In 1988 there had again been a substantial increase of new asylum-seekers in his country. In addition to the 700,000 refugees with or without legal status at the end of 1987, another 100,000 were expected by the end of 1988.

His Government fully supported UNHCR's efforts to find durable solutions and considered voluntary repatriation and local resettlement in the refugees' region of origin to be the most desirable solutions.

36. Turning to the subject of refugee aid and development, he said that since ICARA I his Government had endorsed the linkage of refugee assistance to implementation of development policy, believing that as long as there were refugees in developing countries development assistance must be given with a view to strengthening the economic and social infrastructure of the refugee-receiving countries as well as by direct assistance to the refugees. In view of the declarations of ICARA II and the recent SARRED Conference, the first heading of the introductory remarks of document A/AC.96/XXXIX/CRP.3, was therefore too defensive: there was not only a "justification", but an undeniable necessity for a linkage between refugee aid and development. One example was a study grant programme in his country running since 1978 which provided vocational training or education at the high school level to political refugees from the countries of southern Africa.

37. As to UNHCR's role in implementing those policies, he said that the Executive Committee had consistently recognized its legitimate concern to pursue durable solutions for refugees within a development context. There was some confusion, especially regarding UNHCR's "catalytic role", which in his view should only apply in promoting development infrastructure projects. In programmes directly dealing with the refugee population, UNHCR should maintain well-defined monitoring and protection responsibilities. His Government had supported that policy through various channels directed to UNHCR, the World Bank or recipient Governments.

38. Turning to the proposals in chapter IV of document A/AC.96/XXXIX/CRP.3, he said that his Government endorsed the High Commissioner's programme for durable solutions aiming at refugee self-reliance. UNHCR should apply a multi-year programme planning approach and actively seek co-operation and co-ordination with development agencies.

39. Regarding refugee women and girls and the relevant note on that subject (A/AC.96/XXXIX/CRP.1), he said that particularly vulnerable group needed to be protected and assisted by special policies and programmes. His country supported projects which had special components for improving the situation of refugee women, and would continue to give special support to those parts of the projects aimed at enhancing their self-reliance and enabling them to assume fully their key role in social and economic life. He congratulated UNHCR on its efforts to find better solutions for that vulnerable group, welcomed the recent establishment of the UNHCR Steering Committee on Refugee Women, and expressed his delegation's interest in the progress report to be presented at the Committee's next session, on the steps taken and results achieved thus far.

40. The other highly vulnerable group was that of refugee children. His Government appreciated UNHCR's efforts to deal with the problems of refugee children and fully supported the two main guiding principles, namely, that of the best interest of the child and that of family unity. It also supported UNHCR's efforts to intensify the work of the Special Working Group.

41. Mr. HASSAN (Sudan) said that the vantage point of a least developed country like his own, which had been besieged by refugee problems for many

years, was extremely useful in addressing the subject under discussion. In recent years, the refugee phenomenon in Africa had acquired a new dimension in terms of sheer magnitude and complexity, and despite the generous understanding of the international community, the response still fell short of meeting the needs of refugees and helping host countries to offset the negative impact on their already fragile economies. The reasons for that situation were: the traditional approach in assisting refugees was not sufficient to address the needs of the vast number of rural refugees, while at the same time organized rural settlements had negative impacts on the fragile environment; spontaneously-settled refugees, who comprised about 60 per cent of the refugee population, were not receiving adequate assistance, while placing heavy pressures on local services; UNHCR did not have a sound strategy in assisting them and, consequently, their impact on the urban infrastructure and services was largely covered by host Governments; refugee assistance programmes, especially relief operations, were placing heavy burdens on the already weak communication networks, warehousing, ports and other physical infrastructures.

42. Turning to the question of burden sharing, he said the signatories to the 1951 Geneva Convention had clearly been cognizant of the fact that the refugee problem was one of international responsibility and that donor countries, asylum countries and countries of origin must share the burden equitably.

43. Post-colonial Africa, striving to build its basic infrastructural requirements, had been besieged by the problem of refugees. The already fragile infrastructures of the African countries had been stretched to the limit and their economic development stunted to the point that most of them suffered from negative growth rates. An exercise in an approximal quantification of the inputs of the asylum African countries on the one hand and the donor international community on the other hand would reveal a most unjust and grim situation. If the input of the African asylum countries in positive material services were to be quantified along with the negative impact of the presence of high numbers of refugees on the basic infrastructure, besides the social tension that usually erupted among the indigenous populace and the refugees themselves, the glaringly obvious conclusion would indicate that perhaps those African asylum countries were shouldering about 80 to 85 per cent of the whole burden. It was time for a new approach to be adopted and a fresh look into that gross injustice to be undertaken by the international community.

44. Turning to the genesis of refugee aid and development, he said that the linkage of development to refugee aid was intended to make available additional resources to redress the negative impact of the presence of huge case-loads of refugees in a host country whose fragile basic infrastructure had been stretched to the limit. Development aid sought to bring fatigued basic infrastructures back to the level prior to the arrival of large numbers of refugees. Many African countries were striving to maintain their basic infrastructures at the levels of the early 1970s, or even earlier. As the representative of Tanzania had indicated, development related to refugee aid would by its very nature be of a compensatory character in the specific areas negatively affected, namely, food security, reforestation, agriculture, irrigation, veterinary services, water supply, education, vocational training, social services, community development, health, sanitation, income-generating activities and logistics.

45. The item should perhaps be entitled "Refugee aid and compensatory development assistance", which was a more accurate description. The report in document A/AC.96/XXXIX/CRP.3 explicitly and implicitly testified to the claim that the whole exercise was compensatory, recovery and/or restitutionary in nature. His delegation welcomed the report as the first tangible recognition of the need to link refugee aid and national development and requested UNHCR to submit to the fortieth session of the Executive Committee a complementary report clearly spelling out the role and mandate of UNHCR as focal point, the character and operational aspects of a project planning fund, the breakdown of financial resources allocated to developing countries of asylum and the roles and mandate of development agencies, non-governmental organizations and other partners in that process.

46. He recognized with appreciation recent agreements signed between the High Commissioner and development agencies aimed at co-ordinating relief programmes with the development plans of certain developing countries. He called upon the High Commissioner to pursue his efforts to widen the co-ordination base by involving more multilateral development agencies and non-governmental organizations in order to achieve the requisite degree of co-ordination between UNHCR programmes and the development plans of the developing countries of asylum.

47. Mr. ULRICH (Denmark) said that in the current year the High Commissioner had outlined more clearly than before the policies and strategies linking refugee aid to development, had introduced principles for action in developing countries, and had presented the Committee with a concrete proposal to establish a project planning account for refugee aid and development.

48. The annex to document A/AC.96/XXXIX/CRP.3 clearly stated that UNHCR should not assume the role of a development agency. His delegation supported that view but considered that, where developmental initiatives were needed to help refugees support themselves, it was proper that UNHCR should initiate suitable projects.

49. The documentation before the Committee made a very important distinction: on the one hand, there were temporary measures pending a durable solution, and, on the other hand, measures for the integration of the refugee into society as part of a durable solution. It was important that conditions should be created in the country of asylum to enable the refugee to engage in self-help activities. However, such activities must not become developmental projects if the durable solution for that particular group of refugees was voluntary repatriation or integration in another part of the country of asylum or resettlement.

50. His delegation supported the proposal to establish a project planning account for refugee aid and development and agreed that the account should be used exclusively to finance technical missions and feasibility studies during defined planning stages, as well as for the finalization of project documents, and that the contributions accrued at any given time should not exceed \$1 million. His Government was prepared to consider making a contribution to the account.

51. Finally, his delegation wished to stress the importance of UNHCR's close co-operation with other organizations of the United Nations system and with governmental and non-governmental organizations in the development planning activities of countries with large refugee or returnee communities.

52. Mr. SUTHANAKUL (Thailand), on behalf of the ASEAN countries, namely, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, introduced a draft decision on the convening of an international conference on Indochinese refugees (A/AC.96/XXXIX/CRP.6), which he hoped the Executive Committee would endorse.

53. Broad agreement on the wording of the text had been reached with the parties directly concerned. It was envisaged that a series of preparatory meetings would be held to elaborate upon the various issues involved and to build upon the informal consultations held among the various parties concerned, including UNHCR, over the past 18 months. The initiative had received the support of all the countries in South-East Asia. The ultimate objectives of the conference would be to refine and build upon the arrangements established by the 1979 International Conference on Indochinese refugees so that a new consensus could be reached on comprehensive and durable solutions to deal in a realistic yet humanitarian manner with the new character and dimensions of the problems that had arisen in South-East Asia.

54. Mr. HARDY (Australia) congratulated UNHCR on the quality of the Note on Refugee Women, with its positive emphasis on the contribution which refugee women made to social and economic productivity. As refugees, women were especially vulnerable to acts of institutional and individual abuse. However, no discussion of appropriate protection and assistance should overlook their pivotal family role nor their capacity to articulate their own needs. Further efforts to promote income-generating activities for women should be encouraged, and a general evaluation of income-earning projects for women was a priority concern.

55. His delegation was encouraged not only by the establishment of the UNHCR Steering Committee on Refugee Women, but particularly by its efforts to "mainstream" refugee women issues into the range of functions carried out by UNHCR. The Office rightly recognized the need to assess, strengthen and reorient existing policies and programmes in favour of refugee women, while ensuring that such efforts were culturally appropriate and resulted in full integration.

56. Further efforts should be made to strengthen the "institutionalization" of refugee women policy in the "mainstreaming" process. The Regional Bureaux should be actively involved in the process, and the expertise of non-governmental organizations might also be harnessed, in particular their support for a public information strategy on refugee women.

57. His delegation noted the importance of new and improved systems for the collection, maintenance and practical use of basic socio-economic and demographic data on women, which was a pre-condition for any effective implementation of programmes. His delegation strongly supported the efforts to effect institutional changes aimed at ensuring that the needs of special groups, including women, were systematically considered and regularly reported upon. Further information on the elements to be included in the various

Sector Guidelines would be welcome. Training was also an important sector. The importance of programmes that dealt with the difficulties faced by refugee men, particularly in education, should not be underestimated. His delegation reiterated its support for UNHCR's efforts to strengthen its protection response, particularly by way of the Guidelines issued in 1987, and emphasized that without the full co-operation of Governments, those efforts would be heavily compromised.

58. As a country adjacent to South-East Asia which had been closely involved in the search for lasting solutions to the problem there, Australia had closely followed the developments leading up to the proposal to convene an international conference on Indochinese refugees. The time was indeed opportune for such a conference, which needed to be very carefully prepared. His delegation supported the draft decision read out by the representative of Thailand.

59. The High Commissioner had referred to developments in South-East Asia as an illustration of UNHCR's solution-oriented work. The Office had indeed shown welcome signs of a more solution-oriented approach since the present High Commissioner had taken up his duties. There had long been a need for UNHCR to organize its responses to refugee situations within the framework of an envisaged long-term solution. That approach was particularly well demonstrated in the development of a programme for the repatriation of Afghan refugees. The reflections on solutions made by the Director of Refugee Law and Doctrine at the 430th meeting had been noted with great interest.

60. Document A/AC.96/XXXIX/CRP.3 and the annex thereto provided a clear rationale for UNHCR's involvement in aid and development activities on behalf of refugees and advanced a sound proposal for UNHCR's future involvement in that important area. In presenting the proposal, UNHCR had in effect drawn attention to its specific role in relation to the mandate of other development agencies. While it was undesirable that UNHCR should engage in activities that might detract from its capacity to fulfil its core responsibility, its knowledge and experience in refugee issues was unparalleled in other agencies. It thus had a catalytic role to play in achieving greater international support for refugees and in encouraging an integrated approach to the task of providing assistance jointly to refugees and to the affected host communities. In so doing, UNHCR could achieve a greater degree of service to refugees than would be possible from its own limited resources. The first point of the "summary of the rationale" for the fund could be expanded to reflect the fact that refugee development projects were also likely to achieve economic benefits which obviated the need for long-term recurrent emergency funding. UNHCR's role in identifying the possibility of such projects could represent a move towards a more efficient allocation of resources.

61. His delegation had no difficulty with regard to most of the measures proposed in section IV of Part One of the document, concerning proposed action to be taken by members of the Executive Committee. However, Australia's approach to the question of multi-year funding commitments would be governed basically by its budget processes and by a careful assessment of the circumstances in which multi-year funding was appropriate. His delegation noted that the guidelines set out in Part Three, section 6, did not encompass direct funding of investment projects by UNHCR, and it continued to consider

that UNHCR's resources should not be allocated to co-financed development projects. There appeared to be a need for some flexibility in the mechanism of setting up the fund. Australia would have no difficulty regarding the establishment of either a trust fund or some other mechanism.

62. Mr. SANKEY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) said that his Government would continue to play its part in ensuring that sufficient funds were available to UNHCR to maintain its programmes and to cope with the very difficult situations in Africa. Developments in 1988 had shown how important it was for the Office to be able to respond quickly and effectively to the large influx of refugees into Ethiopia and southern Africa, with their potentially disastrous consequences. His Government was concerned about reports of the difficulties being met by international and non-governmental organizations in Ethiopia. The difficulties of bringing relief to refugees were clearly understood but every effort should be made to ensure that all concerned worked together. Numerous problems could arise, especially in remote parts of Africa, where the weather and transport problems could make operations difficult and dangerous, if not sometimes impossible. It was therefore to be hoped that the Deputy High Commissioner's recent visit to Ethiopia would lead to increased trust, confidence and stability and to the maintenance of co-operation and co-ordination of the efforts made by all the organizations involved.

63. The burden placed on the developing countries of southern Africa continued to grow. Tribute should be paid to the countries affected, especially Malawi, which had selflessly opened their doors to the destitute refugees arriving across their borders. They had given land, food and shelter, at considerable sacrifice to their development programmes. The United Kingdom Government's concern for the plight of Mozambican refugees had been clearly demonstrated at the SARRED Conference at Oslo, where it had pledged £3 million for them, £2 million of which would be channelled through UNHCR.

64. There were at present over 25,000 Vietnamese boat people in Hong Kong, 17,500 of whom had arrived in 1988. The pressure of recent arrivals from Viet Nam had thus put a very heavy strain on Hong Kong's resources. During the first half of 1988 the rate of arrivals had climbed to 2,000 a month, with the rate of resettlement in the third countries running at only 2,000 a year. Thus Hong Kong had to provide extra accommodation for a growing population of asylum-seekers who faced a long wait in Hong Kong and in some cases limited, if any, prospects of resettlement.

65. In those circumstances the Hong Kong Government had decided that it could not continue to grant refugee status automatically to all new arrivals. A statement of understanding had been agreed with UNHCR reaffirming the principle of first asylum and allowing UNHCR to monitor the status determination process and appeals procedures which had been introduced. The process was fully in accordance with UNHCR's guidelines and all new arrivals were given safe haven and were interviewed to determine whether they were genuine refugees. No boat people were turned away, but failed asylum-seekers would not have access to resettlement. In September the Hong Kong Government had announced that all the existing closed camps for refugees would become open camps within six months. The United Kingdom Government's initial contribution of £1 million to UNHCR's work in Hong Kong had been announced in

the general debate. His Government hoped that other countries, too, would contribute to the programme and would continue to accept refugees from Hong Kong in their resettlement programmes. In addition, bilateral discussions were being held with Viet Nam to find a comprehensive solution to the problem. His Government had made it clear to the Government of Viet Nam that it expected Viet Nam to take back those of its citizens who failed to meet the criteria for refugee status. Useful progress had already been made, and it was hoped that further progress would be made at the next meeting. Furthermore, the United Kingdom hoped to play an active part in building a consensus on the objectives for an international conference on Indochinese refugees to be held in 1989. It would continue to liaise closely with UNHCR and with the ASEAN and other major resettlement countries as the preparatory work for the conference proceeded. The active part played by the High Commissioner and his staff in providing guidance and assistance in the development of the new arrangements in Hong Kong was greatly appreciated.

66. Another area where UNHCR had demonstrated the importance of its work was among Afghan refugees. The commendable role played by Pakistan in looking after the 3 million Afghans who had been forced to leave their country should be recognized. The huge scale of the rehabilitation and repatriation exercise would present formidable problems. His Government had been pleased to contribute, at an early stage, £10 million towards the international operation. Of that, £6.75 million had been given to UNHCR for its Afghan refugee programmes, on the clear understanding, however, that the money was for Afghan refugees and their return to Afghanistan and would not be used for programmes under the control of the régime in Kabul.

67. The burden of refugees arriving in developing countries and the continuing search for solutions had led to an increasing examination of the need for refugee aid to go hand-in-hand with development. The increased co-operation between UNHCR and other agencies such as UNDP and IFAD was therefore welcome. Current refugee emergencies demonstrated that Governments and agencies must adopt a flexible approach in the allocation of resources, while ensuring that the needs of refugees were met. His delegation was confident that UNHCR would continue to make every effort to ensure that the best possible use was made of the resources available to it. In most new situations, the provision of clean water, food, shelter and clothing was still the priority need. His Government therefore welcomed UNHCR's co-operation with others, especially the voluntary agencies, and was also pleased to note that progress had been made in shifting from emergency relief to self-sufficiency programmes. The continuing emphasis on increasing self-reliance in projects like the joint UNHCR/World Bank programme for Afghans and on promoting integrated self-reliance programmes which also benefited the host community was particularly welcome. In line with the principles of ICARA II, projects were specifically designed to provide infrastructural assistance to those African countries hosting large influxes of refugees. The United Kingdom planned to continue its support for ICARA II projects beyond 1989, when the present £5 million pledge would have been fully spent. It therefore fully appreciated the High Commissioner's suggestion regarding the establishment of a separate trust fund to promote the link between refugee aid and development. While recognizing the important principle behind the suggestion, it believed that it was equally important that refugee elements of development projects should be an integral of UNHCR's

assistance programmes. However, it should be borne in mind that trust funds rarely attracted additional funds; they merely diverted funds from elsewhere. His Government would continue to contribute through existing channels.

68. The establishment of the Steering Committee on Refugee Women had helped focus more programmes on the needs of women refugees. The most important step was the involvement of women at both the planning and the decision-making stage of all refugee projects. Project activities should aim to develop economic self-reliance through well prepared income-generating projects to allow refugee women to support themselves and build a new life for themselves and their families. The major part of the £5 million provided by his Government for infrastructural assistance under ICARA II had been committed to projects which included benefits for women.

69. The United Kingdom had played a major role in assisting UNHCR. Taking account of a recently announced further pledge of £2.4 million for Hong Kong and Sudan, the United Kingdom's assistance to UNHCR so far in 1988 totalled over £21 million, representing 58 per cent of its total refugee assistance.

70. Mrs. XIANG Jiagn (China) noted that over the past year further progress had been made in the search for durable solutions. During 1987 and the first half of 1988 more than 250,000 refugees, mostly in Africa and Central America, had voluntarily returned to their countries of origin. UNHCR had provided the necessary assistance.

71. UNHCR had adopted measures for the local integration of the growing numbers of urban refugees. Nevertheless, the majority of refugees being locally integrated were rural refugees. Consequently, efforts to assist them should not be relaxed.

72. Most of the countries receiving and settling large numbers of refugees were in the developing world. They had devoted enormous human, financial and material resources to that task, under heavy economic and social strains, in implementation of the principle of international solidarity and burden-sharing. In receiving refugees, countries of first asylum had no opportunity to select the refugees they wanted. Countries of resettlement, however, could do so. It was therefore important that countries of resettlement should adopt, in accordance with their economic capabilities, an open rather than an over-restrictive policy in receiving refugees, in a similar spirit of international solidarity and burden-sharing.

73. The problem of Indochinese refugees had beset the Asian countries concerned and some resettlement countries for over 12 years. The number of refugees fleeing from Viet Nam had increased drastically in 1987 and 1988. The international community, especially the country which bore direct responsibility for that situation, had to give serious consideration to solving the problem. It was not fair that not very well-off neighbouring countries should bear heavy economic and social pressures and that donor countries should make generous offers while the refugee-creating country stood idly by. The ASEAN countries had proposed the convening of another international conference on Indochinese refugees to seek a durable solution to the problem. Their proposal should be supported by the Executive Committee.

74. Experience in some countries demonstrated that development aid to refugees was effective. The recent SARRED Conference held at Oslo had again emphasized the need to strengthen development aid. Her delegation was pleased to note that UNHCR had endeavoured to increase its co-operation with relevant United Nations development agencies over the past year and hoped that such co-operation would be intensified and that the good intentions expressed at ICARA II and SARRED would be translated into reality.

75. Mr. WULS (Sweden) noted that the vast majority of current refugees fled from one developing country to another. In view of the difficult economic and social circumstances of those countries, Sweden reiterated its appreciation of the generous way in which refugees continued to be received by them.

76. The international community had a clear obligation to help to alleviate the burden placed upon the countries concerned. It was not only a matter of providing emergency assistance and establishing basic services such as health care and education. There must also be an increasing emphasis on activities such as income-generating projects. The link between refugee aid and development had constituted one of the main ideas of ICARA II, and his delegation welcomed the recommendation made by the SARRED Conference to the effect that the ICARA process should be given new impetus.

77. Document A/AC.96/XXXIX/CRP.3 contained an interesting proposal to establish a project planning fund for refugee aid and development. While his delegation had some misgivings regarding the proposed creation of a special fund, it was in favour of the substance of the proposal. However, since the proposal had been submitted only a few days previously, it would be advisable for further discussions to be held on the matter between UNHCR and interested countries. In any case, the High Commissioner had an important catalytic role to play in promoting the linkage between refugee aid and development. His delegation reiterated its appreciation of the High Commissioner's efforts to increase co-operation with other international organizations, development agencies and non-governmental organizations, particularly the World Bank, UNDP and other development organizations, which should adapt their projects so as to allow for the incorporation of refugees. Governments should seek to promote such co-operation in the governing bodies of those organizations, too.

78. His Government believed that asylum-seekers should be treated in such a way as to allow them to attain the standards of the countries of asylum as soon as possible and that procedures should be developed to make the waiting time as short as possible without endangering their protection. In Sweden, the aim was to encourage refugees to integrate and to exercise the same rights and responsibilities as Swedish citizens. For the past few years Sweden had maintained an annual quota of some 1,250 persons per year to be used for refugees and other persons in urgent need of protection. In recent years, in fact, the number concerned had reached 1,500 persons. The quota programme would be continued for 1988 and 1989. It was implemented in close co-operation with UNHCR and was primarily intended for especially needy cases, in particular from South-West Asia and Latin America. In addition Sweden accepted some disabled refugees and victims of torture from various countries of origin. His Government believed that the resettlement of especially needy cases and high risk groups should be approached on a global level and hoped that many more countries would find it possible to assist in that important humanitarian task.

79. Mr. YAVUZALP (Turkey) said that it was important to continue assistance programmes after the period of emergency aid both to improve the conditions of refugees for whom no durable solution was within sight and to alleviate the strains placed on the host countries, most of which were very poor. The connection between refugee aid and development should be reinforced and co-operation between UNHCR and the development agencies should increase. The international community should not fail to support such activities. In that connection, it also hoped that the SARRED Conference would be successfully followed up.

80. He commended the Note on Refugee Women (A/AC.96/XXXIX/CRP.1) and expressed his appreciation of the measures recently taken by UNHCR to strengthen programmes in favour of that vulnerable group.

81. Voluntary repatriation was the preferred solution to any refugee situation and, fortunately, that solution usually proved feasible when the root causes which had compelled the refugees to leave their country were removed. There was thus a correlation between voluntary repatriation and the settlement of political problems. His delegation hoped that the current negotiations in various parts of the world to resolve long-standing political issues and the recent peace accords would prove fruitful in that regard.

82. Local integration and resettlement were two other durable solutions which were applicable to different situations. Hence neither should automatically be preferred to the other. Undue emphasis on local integration could result merely in increasing the difficulties faced by first asylum countries overburdened with refugees. Countries where local integration seemed feasible should not be forced to assume responsibilities beyond their means but should be assisted in their humanitarian efforts within the framework of equitable burden sharing.

83. There were refugee situations where local integration was not a feasible durable solution, such as the problem of asylum-seekers in transit countries which could be solved only through the provision of more resettlement opportunities by refugee receiving countries. Unfortunately, resettlement remained least applied even when it was the most viable solution: according to document A/AC.96/709, in 1987, UNHCR had participated in the resettlement of 97,000 persons from around the world. That figure indicated that more effective action was required since asylum-seekers were accumulating in transit countries while resettlement quotas remained limited. The harmful effects of that situation on both transit countries and refugees should be remedied by an increase in resettlement opportunities and an acceleration of resettlement procedures.

84. Mr. LEVITTE (France) said he wished to address the issue of whether, given that the very concept of refugees had changed drastically, the mission of UNHCR should also change. In recent years there had increasingly been mass movements of refugees whether as a result of foreign aggression as in Afghanistan or internal conflicts as in southern Africa and Central America. The root causes of such mass movements were many and cumulative. Conflicts destroyed economies and it was difficult to say whether it was an oppressive régime, rather than scarcity or famine or the hope of a better life elsewhere that caused people to leave home. The expanding grey zone between genuine

political refugees and economic migrants undoubtedly covered most of the cases. Finally there was the category, not much taken into consideration, of persons displaced within their own country, whose position was often more difficult than that of the refugees looked after by UNHCR.

85. To the question whether UNHCR's mission should also change, some answered that the Office must adjust to changing circumstances. The current mass movements of refugees were too large to make it possible to find countries of resettlement and furthermore they were caused by temporary phenomena such as conflict or famine; when the phenomena disappeared, the refugees and displaced persons would return home. It was therefore reasonable that UNHCR should undertake economic assistance as "catalyst and co-ordinator" of development assistance, in order to hasten the return or integration of the people concerned.

86. However, it was his personal view that the basic vocation of UNHCR should not change. There was need of an institution which defended the principles and spirit of the 1951 Convention in a world in flux. The moral authority of UNHCR, whose function of protection was as important as that of assistance, must be upheld. Secondly, the United Nations family had a number of institutions - for example, UNDP, WFP, UNICEF and the World Bank - better equipped than UNHCR to provide development assistance. The pragmatic reply to the problem of coping with the changes in the nature of refugees was to be found in better co-ordination of governmental and non-governmental organizations, region by region, by the appointment of co-ordinators, whenever necessary, by the Secretary-General. The example of Afghanistan could serve as a model. In Central Africa, Mr. Ramirez Ocampo, the Secretary-General's Special Representative, who was co-ordinator for the Central American Plan of Action, might, at the appropriate moment, head an inter-agency task force charged with implementing the decisions that would be taken at the forthcoming conference in Guatemala City on refugees and displaced persons.

87. In South-East Asia, which was facing a new arrival of boat people, the Secretary-General might appoint a special representative responsible, having regard to the prevailing political conditions, for efficiently co-ordinating the implementation of decisions which would be taken at the Geneva Conference on South-East Asian Refugees. UNHCR would play an essential role in the preparation of that conference and a considerable part in the implementation of its decisions. But the High Commissioner should be careful not to depart from his mandate when the economic migrants returned home. In the case of southern Africa, the possibility should be considered of appointing a co-ordinator at the head of an inter-agency task force to implement the plan of action adopted at the SARRED Conference, rather than setting up a new institution responsible for displaced persons.

88. It was not that he in any way discounted the necessity of development assistance to supplement refugee assistance. Indeed, the two must proceed in tandem. But every institution should act within its mandate not only as a matter of principle but also for reasons of efficiency. Co-ordination of their efforts should be ensured whenever necessary by the establishment of a task force under a co-ordinator.

89. On the other hand, it was desirable that UNHCR should be fully associated with the preparation and implementation of programmes worked out at conferences or round-table meetings, whenever there were large concentrations of refugees in the regions or countries covered by such meetings. UNHCR should also be associated in an appropriate manner with the work of institutions such as the World Bank, UNDP and IFAD.

90. Mrs. SCHELLING (Switzerland) commended the Secretariat for its paper on refugee aid and development (AC.96/XXXIX/CRP.3) and said that her delegation fully shared the Office's desire to integrate refugee aid into the development process of host countries. It was clear that humanitarian assistance to refugees, essentially short term in nature, should be associated with medium- and long-term development co-operation measures which would benefit both the refugees and the local population. It was an example of the ever-growing interrelationship between various instruments of official development assistance. That interrelationship was the main thrust of the message submitted to the Federal Parliament on the proposed budget allocation for continued international humanitarian assistance. In her delegation's opinion, UNHCR had a three-fold part to play: it was very often the initiator of such projects since its work for refugees put it in touch with the authorities and the problems of the local population. It had also to act as a catalyst in project design and preparation and in the mobilization of resources. In that connection, co-ordination with the host country, international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and donor countries was very important. The formulation of development projects required the specialized knowledge already available in United Nations agencies dealing with technical co-operation and financial assistance. Her delegation therefore welcomed the institutionalization of co-operation between UNHCR and some of those agencies. Finally, the Office should also act as partner in the preparation and supervision of projects since, in most cases, some of the beneficiaries came under its mandate and require its protection. The partnership function was also essential from the viewpoint of United Nations inter-institutional co-operation in order to learn as much as possible from common experiences. In its message to Parliament, her Government had referred to UNHCR activities in the field of refugee aid and development as one of the components of the UNHCR programme that it would continue to support.

91. Her delegation was in principle in favour of the proposal to set up a project planning fund provided that it was supported by a representative group of other donors. The aims, operational methods and precise criteria for using the fund should be the subject of consultations, in which Switzerland was willing to take part, between UNHCR and interested donor countries.

92. In conclusion, she noted with satisfaction the institutional machinery set up by UNHCR to address more effectively the needs of refugee children and women and the High Commissioner's proposal to promote culturally and socially appropriate solutions for those concerned.

93. Mrs. MBONU (Nigeria) expressed her satisfaction that there was a greater awareness in the High Commissioner's Office of the peculiar problems facing refugee women. Women refugees faced double jeopardy in that they were people uprooted from their country of origin for reasons beyond their control and that they were women with all the hazards that entailed. The Note on Refugee Women (A/AC.96/XXXIX/CRP.1) dealt adequately with the problem of sexual

exploitation and abuse and it was satisfactory to note the efforts being made by the authorities of certain asylum countries, at whose borders such incidents had occurred, to ensure the physical protection of refugee women within their territories. She also endorsed the provision of separate accommodation for young female refugees, as mentioned in the introductory statement to the agenda item.

94. Action by the Office to sensitize field officers to the particular protection problems affecting refugee women was a matter of high priority and her delegation would like regular reports to be submitted to the Executive Committee on the impact of programmes for refugee women. Her delegation supported efforts to provide income-generating opportunities for refugee women in order to promote some degree of self-reliance and facilitate measures towards durable solutions for them. The economic potential of refugee women should not be overlooked and they should be fully integrated into mainstream programming. In conclusion, her delegation recommended that some of the non-governmental organizations concerned with refugee women should be permanently represented on the Steering Committee on Refugee Women so that use could be made of their expertise.

95. Mr. KELLEY (United States of America) welcomed the efforts of the Technical Support Services to find creative solutions of meaningful employment for urban refugees whose plight had for too long been ignored. The consolidation of the Social Services Unit into the Technical Support Services would provide important opportunities to programme more relevant education and training for employment. He urged Governments of asylum countries to co-operate by granting refugees the necessary work permits, business licences or professional certificates to enable them to apply their skills in meaningful employment.

96. Although third country resettlement was the least desirable solution both in terms of disruption of the lives of refugees and of costs, it was sometimes the only viable option for a variety of reasons. The United States Government had been in the forefront in providing such resettlement for large numbers of refugees.

97. He was pleased to announce that, after due consultation with the Congress, President Reagan had set the United States admission level for 1989 at 94,000. It was hoped that the increase would inspire other nations similarly to increase their levels, since the need for resettlement opportunities in order to relieve frustrated refugees and their unwilling hosts had in no way decreased. He urged that the international burden-sharing equation should take into account the factor of resettlement and its costs and that the financial contributions towards UNHCR's non-resettlement activities should consequently be significantly increased by relatively wealthy countries with socio-cultural and demographic constraints on resettlement.

98. He was pleased to announce that his delegation could support the draft decision (A/AC.96/XXXIX/CRP.6) introduced by the representative of Thailand earlier in the meeting.

99. Turning to the proposals in the Note on Women Refugees (A/AC.96/XXXIX/CRP.1), he said that several additional measures were required. Care must be taken to ensure that the Technical Services Division had the necessary staff and expertise to assist and motivate field offices in the

planning, implementation and evaluation of the kinds of services discussed in paragraphs 21 to 52 inclusive. His delegation specially commended UNHCR plans to develop a data bank to assist in that matter. Furthermore, the success of the programmes described would largely depend on how effectively UNHCR discharged its protection mandate on behalf of female refugees. Such protection could not be considered strictly in a legal sense but should also include the development of operational ability to make the authorities of the host country and other relevant individuals more skilled in the physical and psychological protection of female refugees. Ultimately, the refugees themselves could probably propose the best solutions to their particular problems. It was essential that programmes should be designed and implemented in close consultation with their beneficiaries, with the specific aims of improving living conditions in the country of first asylum in the short term and of providing women with life skills that would benefit them in the longer term.

100. The best means of combating the exploitation of women refugees was the development of a camp security apparatus. UNHCR should consider the example followed by the Victims of Violence Programme and UNBRO in sensitizing their security agents to the needs of abused women and, where possible, creating specially trained female guard units. It should also make an effort to establish separate monitored accommodation for unaccompanied women. Refugee women were a centrally located group and the restrictions on their physical movements should be exploited for their benefit.

101. In the past, UNHCR's implementation of health programmes had fallen short of what was described in the Note on Refugee Women. In particular, it had not always given top priority to recruiting and training women to serve as community health workers. The activity had not been carried out very vigorously, at least in South-East Asia and Pakistan, in programmes where the host country delivered health services. UNHCR should place renewed emphasis on training host country authorities in the fundamentals of primary health care and efforts should be made to communicate the value of child-spacing, breast feeding, immunization, delivery techniques, oral rehydration and proper household sanitation. In the past, much emphasis had been placed on the supplemental feeding of young children often in co-operation with the WFP. Responsibility for monitoring and administration was not clearly defined and as a result programmes were poorly managed. A number of infant deaths had been attributed to the improperly monitored distribution of dried skimmed milk. UNHCR must in future take a more active role in the management of such programmes.

102. An effort must be made to improve the mental health of women refugees through educational and income-generating projects, since a significant number of their health-related complaints were attributable to the uncertainty of exile and the lack of productive activities. In view of UNHCR's limited experience in developing such projects, an open exchange of information should be encouraged between project participants and between UNHCR and other interested parties. UNHCR should give priority to developing a mechanism for collating and interpreting the experience gained in all projects implemented by UNHCR contractors. Finally, UNHCR should make every effort to keep donors informed of progress in meeting the needs of refugee women, by providing details on project plans and evaluation.

103. His delegation could support in principle the paper on Refugee Aid and Development (A/AC.96/XXXIX/CRP.3) and the call for a trust fund specifically. Seed money for feasibility studies should be expended in accordance with the receptivity of countries of asylum, particularly with regard to work permits, business licences and professional certificates and land tenure. It was to be hoped that UNHCR and donors would select for feasibility studies those projects which had the greatest likelihood of attracting funds for implementation.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

s'efforcer de prévoir un hébergement protégé dans des logements séparés pour les femmes non accompagnées. Les femmes réfugiées constituent un groupe cible et les limitations imposées à leurs déplacements doivent être exploitées à leur profit.

101. Jusqu'ici, la mise en oeuvre des programmes de santé du HCR n'a pas atteint les objectifs mentionnés dans la Note sur les femmes réfugiées. Ainsi, ces programmes n'ont pas toujours accordé la priorité absolue aux activités de recrutement et de formation de femmes appelées à exercer les fonctions d'agents sanitaires des collectivités. Ces activités n'ont pas été menées énergiquement, du moins en Asie du Sud-Est et au Pakistan, dans le cadre des programmes où le pays d'accueil dispense des services de santé. Le HCR devrait insister davantage sur la formation des autorités des pays d'accueil aux aspects fondamentaux des soins de santé primaires; de même, des efforts devraient être entrepris pour faire comprendre l'importance de l'espacement des naissances, de l'allaitement maternel, des vaccinations, des méthodes d'accouchement, de la réhydratation par voie buccale et de l'hygiène domestique. Par le passé, on a beaucoup mis l'accent sur l'alimentation complémentaire des jeunes enfants, souvent en coopération avec le PAM. Les responsabilités concernant le contrôle et la gestion des programmes dans ces domaines n'ont pas toujours été clairement définies et, de ce fait, l'exécution de ces programmes a beaucoup laissé à désirer. Un certain nombre de décès de nourrissons a été attribué à une distribution mal suivie de lait écrémé en poudre. A l'avenir, le HCR doit jouer un rôle plus actif dans la gestion de ces programmes.

102. Un effort doit être entrepris pour améliorer la santé mentale des femmes réfugiées grâce à des projets portant sur des activités éducatives et des activités génératrices de recettes car un grand nombre des problèmes de santé dont elles souffrent sont dus à l'incertitude de l'exil et au manque d'activités productives. Le HCR n'ayant qu'une expérience limitée de l'élaboration de ces projets, il conviendrait d'encourager un large échange de renseignements entre les participants aux projets et entre le HCR et les autres parties intéressées. Le HCR devra donner la priorité à la mise au point d'un mécanisme servant à compiler et à interpréter les données d'expérience tirées de tous les projets mis en oeuvre par les agents d'exécution du HCR. Enfin, le HCR ne devra ménager aucun effort pour informer les donateurs des progrès accomplis pour répondre aux besoins des femmes réfugiées, en fournissant des renseignements détaillés sur la préparation et l'évaluation des projets.

103. La délégation des Etats-Unis peut appuyer en principe le document sur l'aide aux réfugiés et le développement (A/AC.96/XXXIX/CRP.3) et l'appel concernant la création d'un fonds fiduciaire spécifique. Il faudra que le capital de mise en route des études de faisabilité soit augmenté en fonction de la réceptivité des pays d'asile pour ce qui est notamment des permis de travail, des patentes, des attestations donnant droit à l'exercice d'une profession et du régime foncier. Il faut espérer que le HCR et les donateurs décideront d'entreprendre des études de faisabilité sur les projets pour l'exécution desquels les probabilités de recevoir des fonds sont les plus grandes.

La séance est levée à 18 heures.