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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

Thirty-fourth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 367TH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 20 October 1983, at 9.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. EWERLÖF

(Sweden)

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The meeting was called to order at 9.55 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT (agenda item 14) (continued) (HCR/EC/XXXIV/CRP.1 to 11)

The CHAIRMAN, referring to a question raised at the preceding meeting by the observer for Senegal, said that the draft report had now been distributed to observers.

Mr. LUKE (Secretary of the Committee), referring to the same question, said that the status of observers in the Executive Committee derived from rule 9 of the Committee's rules of procedure, which he read out. Under a decision taken by the Executive Committee, observers were not represented in sub-committees. Documents for "general distribution" were available to observers, but those marked "restricted distribution" were for members of the Executive Committee only. That practice might, however, be changed at future sessions if the Committee so decided. At the current session, the draft report had been distributed to observers the day before, as the Chairman had noted.

Mr. KONATE (Observer for Senegal) said that the question he had raised was tied up with the question of the reason for the presence of observers in the Executive Committee. At the General Assembly and in its subsidiary organs, documentation was distributed to all delegations. The different practice followed by the UNHCR Executive Committee should be changed since it had been called in question. Moreover, to justify their governments' interest in the work of UNHCR, observers should be entitled to speak on all agenda items and to submit draft resolutions on those items without, of course, any right to vote. It was regrettable that the draft report contained no reference to observers. The question of the participation of observers should be decided at once. If it was not to be decided to have closed meetings and confidential documents to which observers would not have access, as in the Commission on Human Rights, that should be made quite clear. It was particularly illogical that observers did not receive some parts of the draft report and were therefore unable to ensure that those parts accurately reflected the statements they had made.

The CHAIRMAN said he thought that he spoke on behalf of the entire Executive Committee in stressing that it attached great importance to the active participation of observers in its sessions. He had made it his personal responsibility to see that the various parts of the draft report were made available to them. The Bureau would look carefully into that problem, to which he himself had a positive attitude.

Mrs. FELLER (Australia), Rapporteur, said that in section II of the draft report concerning the general debate (HCR/EC/XXXIV/CRP.2), the following sentence should be added at the end of paragraph 8: "During the debate, the observer for Democratic Kampuchea drew attention to what he described as the extremely grave situation of Kampucheans who had become refugees in their own country because of the situation prevailing in that country".

The CHAIRMAN said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the Executive Committee agreed to add that sentence at the end of paragraph 8.

It was so agreed.

Mrs. FELLER (Australia), Rapporteur, drew attention to an amendment which should be made, at the request of the observer for Afghanistan, to paragraph 16 of document HCR/EC/XXXIV/CRP.4 concerning UNHCR assistance activities. In order to reflect that observer's statement properly, the sentence beginning with the words "The observer

of Afghanistan" should be replaced by the following text: "The observer of Afghanistan asserted that the Government of Pakistan had greatly exaggerated the number of refugees in Pakistan so as to increase the flow of international aid. He claimed that the majority of those involved were traditional nomads, who had, throughout history, crossed borders seasonally, as well as migrant workers. Many of them had already returned home to Afghanistan, but none the less continued to be registered as refugees in Pakistan". The next sentence of the original text beginning with the words "He confirmed" should be maintained and followed by a sentence which would read: "The observer of Afghanistan further pointed to the need to consider refugee problems from a purely humanitarian point of view and not to use humanitarian aid in such a way as to endanger international peace and stability". The original text would then continue with the words "The observer of Pakistan ...".

Section VIII - Administrative and financial matters (HCR/EC/XXXIV/CRP.7)

Paragraphs 1 to 5

Paragraphs 1 to 5 were adopted.

Paragraph 6

Mr. HAMRA (Sudan) requested that the words "to refugee camps and" should be inserted after the word "access".

Mr. MATIKO (United Republic of Tanzania), referring to the amendment proposed by the representative of the Sudan, suggested that the words "settlement and" should be added after the words "to refugee camps and".

Paragraph 6, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraphs 7 and 8

Paragraphs 7 and 8 were adopted.

Decisions of the Executive Committee

Decisions A and B

Decisions A and B were adopted.

Decisions C and D

Mr. BECK (United States of America) proposed that, in decision C, after subparagraph (b) (ii), the following text be inserted as subparagraph (iii): "Several speakers specifically noted that an efficient and effective system of rotationality is fundamental to a field service organization like UNHCR. They requested that the practice of rotationality encompass all D-level positions as well. A number of speakers also affirmed the need for a linkage between field service and all promotions, not only accelerated promotions". The rest of decision C would become decision D and decision D would become decision F.

Mr. LEJRI (Tunisia) said that he supported the United States amendment. His own delegation proposed that subparagraph (b)(iii) of the present decision C should be amended to read: "encouraged the High Commissioner to proceed with the classification of all UNHCR posts and the corresponding job descriptions at the earliest opportunity".

The text of the decisions of the Executive Committee relating to administrative and financial matters, as amended, was adopted, with minor drafting changes.

The HIGH COMMISSIONER, referring to the decisions just adopted, said that UNHCR was applying in full and as speedily as possible the recommendations concerning administrative and financial matters made to it by the Executive Committee in the "consensus paper". With regard to the Committee's request to be kept regularly informed of those matters, he explained that he would be able to submit full reports at official Committee sessions, but not at all informal sessions.

The CHAIRMAN invited the Executive Committee to adopt section VIII, as a whole, of the draft report.

Section VIII, as a whole, of the draft report concerning administrative and financial matters (HCR/EC/XXXIV/CRP.7) was adopted.

Section IX - Status of contributions and over-all financial requirements for 1983 and 1984 (HCR/EC/XXXIV/CRP.8)

Section IX of the draft report was adopted, with minor drafting changes.

Section XI - Any other business (HCR/EC/XXXIV/CRP.9).

Paragraph 1

Mr. HAMRA (Sudan) proposed that the fourth sentence of paragraph 1 of section XI should be amended to read: "He emphasized that his delegation well understood the problems raised by the secretariat and that, if unavoidable, he would not mind a reasonable delay in submitting documents in those languages until the services for the newly introduced languages were fully established, although he felt that the six-week rule for the submission and distribution of documents should be abided by; that should not, however, prevent the Committee from adopting the proposal in question".

Paragraph 1, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 2 was adopted.

Paragraph 3

Mr. BECK (United States of America) proposed that the second sentence of paragraph 3 should be amended to read: "One representative expressed concern at the risk of further delays in the preparation of Committee documents and said that any decision which would entail an additional charge on the United Nations regular budget would not be acceptable to his Government".

Paragraph 3, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraphs 4, 5 and 6

Paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 were adopted.

Paragraph 7

Mr. HAMRA (Sudan) noted that the decision of the Executive Committee contained in paragraph 7 did not mention the consultations to which the Chairman had referred.

Mrs. FELLER (Australia), Rapporteur, suggested that subparagraph (b) of the decision of the Executive Committee should be amended to read:

"(b) urged the High Commissioner to undertake a comprehensive study of the financial and practical implications, to hold consultations with the members of the Executive Committee and to report thereon to the Executive Committee".

Mrs. RUESTA de FURTER (Venezuela) said she was surprised to note that her country was not included in the list of sponsors of the draft decision proposed by the Government of Sudan on page 4 of document HCR/EC/XXXIV/CRP.9. Since observers in the Economic and Social Council and in the Commission on Human Rights, in particular, were entitled to co-sponsor draft resolutions or decisions, she did not see why they could not be included among the sponsors of such drafts in the Executive Committee.

Mr. LUKE (Secretary of the Executive Committee) said that the Executive Committee's rules of procedure did not contain any provision to that effect, whereas rule 72 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council provided that observers could submit or co-sponsor draft resolutions, but did not have the right to vote.

The CHAIRMAN said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the Executive Committee agreed that observers could co-sponsor draft resolutions or decisions.

It was so agreed.

Mr. DAVEREDE (Argentina), supported by Mr. LUNA (Colombia), said that Spain should be included in the list of sponsors of the Sudanese draft decision.

Mr. HAMRA (Sudan) said that the list of sponsors of the draft decision submitted by his delegation was composed of the following countries: Algeria, Argentina, China, Colombia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Iraq, Lebanon, Madagascar, Morocco, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Somalia, Spain, Sudan, Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania and Venezuela.

Paragraph 7, as amended, was adopted.

Section III - Action taken on decisions by the Executive Committee (HCR/EC/XXXIV/CRP.1)

Section III of the draft report was adopted.

Section X - Draft provisional agenda for the thirty-fifth session (HCR/EC/XXXIV/CRP.1)

Mrs. FELLER (Australia), Rapporteur, said that the word "adopted" in the first line of the text of section X should be replaced by the word "noted".

Mrs. RUESTA de FURTER (Venezuela) said that her delegation wished to propose several amendments to the draft provisional agenda for the thirty-fifth session. She therefore noted with regret that the Executive Committee had not really had an opportunity to discuss the draft provisional agenda.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Venezuelan delegation could submit in writing to the Secretariat of the Executive Committee the text of any amendments it wished to make to the draft provisional agenda.

Section X of the draft report was adopted.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

After an exchange of courtesies, the CHAIRMAN declared the thirty-fourth session of the Executive Committee closed.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.