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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

Thirty-fifth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 372nd MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 10 October 1984, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. MEBAZAA (Tunisia)

later: Mr. CHIBA (Japan)

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General debate (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (agenda item 4) (continued)

1. Mr. SKALLI (Morocco) said that the High Commissioner, in his introductory statement, had given a graphic and frank account of the questions which were currently of concern to UNHCR and had reported on recent developments. His delegation had been pleased to note that the efforts made by UNHCR in various regions of the world to arrive at solutions, and in particular durable solutions, had in some cases produced satisfactory results, which should encourage the Office in the performance of its difficult task.
2. The Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (ICARA II), the salient event of 1984, had raised great hopes. The first Conference, which had been intended to draw the attention of the international community to the tragic situation of African refugees, had been successful in mobilizing resources for current programmes, but not all the targets set had been achieved. Thus, the situation of many African countries, faced every day with the insurmountable difficulties involved in accommodating thousands of materially destitute and morally shattered refugees, had deteriorated significantly. The aim of the second Conference - to arrive at durable solutions to the problems of refugees in Africa - did not appear unattainable, since the problems had been identified, the procedure established and the projects prepared and submitted to the international community. Indeed, the High Commissioner himself had expressed optimism in regard to the continent of Africa.
3. In the humanitarian mission which it was called on to discharge, UNHCR had to make prudent use of the resources available. It must, of course, provide emergency assistance, but should also, above all, seek durable solutions. It was also extremely important that UNHCR should make the supply of aid conditional on greater co-operation in its efforts to clarify situations and to bring about durable solutions, since it could not confine itself to providing aid, disregarding the future prospects of the refugees. The Executive Committee should encourage UNHCR to pursue its efforts to achieve durable solutions, an aim specifically referred to in Chapter 1 of its Statute. Assistance could not be provided indefinitely, especially since financial resources were becoming increasingly tight, as the High Commissioner had noted with concern. UNHCR should always submit a detailed report to the Executive Committee, where difficulties were encountered in the search for durable solutions, to enable it to form a full and objective picture of the situation. It was incumbent on both host countries and countries of origin to assist UNHCR in its humanitarian task. In his continuing search for durable solutions, the High Commissioner should consider only the interests of the refugees themselves.
4. The Governments of African countries which, with UNHCR assistance, had successfully completed voluntary repatriation operations should be commended. Voluntary repatriation had also taken place in Asia and America, either spontaneously or under the auspices of UNHCR. In other cases the situation remained static in the absence of co-operation from some Governments.
5. African countries were not the only ones unable to bear the burden imposed by the refugee population. The situation in the Lebanon was still a cause of concern; it was to be hoped that the efforts already made by the international community to assist that country would be continued and intensified. The same applied to

Pakistan which deserved international aid, having received an influx of nearly 3 million Afghan refugees. In South-East Asia, Thailand as a country of first asylum, had received the largest number of refugees in recent months, while other ASEAN countries also deserved the support of the international community.

6. The problem of the international protection of refugees had always been a matter of deep concern to the international community. The physical safety of persons seeking asylum or those already settled in camps had caused even greater disquiet in recent years. Pirates continued to attack boat people, passing vessels had become less and less ready to come to their assistance and asylum-seekers in distress at sea were left to their fate.

7. A problem of no less concern was that of military attacks against refugee camps and settlements, such as those in southern Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere in the world. He recalled, in that regard, the consultations which had been held throughout the year on a draft declaration condemning military attacks against refugee camps and settlements; he hoped that the Executive Committee would be able to come to an arrangement on that particularly serious question during the present session.

8. With regard to the internal administration of UNHCR, his delegation welcomed the projected redeployment of posts to meet additional staff requirements, and was pleased to see that 90 countries were already represented on the staff. It continued to believe, however, that a further effort was needed to improve the geographical distribution of staff.

9. The problem of the displaced persons in the camps at Tindouf and in the neighbouring region should be dealt with by the Office from a strictly humanitarian viewpoint. If the inhabitants of those camps were to be granted refugee status, all legislation concerning that status should be applied to them, without limitation or reservation. The first thing to do was to ascertain their wishes, without attributing any particular intention to them; that would be tantamount to denying them freedom of expression. His Government was prepared to extend a fraternal welcome to any person from the Western Sahara and resident in those camps, who opted, freely and independently, to return home. All that was required was that the usual UNHCR procedures should be strictly applied. His delegation would refrain from bringing up the reasons, which were well known, why several thousand persons from the Western Sahara were living in the camps at Tindouf and the neighbouring region, since the Executive Committee was not a suitable forum for dealing with the political and other aspects of that serious problem.

10. Mr. GONZALES (Observer for Mexico) paid tribute to UNHCR, whose humanitarian activities, under the High Commissioner's skilful guidance, made it possible to mitigate the serious consequences of the marginal and precarious situation in which refugees found themselves after being uprooted from their place of origin. There was no doubt that refugee flows for political reasons were occurring with increasing and ever more alarming frequency, especially in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. He reminded the Committee that the participants at the International Conference on Population held in Mexico in 1984, had issued a recommendation emphasizing the importance of continuing international co-operation, within the framework of the United Nations system and always bearing in mind the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States, in order to work out solutions for averting new large-scale flows of refugees.

11. From the point of view both of causes and effect, the increase in refugee flows might be perceived as a political manifestation of the evolution in power politics on the global, regional and national scale, a rapid evolution since the end of the Second World War. The breakdown of the former structures of colonial, national and transnational domination, in conjunction with a general economic crisis, tended to exacerbate in all parts of the world social conflicts involving in particular population flows. Responsibility for those situations rested with regimes which systematically violated basic human rights, flouting democratic principles or pursuing a hegemonistic policy. Latin America had a long and painful experience of political asylum and various conventions marked out its many efforts to guarantee the protection of the victims of political persecution or acts of violence.

12. Mexico placed great emphasis on protecting the lives of refugees, while at the same time respecting the absolute sovereignty of States, in the firm conviction that the protection of the human rights of individuals or groups should not be used as a pretext for any form of bilateral or multilateral interventionism.

13. Mexico could take pride in the fact it had always granted political asylum generously: during the 1930s, it had granted asylum to refugees from Republican Spain, during the 1970s to South American victims of political persecution and during the early years of the present decade to peasants from Guatemala who had sought refuge on Mexican territory. With the support of UNHCR, his Government had provided assistance to several thousand of those refugees whose number had increased in 1982 and 1983, to reach in 1984 some 46,000 persons in 89 camps along the southern frontier. Through the Mexican Refugee Aid Commission, his Government had concluded with UNHCR and the World Food Programme technical and financial assistance agreements to enable it to provide that destitute population with basic foodstuffs, and a UNHCR office had been opened in Mexico.

14. Experience had shown that the refugee settlement zones situated on the frontier constituted an ever-present danger of international friction and of those groups being used to stir up violence in the neighbouring country. The difficulty of access to those zones and the lack of land available for agriculture in the region were further serious difficulties. After the stage of emergency aid, the next stage was to seek durable solutions; after a fruitless study of the possibilities of voluntary repatriation or resettlement in third countries, the Mexican authorities had laid down the criteria governing the settlement of Guatemalan refugees. Primarily, the Government gave the highest priority to the national interest; it reaffirmed its principles in respect of foreign policy; it took care to respect the ethnic integrity of the refugees and that of their community and family life; it took into account the former employment of refugees and attempted to find an environment comparable to that which they had previously known; it paid careful attention to health conditions during refugee transfer and in their new establishments; and it resettled the refugee in a place where he was able to live in complete self-sufficiency and to become integrated in the local society. An attempt was made in all cases to provide the refugee with work which was unlikely to displace or compete with local labour or prejudice the property rights of Mexican citizens; finally the technical aspects of settlement were studied with the UNHCR office in Mexico. In accordance with those principles, 16,000 refugees had been voluntarily transferred to the frontier States of Campeche and Quintana Roo, whose physical and demographic characteristics were very similar to those which the majority of Guatemalan refugees had previously known.

15. The refugees were allocated State land on which to build accommodation, as well as nutritional, medical and educational facilities. The public authorities would shortly be issuing plans for income-generating activities to ensure the integration and self-sufficiency of refugees, thus enabling them to recover their dignity.
16. In a spirit of solidarity, the Contadora Group has decided to continue the supply of humanitarian aid to Central American refugees and to create conditions suitable for voluntary repatriation, in conjunction with or in co-operation with UNHCR and other international organizations.
17. His Government had repeatedly expressed the view that the root cause of the conflicts in Central America was not an ideological confrontation between East and West, but rather the age-old persistence of conditions of inequality and oppression which should not be allowed to continue. Faced with so complex and critical a situation, one could only commend the attitude of countries which, in fulfilment of their international commitments, undertook for humanitarian reasons to ease the burden of many human beings. The fact that some States claimed to sit in judgement on the behaviour of others was very disturbing.
18. His Government had not requested additional aid from States or international organizations but would certainly not turn down any aid that was offered. Firmly convinced, as it was, of the need to strengthen the agencies of the United Nations system, especially at a time of fresh tensions, it had decided to channel all aid for Guatemalan refugees through the UNHCR and the Mexican Refugee Aid Commission.
19. His Government had always adopted a clear-cut and generous attitude to Guatemalan refugees. The President of Mexico had reaffirmed in that sense that his Government would maintain the tradition of political asylum, of protection of refugees and of humanitarian solidarity, but would not allow Mexican territory to be used to sustain violence in Guatemala or in any other country. That attitude was consonant with the efforts made on behalf of peace within the Contadora Group and with the commitments entered into in the Act for Peace and Co-operation in Central America, which required in particular that measures should be taken to prevent refugees from participating in activities directed against their countries of origin, while at the same time respecting their basic human rights.
20. He assured the Executive Committee that his Government would honour its tradition of hospitality and political asylum, guaranteeing Guatemalan refugees of Mayan origin the possibility of integration in society in their country of asylum.
21. Mrs. RODETH DOS SANTOS (Observer for Angola) reminded the Committee that, at the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (ICARA II), held two months previously in Geneva, the international community had recognized for the first time the importance of finding long-term solutions to refugee problems through development aid to countries of asylum. The arrival of refugees in resettlement zones created a serious socio-economic imbalance in the countries concerned, which the international community should endeavour to mitigate by measures in favour of their development. The pledges made during ICARA II already covered about one third of the 128 projects submitted by 14 African countries, including the People's Republic of Angola; the projects should be implemented as soon as possible.

22. At present there were almost 100,000 refugees in Angola: 3,000 had arrived from South Africa in 1983, bringing the number of South African refugees to almost 9,000; there were almost 20,000 refugees from Zaire; and the largest group of 70,000 refugees were Namibians. The refugees were living in different parts of the country, mainly in the Kuanza-Sul province, where 40,000 Namibians were located; in camps in the central and north eastern zones of the country, accommodating about 18,000 refugees from Zaire; and in the urban zones of Luanda and Benguela where nearly 6,100 South African refugees had recently arrived. The dispersal of the refugees throughout the country raised serious problems, especially in regard to logistical support and communications. The assistance provided to Namibian refugees was intended to enable them to improve their living conditions by means of medium-term projects, such as building their own houses, health and educational infrastructure, etc. The resettlement of Zairean refugees in provinces of the interior was continuing and the regular programme, carried out in conjunction with UNHCR, planned mainly to improve the drinking water supply to those camps during the next year. The assistance to South African refugees was directed essentially towards improving agricultural production on the land allocated to them by the Government, to enable them to meet their basic food requirements.

23. The Government was also called upon to resolve the problems of population movements in the centre and south of Angola following the destabilizing activities of the South African racist regime and the puppet guerrilla bands supported by it. In the stricken province of Cunene, occupied by the South African racist army since 1981, the administrative, economic and social infrastructures had been completely destroyed; the Government would face a considerable task in re-establishing those infrastructures so as to permit the return of the thousands of displaced persons who had fled from the occupation, mainly towards urban centres. Her delegation requested, through the Executive Committee, the support of all countries in a position to contribute to the programme which the Angolan Government would have to implement after the total withdrawal of the South African racist army from Angolan territory. Her delegation appealed to UNHCR for continued aid in the immediate future to the numerous refugees who had arrived in Angola at a time when the country was already facing serious economic and social problems, and for the requests for aid submitted by Angola to the international community in conjunction with ICARA II, to be met with the necessary urgency.

24. Mr. IVRAKIS (Greece) considered that the High Commissioner had been right in not touching in his statement on matters already referred to extensively in the report (A/AC.96/639), in order to concentrate on specific problems which arose in UNICEF's daily work; he had thus been able to present a concise but full picture of UNICEF's concerns. The report A/AC.96/639 was a balanced, complete and detailed document, although it was slightly less bulky than in the past, as the High Commissioner had in fact pointed out. That report and the other documentation provided a detailed review of UNHCR's activities and an overview of the humanitarian problem which the international refugee situation constituted today.

25. A special tribute should be paid to the countries which were bearing the main burden in the UNHCR's efforts during the present period of economic difficulty. His country had contributed according to its means, over and above its bilateral and multilateral participation in various other humanitarian activities in favour of refugees.

26. Until the root causes of the refugee problem were eliminated, the international community could do no more than mitigate its consequences by protecting the refugees and helping them to resettle, either in their own countries after voluntary

repatriation or in countries of asylum through durable solutions. The section on refugee aid and development in document A/AC.96/645 was very important in that connection. His country was in favour of additional aid to countries which offered asylum to refugees or welcomed back returnees.

27. After stressing the importance of the work of the two sub-committees of the Executive Committee, he commended the clear picture of the situation given by the Director of Administration and Management, especially in regard to job reclassification at Headquarters and in the field, even though he was not in agreement with all the solutions envisaged. The Sub-Committee of the Whole on International Protection had discussed at great length the question of armed attack against refugee camps. It was regrettable that a consensus had not been reached on a text clearly condemning such acts; it was to be hoped that a proper spirit of co-operation would enable the Executive Committee to fulfil its mandate in that regard.

28. His delegation had stated Greece's position in the debate on the situation of the boat people and it would be superfluous to repeat it. He merely wished to point out that Greece supported the strengthening of the DISERO scheme for the resettlement of refugees picked up by ships and was still seriously studying the RASRO scheme.

29. Although ICARA II had achieved laudable results, they should merely be regarded as a foundation on which to build future action on behalf of the millions of African refugees with the aim of alleviating the difficulties of the countries which had accepted them. It was most encouraging to note the extensive co-operation between UNHCR and other United Nations organizations, which continued to do their utmost on behalf of refugees.

30. Mr. CHARRY-SAMPER (Colombia) said that his country had no refugee problem of its own, but played its part in solving the problems occurring in Central America. Like Mexico, whose representative had spoken earlier, Colombia was a member of the Contadora Group and in that capacity had taken part in September 1985 in the preparation of a document defining the aims of refugee aid in Central America. In a few weeks' time, the Cartagena Seminar would be studying the situation of those refugees with a view to implementation at the regional level of the measures which experience had shown to be necessary. The role played by the Latin American countries in regard to refugees kept alive a tradition of asylum in which those countries had been pioneers. Colombia also associated itself with the cause of refugees elsewhere, in particular African refugees for whom various forms of assistance had been envisaged at ICARA II and also refugees in Asia and in other regions of the world.

31. Colombia shared the concern expressed by the High Commissioner about the erosion of the right of asylum; it also deprecated the lack of interest in durable solutions, the inherent scepticism in certain attitudes and the xenophobic tendencies with which refugees were confronted in some countries. Such phenomena were all the more regrettable in view of the current extension of the causes of refugee problems; in addition to the traditional causes there were others, in particular racial prejudice.

32. His country very much hoped that there would be greater co-ordination between UNHCR, the ICRC and ICM, the three main institutions concerned with refugees. Each agency had different traits. ICRC was a non-governmental organization mainly active in the context of civil wars in ensuring the implementation of the 1949 Geneva Conventions; it was also concerned with the problems arising in occupied territories. UNHCR's functions had increased steadily over the years since the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol. Colombia hoped to see that role strengthened further in the implementation of the international instruments coming within UNHCR's field of competence. Closer co-ordination of its activities with those of ICRC and ICM was therefore desirable; co-ordination already existed, and its terms had been defined, but there was room for improvement.

33. UNHCR had a particularly delicate function to perform in what were known as the "grey zones" where refugees found themselves in ambiguous situations and where their status had not been clarified. The experience of the League of Red Cross Societies might be of use in such cases. UNHCR should take account of the developments in the relationship between international law and humanitarian law. International law contained more stringent methods; humanitarian law was more **flexible** since it drew on both legal and humanitarian principles. In many cases, refugee problems could not be reduced to purely legal considerations; account had also to be taken of de facto situations which were decisive.

34. When considering conflicts between States, there was a tendency to overlook civilian populations which were not directly involved. International law was based on principles mainly concerned with the relations between States. States were not however the only protagonists in such conflicts, and that gave rise to specific refugee problems, which humanitarian law should seek to clarify. For example, there was the problem of attacks against refugee camps, which would certainly continue to be a source of concern to UNHCR in the years ahead; in the Sub-Committee of the Whole on International Protection, his country had requested that the role of UNHCR should be strengthened. Refugee camps raised a serious international protection problem, since they did not enjoy a special status. UNHCR should ascertain that it had the support of the international community in ensuring that those camps were protected against outside attack; it should at the same time prevent their becoming a base for attacks since that would deprive them of their demilitarized status. UNHCR would therefore have to take on inspection and control functions, for which any facilities that were needed should be made available to the High Commissioner.

35. Other United Nations agencies, particularly those that were concerned with the protection of human rights, had spheres of competence that complemented those of UNHCR. In view of the respective functions of those agencies, it was better for the High Commissioner to avoid passing judgement on individual countries, since that might cast doubt on his impartiality. He was a believer in what he called the "psychological coercion" of institutions: UNHCR had developed a particular style which should not be changed by politicization. Even though refugee problems originated in political conflicts, especially in the third world, UNHCR should not become politicized. His delegation believed that UNHCR should preferably adopt a global approach to refugee problems; if certain obstacles made such an approach inviable, it should adopt regional or even individual approaches.

36. Mr. EWERLOF (Sweden) said that he shared the High Commissioner's concern in regard to refugee problems and the manifest erosion in many parts of the world of the fundamental concept of asylum. He also wondered whether the world was suffering from "compassion fatigue". Never had the need for re-emphasizing the humanitarian ideals upon which the work of UNHCR was based been so urgent.

37. Last year, the High Commissioner had drawn attention to the deteriorating situation with regard to the protection of refugees. That trend had unfortunately continued and document A/AC.96/643 reported several serious violations of refugee law, including refusal of asylum, refoulement, forced repatriation, armed attacks on refugee camps, etc. At the same time it was true that the fundamental principle of non-refoulement would soon become a rule of international law, and the number of accessions to refugee instruments continued to increase.

38. That contradictory development had been observed in all fields affecting human rights. It was of interest, in that connection, that the Secretary-General had drawn the General Assembly's attention to the fact that the non-implementation of resolutions tended to downgrade the seriousness with which Governments and the public regarded the decisions of the United Nations. It was the High Commissioner's function to keep Governments abreast of the implementation or non-implementation of recognized rules of refugee law. Sweden would continue to give him full support in his endeavours to fulfil his mandate. During the past year, there had been cases where Sweden, together with other Governments, had expressed that support in countries where refugees had seemed threatened. It was the responsibility of members of the Executive Committee to ensure the scrupulous implementation of agreed principles, norms and rules in the field of refugee protection.

39. The implementation of refugee law was becoming more difficult in a world where refugee movements were taking on a more complex character. At the present time, refugee movements often reflected a combination of ills, such as violations of human rights, internal or external conflicts on ethnic, religious or other grounds, or again poverty, over-population, unemployment and sometimes natural disasters. Those changes were occurring in a world which was shrinking daily as a result of the development of communications and mass media. The High Commissioner had said that the growing problem of intercontinental asylum-seekers was becoming even more acute, since an increasing number of migrants were resorting to irregular means of entry and the task of distinguishing bona fide asylum-seekers was becoming increasingly difficult. It would, however, be tragic if that development led to restrictions in the application of international instruments for the protection of refugees; it could also accentuate existing xenophobic tendencies. There was an urgent need for international co-operation in coming to grips with those problems and the advice and guidance of the High Commissioner would be all the more valuable in that connection.

40. The High Commissioner had referred in his statement to the situation in some turbulent areas in the world, such as Central America and South-East Asia. UNHCR was doing excellent work and Sweden appealed to countries concerned in Central America to co-operate more closely with the High Commissioner, particularly in his search for durable solutions. It hoped that the RASRO scheme, which was applicable to South-East Asia, would soon receive enough support to enable it to be initiated. The award of the Nansen Medal to the captain and crew members of the "Rose City" was particularly timely in that context.

41. The situation in southern Africa remained very disquieting. Recent political developments had placed many of the refugees from the apartheid regime in a precarious situation. It was essential for the High Commissioner to strengthen his presence in the region and his delegation noted with satisfaction that he was taking steps in that direction. The same also applied to the Middle East and Western Asia, where recent developments called for greater international attention.

42. The Executive Committee had expressed grave concern in regard to military and armed attacks on refugee camps. Such attacks were taking place in different parts of the world, and there was general agreement in the Committee that they constituted a serious violation of the fundamental principles of international law and should be strongly condemned. Unexpected difficulties had arisen, however, which his delegation hoped could be overcome during the present session. In any case, the international community must never hesitate to condemn such attacks wherever they occurred.

43. Progress had been made on the idea of a link between refugee aid and development, and it had now been generally accepted that to achieve durable solutions in poor countries refugee problems had to be placed in a developmental context. The experts who had met at Mt. Pélerin a year ago to consider that question had formulated ideas and thoughts which had provided a basis for the deliberations at ICARA II. The Declaration and Plan of Action agreed upon at the Conference, which had spelled out the obligation for countries to refrain from acts that might cause new refugee flows provided a balanced framework for future action, and which might also be used outside the African continent.

44. It was clear that voluntary repatriation was the best solution to many refugee problems. It was considered that local settlement should take place only on the basis of programmes involving both refugees and the local population: such an approach obviously required innovative thinking and open minds on all sides. The Committee should be prepared to envisage the allocation of additional resources to meet new goals. Funding procedures in donor countries should be adjusted to those new requirements, as should the planning in recipient countries. He drew attention to the role of non-governmental organizations as implementing partners of integrated programmes: their dedication and experience would be more useful than ever.

45. Much attention had been **focused** in recent years on voluntary repatriation, as the ideal solution to refugee problems. Nevertheless, the numbers of persons repatriated remained minimal and, for the majority of refugees, voluntary repatriation remained, for the time being, a remote possibility. The blockage was due to political and other obstacles on which the High Commissioner, given the purely humanitarian character of his mission, could have only limited leverage. It was therefore incumbent on Governments to seek ways and means of opening up a dialogue between countries concerned as a first step in a process which might create conditions conducive to voluntary repatriation.

46. He had been pleased to see that an increasing proportion of available resources had been devoted to durable solutions and should account for 42 per cent of the 1985 budget. In addition, funds earmarked for financing durable solutions should in the future be routed through channels other than UNHCR within the framework of development programmes. Such an emphasis on durable solutions would be possible, however, only if the refugee situation remained relatively stable and

no new large-scale emergencies occurred. It might be too early to assume that the mass exoduses of the latter part of the 1970s and the early 1980s were exceptions. Preparedness for new situations must remain high.

47. The prospects for the financing of the 1985 budget were gloomy. The very extensive and clear information provided for the Executive Committee indicated that a series of measures would be needed to finance the 1985 programme: additional contributions from traditional donors would not be able to cover more than part of the anticipated deficit; further attempts would have to be made to widen the group of donors and small donors should be urged to contribute more. The High Commissioner should at the same time seek to reduce expenditure wherever possible. It was reasonable to hope that in time the implementation of durable solutions would enable him to phase out programmes as refugees reached self-sufficiency; other programmes might be merged into developmental activities, as the concept of an integrated approach to refugee aid and development became established.

48. With regard to the High Commissioner's proposed staff changes, his country recognized the need for increased presence in several troubled areas, in order to strengthen, in particular, the protection capacity. Having been given the assurances that all redeployment possibilities had been exhausted, his delegation accepted the establishment of 11 new field posts, as proposed.

49. In conclusion, he emphasized that UNHCR was more than ever dependent on popular and parliamentary support for the implementation of its humanitarian task. The interaction of Governments and voluntary and other non-governmental organizations was therefore more than ever indispensable.

50. Mr. Chiba (Japan) took the Chair.

51. Mr. NGO Hac Team (Observer for Democratic Kampuchea) said that he shared the High Commissioner's anxiety about the future of millions of refugees throughout the world. The present session marked an important stage in UNHCR's efforts to improve their lot. In spite of its untiring efforts, however, the population flows fleeing from one country to another for a variety of reasons continued, since the trouble-spots causing those movements remained in being. A tribute should be paid to UNHCR which had been responsible for the success of ICARA II, an important step forward in the search for durable solutions to the refugee problem in Africa. He was also grateful to UNHCR for its activities over the years to mitigate the sufferings of his compatriots.

52. The Coalition Government and people of Kampuchea wished to express their gratitude to those countries which had welcomed Kampuchean refugees, and in particular Thailand, which had generously opened its frontiers right from the start of the Vietnamese invasion. Although many of those refugees had subsequently found other host countries, Thailand was still accommodating 100,000 of them and was still accepting large groups of fugitives from zones under Vietnamese control. The protection extended by Thailand to those refugees was not only costly but also dangerous since Vietnamese forces occasionally infiltrated or bombed its territory.

53. He was also grateful to more distant countries which had welcomed and assisted in various ways tens of thousands of Kampuchean refugees. Many countries, Governments and peoples, international organizations, associations and even private individuals had rendered humanitarian aid to the Kampuchean people, and they deserved warm thanks for their actions.

54. With the aim of annexing Kampuchea once and for all, Viet Nam was practising out-and-out Vietnamization. The occupation forces were settling Vietnamese colonists on the best land in Kampuchea on a large scale: foreign observers who had been able to visit the occupied zones had reported that colonization had reached a very disturbing level. At the thirty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the President of Democratic Kampuchea, had stated that, according to reliable witnesses, almost half the population of the capital now consisted of Vietnamese and that, in some of the regions under their control, the occupation forces had established purely Vietnamese zones whose colonists took part in the repression against Kampuchean patriots.

55. At the cultural level, the occupying forces had made the teaching of Vietnamese compulsory in schools and the use of Vietnamese compulsory at all levels in the puppet administration, and encouraged mixed marriages. The new masters presented a scurrilous misrepresentation of Kampuchea's thousand years of history, in order to make Khmer schoolchildren feel members of the "Greater Viet Nam", in other words, the "Indo-Chinese Federation". Foreign observers estimated that about 600,000 Vietnamese colonists had been settled in Kampuchea.

56. Kampucheans who opposed the colonization of their country were imprisoned or persecuted, and those who could no longer tolerate such oppression and did not wish to see their children "Vietnamized" had no option but to flee westwards; that was one of the principal causes of the continuing flow of refugees towards the Thai frontier.

57. The tribulations of the refugees were not at an end when they arrived at the frontier. Every dry season saw a recurrence of the nightmare. The Vietnamese occupation forces bombed the refugee camps indiscriminately: in March and April 1984, for example, those attacks had given rise to an influx of 80,000 Kampuchean civilians, in addition to the 150,000 refugees who had been there since the start of the Vietnamese occupation. Some 200,000 Thai nationals living along the frontier had also been affected, and several hundred had been wounded or killed. A further reason for the exodus of Kampucheans had been the occupying forces' practice of poisoning the sources of water - rare in the dry season - with toxic chemical products.

58. Finally, Hanoi had dispatched further reinforcements, consisting of about 24,000 men, during the rainy season ending in September 1984; it was unfortunately clear that the occupation forces were preparing to intensify their repressive measures, searches and massacres of Khmer villagers.

59. Democratic Kampuchea wished to present a complete picture of the situation to the international community, to enable it to form a clearer idea of what was really going on, and of the dimensions and seriousness of refugee problems in South-East Asia. Only a resolute and unequivocal condemnation of armed attacks against refugee camps

could make the perpetrators of such acts think. Clearly, there was no hope of the influx of refugees in the region coming to an end so long as Hanoi persisted in its warlike and expansionist policy. It was time for the Vietnamese leaders to listen to the voice of reason and to take cognizance of the distress of millions of refugees. They ought to see that it was in Viet Nam's own interest to comply with the relevant United Nations resolutions, by effectively withdrawing all its troops, rather than undertaking partial withdrawal operations or "unconditional dialogues" intended to mislead international public opinion. It would be in no sense a humiliation for Viet Nam to establish between the two peoples relations based on reciprocal respect, justice and wisdom.

60. Mr. HUSSAIN (Observer for Pakistan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, referred to the completely unfounded statement by the observer for Afghanistan. The Afghan refugees were in no sense nomads, but genuine refugees. Their camps in Pakistan were accessible not only to representatives of various United Nations agencies but a host of international voluntary organizations. UNHCR and the World Food Programme had offices in Pakistan and their representatives frequently visited the camps. Hundreds of people from various parts of the world had also visited them.

61. The extent of the problem of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan was a universally recognized fact and any sensible person could understand why they had left their homeland. Pakistan had accommodated them for purely humanitarian reasons; to ascribe other motives to it was insulting and was clearly intended to conceal the tragedies from which those unfortunates had found it necessary to flee. It was hard to imagine, in those tragic circumstances, that they would wish to return home; the position was that the influx continued.

62. Mr. POHAMBA (Observer, South West Africa People's Organization) thanked the High Commissioner for having invited SWAPO, the sole representative of the oppressed Namibian people, to take part in the Committee's deliberations. The present session was taking place at a time when Namibian refugees continued to flee their homeland in thousands as a result of the savage repression of the illegal and racist South African regime. Pretoria had deployed troops in Namibia, turning the country into a vast military theatre where the killing and arrest of innocent civilians had become the daily exercise of the occupation forces who were spreading terror and destruction; thousands of women, children and elderly people had been obliged to flee to the neighbouring countries of Angola, Zambia and Botswana. There were at the present time more than 70,000 Namibian refugees in Angola, about 5,000 in Zambia and a few in Botswana.

63. The sufferings of the Namibian refugees was likely to continue until South Africa's illegal occupation of their homeland came to an end. Those refugees were not safe, since South African troops crossed the frontier to attack their camps; in May 1978, more than 700 Namibian refugees had been murdered by the racist and fascist troops at Cassinga. South Africa was using Namibia as a bridgehead for its military aggression against Angola and Zambia and for other destabilization activities against neighbouring countries.

64. The suffering of the Namibian people at home and abroad and the military aggression and destabilization manoeuvres would continue as long as the Pretoria regime persisted in its illegal occupation of Namibia and refused to implement Security Council resolution 435 (1978), which should be preceded by a cease-fire between the South African occupation troops and the People's Liberation Army of Namibia. SWAPO wished therefore once again to appeal to States Members of the United Nations, either collectively or individually, to exert pressure on South Africa to abandon its arbitrary linkage of the Cuban presence in Angola with the decolonization process of Namibia.

65. At the direct talks between SWAPO and South Africa at Lusaka and in the Cape Verde, SWAPO had been prepared to sign a cease-fire agreement which would have constituted in its view a first step towards the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), but on both occasions the South African racists had arrogantly refused to see reason. Faced with such intransigence, SWAPO and the Namibian people had no alternative but to continue the armed struggle. Even while continuing that struggle, however, SWAPO remained open to any form of direct or indirect negotiations with Pretoria, provided that the racist regime clearly demonstrated its willingness to hand over power to the Namibian people under the auspices of the United Nations.

66. With regard to UNHCR humanitarian assistance to Namibian refugees, SWAPO wished to place on record that significant progress had been made in improving the general well-being of refugees living in Namibian health and education centres in Angola and in Zambia. He wished to express his gratitude to those two countries for having generously placed the installations in question at the disposal of the Namibian refugees. Since the Cassinga massacre, SWAPO had been careful, for security reasons, to avoid crowding too great a number of refugees into one settlement.

67. The SWAPO programme for refugees was based on certain principles, the first of which was to make them self-reliant and independent. Another important aim was to provide basic education for Namibian refugees; SWAPO recognized the important part played by UNHCR in education, and requested all other United Nations agencies to associate themselves with the High Commissioner's activities in that field. The People's Republic of the Congo had been kind enough to invite SWAPO to establish a secondary technical school on its territory, and a request to that effect had been addressed to UNHCR and other agencies. He emphasized once again the value and importance of that project, which he hoped would become operational in September 1985. SWAPO firmly believed that advanced vocational training, together with a good general education, would be extremely useful for the refugees, and all United Nations agencies should do their utmost to support a project of such importance.

68. In conclusion, he expressed, on behalf of SWAPO and the oppressed Namibian people, his gratitude and appreciation to UNHCR and other United Nations agencies for the unflinching humanitarian assistance extended to Namibian refugees in Angola and Zambia. He was grateful also to Sweden, Finland, Norway and the Netherlands for the additional direct aid to Namibian refugees, and to the non-governmental organizations which had shown concern about their fate.

69. Mr. Mebazaa (Tunisia) resumed the Chair.

70. Mr. TANG (Observer for Viet Nam) said that new situations in the refugee field had given rise to new ideas and progress had been made towards new solutions. Nevertheless, the situation in Africa remained very disturbing, as a result of an unfortunate combination of man-made and natural occurrences in the past and at the present time. While ICARA II had not fulfilled all the hopes placed in it, it had, however, been successful in elaborating a Programme of Action, incorporating immediate and longer-term solutions aimed at achieving self-sufficiency through development. Those laudable ideas and pledges should now be implemented; additional initiatives and resources would be required as soon as possible to avert an irreparable disaster. Viet Nam sympathized with the suffering of the countries affected, in particular those of the Sahel and southern Africa which deserved the support of the international community.

71. The situation in Central America was also disturbing but the line of conduct adopted by Mexico, for example, which had been mentioned by the High Commissioner, might be conducive to finding appropriate solutions which might lead to other initiatives.

72. Impartial observers considered the refugee problem in South-East Asia to have become much less acute thanks to Viet Nam's humanitarian policy and the co-operation which, in spite of the hostility of certain Governments, it maintained both with UNHCR, on the basis of the Seven-Point Agreement, and with host countries. For the second year in succession, the number of legal departures had exceeded that of illegal departures and also the desired mean. The High Commissioner's visit to Viet Nam, followed recently by that of a Vietnamese delegation to Geneva, should impart a new stimulus to the Orderly Departures Programme in coming years, with the co-operation of all the parties concerned.

73. Viet Nam was itself a country of first asylum for numerous Kampuchean who had fled the genocide perpetrated in their country between 1975 and 1979. Although the majority had returned to the People's Republic of Kampuchea, tens of thousands were still accommodated in Viet Nam, awaiting resettlement in Europe or America, depending on their wishes. The assistance supplied by UNHCR only partly alleviated the burden which the refugees placed on the Vietnamese economy. That was an anomaly which UNHCR should correct. The accelerated resettlement of those refugees would require a less restrictive and more comprehensive admission policy by recipient countries, especially those that called for family reunification.

74. His delegation appreciated UNHCR's concern about the protection of refugees. In line with their tradition and the humanitarian policy of Viet Nam, the Vietnamese armed forces refrained from attacks against the civilian population and even exposed themselves to danger to spare innocent victims. While condemning attacks against genuine refugee camps in the Near East, in Southern Africa or in Central America, Viet Nam believed that host countries should locate refugee camps at a distance from frontiers and possible combat zones. Even more reprehensible, in his view, were the practices adopted by some circles in host countries which used forcibly conscripted refugees to cover the movements of reactionary armed bands across the frontiers with a view to endangering the safety of the country of origin.

75. In general and in the long term, repatriation was one of the best solutions to the refugee problem. It was not however a practical solution on a large scale, in view of the declared hostility of certain countries of asylum in particular. Repatriation necessitated the free consent of the refugee himself and an agreement between the country of asylum and the country of origin in order to guarantee the safety of the refugee and of the recipient state. In agreement with the People's Republic of Kampuchea, Viet Nam had undertaken the voluntary repatriation of hundreds of thousands of refugees from that country. A similar agreement had enabled Kampuchean refugees to be repatriated from Laos. Difficulties arose, however, where the country of asylum abused the process of repatriation to infiltrate subversive elements or refused to enter into any prior arrangement with the country of origin. He believed that the People's Republic of Kampuchea had been ready for several years to discuss the repatriation of Kampuchean refugees in Thailand and had proposed discussions between the two national Red Cross societies concerned. The refusal of the other party had thus far made it impossible to implement that reasonable solution.

76. On the previous day, one delegation had spread lies and calumnies about Viet Nam, none of which were new. He merely wished to point out that, in the opinion of the international community, the Government in question had been systematically exploiting Kampuchean refugees for political and military purposes in order to salve its conscience and to confuse the issue. He therefore rejected those allegations, as his country had already done on many occasions.

77. In conclusion, he thanked UNHCR, the countries of asylum and the resettlement countries for their co-operation in solving the refugee problem in Viet Nam. Refugee problems varied considerably from one continent to another and from one decade to the next, and contained components that were not invariably disinterested. He wished UNHCR, which was acting in a spirit of humanity and solidarity, success in its many activities, primarily and immediately in Africa, while at the same time dealing with problems arising elsewhere. The Office could count on the sincere support and co-operation of Viet Nam.

78. Mr. JENNY (Intergovernmental Committee for Migration) said that the High Commissioner, in his introductory statement, had given a very detailed picture of refugee problems throughout the world today. ICM fully subscribed to that analysis but wished to comment more specifically on two of the points made.

79. ICARA II had clearly pointed to the need to adjust to the new realities of the refugee situation in the third world and to link aid to refugees and development aid, with a view to achieving durable solutions, whether in terms of local settlement or repatriation. In the context of repatriation, ICM had been promoting and implementing for the past ten years programmes for skilled and highly skilled migrant workers to enable them to return to their country of origin and find employment. Although those programmes were not comparable to large-scale UNHCR repatriation projects on behalf of refugees, some of the beneficiaries might be individual refugees having the required professional qualifications and wishing to return home. Such a programme had been launched two years previously in Africa to facilitate the reintegration of Africans in their countries, in co-ordination with the authorities concerned.

80. The High Commissioner had also stressed, in his statement, the importance he attached to preparedness for emergency situations and to the need for effective initial prior planning and co-operation between Governments and institutions. There was no need to emphasize again the importance of co-operation among specialized agencies which could provide their own specific input in the event of a crisis. ICM had for some time advocated the need for improved planning and co-ordination in emergency situations and was ready to make available its logistical expertise wherever required.

81. UNHCR and ICM, which had been co-operating during the last 33 years, were closely linked by a number of factors, although each organization had its own quite distinct responsibility and role. There was no doubt that both organizations had a common humanitarian purpose and ICM provided UNHCR with operational services to facilitate the permanent resettlement of refugees. Agreements had been concluded between the two organizations on a world-wide basis and ICM maintained a continual working relationship with UNHCR at the Headquarters and through ICM's 37 field offices. Of the \$56 million expended by ICM during 1984 for transportation purposes, \$6 million had come from UNHCR.

82. Whereas UNHCR advocated three basic solutions to the refugee problem - repatriation, local settlement and third country resettlement - and dealt with the legal protection and material assistance to refugees, ICM was primarily concerned with refugee resettlement, from a slightly different angle. ICM saw the organized resettlement of refugees as one aspect only of the very complex question of planned and orderly migration. Furthermore, the ICM definition of the "refugee"

was pragmatic and not limited to those persons recognized as refugees under relevant international legal instruments or the UNHCR mandate. ICM would on occasion assist displaced persons or persons in a refugee-like situation, but who were not the concern of UNHCR. ICM might also assist asylum-seekers whose request for refugee status had been rejected and persons deprived of their basic rights in their own country but who could not yet be regarded as refugees in the strict sense. The ICM concept of resettlement was also linked with a basic human right, freedom of movement. In other words, ICM would attempt to respond to the desire of a person to emigrate, whether as a refugee or not, provided that another country was prepared to admit that person. Finally, ICM was prepared to act, at the request of its Member or Observer Governments, with a view to facilitating migration policies and national resettlement and immigration programmes. That did not however preclude ICM from acting on its own initiative in the interests of individuals who were compelled to leave their homeland and needed international help.

83. An example of the practical co-operation and complementarity of UNHCR and ICM had been the conclusion at the beginning of 1984 of an operational agreement to facilitate the repatriation of Argentine refugees. At the request of the Argentine Government, ICM had also established a special programme for Argentine exiles who qualified for the Return of Talent Programme and for those who were not eligible for UNHCR assistance. The programme had so far enabled 400 persons to be reintegrated into Argentine society.

84. ICM had provided its logistical support to the Orderly Departures Programme from Viet Nam to ensure that those leaving Viet Nam were brought in the most orderly way to the receiving countries. With the steady increase in the number of such persons in recent years and a considerably more complex movement process, ICM had been obliged to develop its operational procedures for reception and transit arrangements in Bangkok as well as for the smooth onward movement to countries of final destination. ICM had also made a contribution in terms of medical assistance and had held meetings with Vietnamese doctors and the Vietnamese authorities and also UNHCR representatives at Hanoi and in Geneva. ICM would continue to participate in the Orderly Departures Programme, including the provision of staff in Ho Chi Minh City and under the UNHCR umbrella.

85. In Central America, ICM had continued to assist Governments which had agreed to receive displaced persons and refugees for permanent resettlement, either for family reunification or because those persons could not remain in their countries of origin or in their country of first asylum. In June 1983, ICM had launched a special emigration programme for Salvadorean former political prisoners and their families. The programme had so far enabled 1,400 persons to leave El Salvador, where their physical integrity was threatened. In December 1983, the ICM Council had adopted a resolution confirming the mandate of ICM to deal with the special situation of individuals whose security was at stake in their home country and who were authorized by their Government to leave.

86. Finally, in the context of repatriation, ICM would organize at the end of 1985 a seminar on the economic and social aspects of voluntary return migration. The seminar would deal with repatriation in the context of migration, primarily from a technical viewpoint, but the refugee aspect would also be considered to the extent that refugees returning to their country would face the same economic and social problems as other returning exiles and migrants. UNHCR's contribution to the seminar was awaited with interest by ICM. In conclusion, ICM looked forward to continued close co-operation with UNHCR in the efforts to resolve refugee problems.

87. Mr. QUINLAN (International Council of Voluntary Agencies) said that his organization had pointed out at the last two sessions of the Executive Committee that, despite numerous positive developments, the situation of refugees, particularly that of asylum-seekers, had deteriorated. Attitudes to foreigners in general and to refugees in particular had hardened, doubtless exacerbated by the economic recession; some developed countries were much less inclined than before to contribute to international relief and development efforts and there was a rising tide of xenophobia.

88. In the field of international protection, the High Commissioner had rightly emphasized in his introductory statement the manifest erosion of the fundamental concept of asylum in numerous regions of the world and drawn attention to certain deterrent measures which should never be resorted to when dealing with refugees. Voluntary agencies were increasingly worried by the fact that certain measures (abusive detention, refoulement of asylum-seekers at sea and other measures of deterrence) not only eluded but also violated the principle of asylum and the specific conventional obligations of States, while damaging the physical and mental health of asylum-seekers. That was not rhetoric, but a daily problem confirmed by impeccable medical reports. No State, no Government had the right to undermine the physical or mental health of persons under its protection, whether they were legitimate asylum-seekers or illegal immigrants. It was no longer a matter of refugee law, but of fundamental human rights and elementary humanitarian principles. There had been an increasing number of instances of rejection of asylum-seekers at the borders of countries where they sought asylum and of the forcible repatriation of significant groups and of extradition. Although some voluntary repatriation operations had been carried out under satisfactory conditions, the apprehensions of the voluntary agencies had unfortunately been vindicated in recent cases. The High Commissioner, referring to the situation in Central America, had emphasized that repatriation should always be voluntary. The voluntary agencies were still convinced that repatriation was the best solution to the refugee problem, provided that it was voluntary and provision was made for the social and economic reintegration of the returnees.

89. The deportation, on the basis of geographical criteria, of groups of undocumented aliens was also in violation of the principle of asylum and of the 1951 Convention, especially where asylum-seekers were not in a position to have their requests for asylum properly examined. The Director of International Protection had recently stated that international protection was at a crossroads. The voluntary agencies shared his view. The international community could progress further on the way towards strengthening the legal framework relating to refugees and asylum by adapting its policies in a liberal manner to the emergence of new groups of asylum-seekers and, finally, by providing the required measure of protection to all who needed it. It could also abandon the approach followed for several decades of hiding behind the difficulties inherent in the movement of people across borders and denying an increasing number of asylum-seekers the elementary protection to which they were entitled. The voluntary agencies hoped that the international community would opt for the path of progress.

90. Assistance to refugees was an area of long standing co-operation between UNHCR and the voluntary agencies. UNHCR should continue to allocate an increasing proportion of its resources to the search for durable solutions, with the aim of arriving at a figure of 85 per cent, as in the early 1970s. The trend of increasing emphasis on self-help and self-sufficiency in care and maintenance operations was equally sound. While continuing the emphasis on voluntary repatriation and settlement in first asylum countries, attempts should be made to promote third country resettlement in developed countries, for the many refugees for whom no other

option existed. It was a matter of concern that, in some regions, particularly Central America, international assistance efforts for refugees and displaced persons were inadequate in relation to the needs and that certain Governments were denying voluntary agencies access to areas where large numbers of refugees and displaced persons were concentrated.

91. The High Commissioner's role as the focal point for durable solutions had been reaffirmed in the note on refugee aid and development (A/AC.96/645). The voluntary agencies welcomed that approach, believing that UNHCR was in a position to co-ordinate the developmental projects necessary for the integration or reintegration of refugees. They also believed that it was extremely important to ensure maximum refugee participation in all aspects of those projects, in particular identifying needs, planning, management and evaluation. The voluntary agencies looked forward to co-operating with the High Commissioner and with other United Nations agencies in implementing in the developing countries the principles for action outlined in the annex to that note.

92. The voluntary agencies welcomed the emphasis placed by the international community on their involvement in the follow-up to ICARA II and the High Commissioner's approval of the principle of "additionality" for development projects involving refugees. The International Council of Voluntary Agencies and the agencies themselves were at present reviewing the project proposals presented to the Conference in order to determine their participation. The Council also intended to appoint a consultant for a one-year period to facilitate liaison between member agencies, UNHCR services, UNDP Headquarters and the Steering Committee of the Conference.

93. 1985, which would be celebrated as International Youth Year, also marked the end of the United Nations Decade for Women. Since women and the young made up the vast majority of the world's refugee population, 1985 should enable UNHCR and the voluntary agencies to re-examine their programmes so as to ensure by means of co-operation at all levels, that those vulnerable groups received priority attention. UNHCR had a leading part to play in that respect and the voluntary agencies pledged their full support. It was also necessary to review UNHCR achievements in acting upon the recommendations of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, in particular in regard to family reunification, the needs of refugee women and children, the need to increase the number of women in UNHCR and the establishment of a co-ordinator for women's programmes. In 1983, the voluntary agencies had also invited the High Commissioner to consider establishing a focal point for problems relating to refugee children.

94. In his opening statement, the High Commissioner had made very positive comments on the role of the voluntary agencies and their co-operation with UNHCR. The NGO community recognized that refugee assistance was a shared responsibility of the governmental and voluntary sectors, both nationally and globally. Effective partnership was based on mutual respect, shared responsibility and ongoing co-operation. UNHCR/NGO liaison meetings might be given a more regular character by setting up permanent machinery for discussing assistance problems similar to the UNHCR/NGO Consultative Group on International Protection. The voluntary agencies should be brought in as early as possible in the planning, implementation and evaluation of activities. Decisions affecting joint NGO/UNHCR programmes should only be made after consultation between the partners and it would be helpful if, wherever possible, UNHCR were to conclude co-operation agreements with the appropriate structure within a voluntary agency. As a partner in the establishment of the International Refugee Integration Resource Centre, ICVA would be interested in receiving details on the status of that important project.

95. The voluntary agencies welcomed UNHCR efforts to encourage Governments to involve non-governmental organizations in local refugee project implementation. While recognizing their responsibility as financial partners in that type of activity, the voluntary agencies should not attempt to compete with Governments in funding UNHCR programmes. The agencies would however continue their efforts to mobilize more official and private resources in support of UNHCR activities.

96. Mr. HARTLING (High Commissioner for Refugees) noted that delegations shared his views on the erosion of the concept of asylum and the deterioration in the situation of refugees. He thanked all those delegations that had expressed support for the idea of holding consultations and a seminar on that subject in the following year. It was also encouraging to observe the respect for the principle of the humanitarian and non-political character of UNHCR activities within the United Nations system. By avoiding any politicization, ICARA II had been able to achieve positive results. That attitude also held good for the Executive Committee and for all activities affecting refugees. Finally, he was grateful for the tribute paid to the dedicated staff of UNHCR which certainly deserved that praise.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.