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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 420th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 8 October 1987, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. ROBERTSON (Australia)

CONTENTS

Review of developments in UNHCR activities relating to

- (a) Assistance
- (b) Durable solutions
- (c) Refugee aid and development (continued)

Review of UNHCR programmes financed by Voluntary Funds in 1986-1987 and
adoption of proposed programmes and budget for 1988

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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.96/693 (Part I) and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/AC.96/693 (Part II), A/AC.96/693 (Part III), A/AC.96/693 (Part IV) and Corr.1, A/AC.96/693 (Part V) and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/AC.96/694 and A/AC.96/696 and Corr.1 and Add.1, E/SCP/46]

1. Mrs. ROBILLARD (Canada) said that her country had for a long time been urging UNHCR to incorporate its assistance activities in a strategy that gave preference to durable and realistic solutions to refugee problems. Her delegation therefore unhesitatingly approved the integrated approach described by the Deputy High Commissioner, since UNHCR would better serve the interests of the refugees if it associated its assistance activities from the outset with the immediate pursuit of opportunities for voluntary repatriation and local integration. Those solutions were best suited to the socio-cultural needs of the vast majority of refugees and were usually the most cost-effective. UNHCR should also co-operate with other agencies in order to simplify the integration of refugees and returnees in the social and economic sectors. To achieve that end, it should be able to rely on support from all the parties, namely the host country, the donors and the competent agencies.
2. Canada strongly supported the establishment of closer and more effective links between refugee aid and development, in relation both to underlying causes and durable solutions. Her country, which had strongly emphasized the need for greater co-ordination within the United Nations system, wished to express its satisfaction at the co-operation currently existing between UNHCR and other United Nations agencies and hoped that it could be strengthened. Her delegation had noted UNHCR's participation in UNDP round tables and World Bank consultative groups. Canada had recently pledged a \$5 million contribution for the second phase of the UNHCR-World Bank joint project for Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Her country would also continue to give special attention to other income-generating projects in the Sudan and Somalia, as well as to any projects emanating from the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (ICARA II) which might be implemented.
3. Of the various durable solutions, such as voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement, obviously voluntary repatriation was the most desirable when conditions in the country of origin were suitable. Although it was encouraging to note that 250,000 refugees had returned to their countries during the last two years, there was cause for concern in the fact that the number of refugees throughout the world had increased by more than 600,000 persons during the last 18 months. That clearly demonstrated that there was a need to tackle the underlying causes of departures, and that all countries should jointly support the High Commissioner in his good offices mission to promote durable solutions.

80. Le Zimbabwe a fortement souffert de la sécheresse et le gouvernement a dû acheter des vivres pour nourrir la population. Des fonds ont donc dû être dégagés et M. Mukwena exprime la gratitude du Gouvernement zimbabwéen au PAM qui a aidé à distribuer des vivres aux personnes déplacées dans les camps. Il faut se féliciter de la décision du PAM d'inclure des produits alimentaires d'appoint dans les rations alimentaires de base. La plupart des enfants qui arrivent dans les camps sont gravement sous-alimentés et le Gouvernement zimbabwéen exprime ses remerciements aux organisations non gouvernementales qui luttent pour améliorer cette situation.

81. Le rapatriement librement consenti ne sera possible dans cette région que si la politique inhumaine de l'apartheid pratiquée en Afrique du Sud est abolie; la plupart des réfugiés concernés ne peuvent pas retourner dans leur lieu d'origine. La délégation zimbabwéenne remercie le Haut Commissaire du travail qu'il a accompli jusqu'ici et de la visite qu'il a effectuée dans l'un des camps pour se rendre compte sur place de ce que le Haut Commissariat, les organisations non gouvernementales et le Gouvernement zimbabwéen faisaient pour aider les victimes de la politique raciste agressive de l'Afrique du Sud.

La séance est levée à 13 heures.

4. Her delegation hoped that an increasing proportion of UNHCR resources would be allocated to durable solutions, particularly voluntary repatriation and local integration. Canada, which had already admitted a large number of refugees for resettlement, shared Denmark's concern at the influx of asylum-seekers. However, it had reservations in regard to the Danish proposal (see A/AC.96/SR.419) and was unable to support it in its present form. Canada was in favour of the burden being shared more equitably among all States, including those that were not traditional countries of resettlement.

5. Finally, it joined other delegations in stressing the need to bear in mind the needs of women refugees. During the current financial year, Canada intended to contribute a further amount of \$750,000 for the implementation of vocational training programmes, income-generating activities and other self-reliance projects intended specifically for women refugees in Africa.

6. Mr. EL GHALI BENHIMA (Morocco) said that document A/AC.96/693, dealing with assistance activities, showed that, in granting assistance, priority was being given, on the one hand, to vulnerable groups, notably women and children, and, on the other hand, to activities promoting self-reliance.

7. With regard to the Special Programmes and General Programmes, he drew attention to the situation of the so-called "Sahrawi refugees", who were being transferred from one programme category to another. Morocco had not opposed those changes, in the belief that they would enable UNHCR to implement durable solutions. Unfortunately, the aid, renewed from year to year, was becoming institutionalized without any progress towards any of the solutions generally envisaged. Accordingly, by virtue of its duration and the inertia that accompanied it, the assistance might no longer serve its purpose.

8. Moreover, with regard to the status of the recipients, he pointed out that only a minority came from the "Western Sahara". The others, of various origins, came mainly from the Sahel countries, which had been affected by an unusually severe drought. Their numbers, which Morocco also contested, had been exaggerated out of all proportion. According to the census conducted by Spain in 1974, the population of the Western Sahara had then been approximately 74,000 persons. Even on the assumption that the entire population had left the territory, it could not logically have doubled over a period of 10 years. Accordingly, the estimate of 165,000 persons, which had never been officially endorsed by the Office of the High Commissioner, was highly suspect.

9. Finally, concerning the nature of the camps of the so-called "Sahrawi refugees", the international press reported regularly on the strict control to which the population was subjected and the manner in which children were being dragooned and given a paramilitary training. That showed the nature of the camps in all its harsh reality, and raised the question of the actual use of the aid provided, whether by UNHCR, other agencies, non-governmental organizations and Governments. UNHCR should enjoy free and permanent access to those camps in order to ensure that the assistance was actually reaching the vulnerable persons for whom it had been allocated, and also to ascertain that it was not being used for military purposes. Like the other delegations that had spoken on the question of durable solutions, Morocco favoured

voluntary repatriation and renewed its commitment to co-operate fully in the implementation of that solution for all Moroccans who expressed the wish to return home. Moreover, his Government had already transmitted to UNHCR two appeals to be disseminated to persons born in "Western Sahara" and had specified the guarantees that Morocco was willing to offer in order to ensure the full security of returnees. Since the political settlement, on which voluntary repatriation was conditional, inevitably implied a long process, it could not be invoked on every occasion. The strictly humanitarian obligation, to which reference was also frequently made, required that no person should be denied the right to choose his own destiny, and that was the basic right that Morocco was claiming for all those who were being held hostage in the camps in the Tindouf area.

10. Mr. KELLEY (United State of America) said that his delegation was pleased to note the UNHCR's efforts to promote voluntary repatriation and local integration in conditions of self-reliance wherever possible. The total number of refugees in the world was approaching 12 million and was still increasing. In 1986, only 100,000 persons had been resettled in third countries. It therefore made good practical sense for the UNHCR to focus on the two durable solutions of voluntary repatriation and local integration. The first of those solutions was obviously the most desirable, since all stood to gain; refugees were able to return home, first-asylum countries were relieved of the refugee burden, prospects for regional stability were improved and, in the long term, the costs to the asylum and donor countries were reduced. Consequently, the United States encouraged UNHCR to continue to play its leading role in the promotion of voluntary repatriation and to develop the body of knowledge necessary to implement those programmes.

11. At the same time, as part of its training initiatives, a programme should be formulated to ensure that all the staff in field offices in refugee-impacted countries knew how to develop effective voluntary repatriation plans. International organizations, non-governmental organizations and the Governments of the host countries and of the countries of origin should also be able to attend the training session in order to acquire an understanding of the particular responsibilities each must meet in emergency situations.

12. On the subject of self-reliance and integration in countries of first asylum, the United States noted with satisfaction the successes that UNHCR had achieved in Africa and Central America. The documentation indicated that 25 per cent of the refugees in Africa were living in 144 organized rural settlements, established between 1962 and 1986. UNHCR had done an excellent job, and the United States hoped that those settlements would become free standing and self-sufficient refugee communities. The United States commended the African countries of first asylum for their generosity, which had made that local integration possible.

13. In regard to those assimilation efforts, his delegation felt that there was a need to strengthen the Technical Support Services, essential for overseeing a wide variety of activities: community development, camp planning, water supply, sanitation, income-generation and agricultural development. The United States believed that short-term investments in the training of technical support and field staff would have a highly beneficial effect in promoting refugee self-sufficiency.

14. The United States was pleased to note that international co-operation was continuing with a view to making the solution of resettlement in third countries an option when other solutions did not appear to be possible. His Government recognized its responsibility, in concert with other nations, to do its fair share in resettling those refugees. However, his Government had reservations on the Danish proposal (A/AC.96/SR.419) which, in its opinion, placed too great an emphasis on resettlement in third countries and seemed to require that States should agree to resettle specific numbers of refugees. Accordingly, his delegation was unable to support the proposal in its present form.

15. Mrs. Xiang JIAGU (China) said that her delegation noted with pleasure the progress that had been made in finding durable solutions to the problems of refugees in 1986: about 250,000 refugees had returned to their countries and 100,000 had been resettled. Progress had also been made in regard to local integration in a number of countries and UNHCR had increased the resources earmarked for durable solutions. The three solutions, namely, voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement, had proved effective as well as necessary. The solution should be chosen in the light of the causes of the departure of the refugees and the situation in the various regions. Voluntary repatriation was obviously the ideal solution, either as a spontaneous individual return or a large-scale organized repatriation, although the latter was naturally impossible unless the causes of the departure of the refugees had been eliminated.

16. Local integration must also proceed in the light of the actual situation. For the last two years, rural settlements had been thought to offer the best solution to the refugee problem in the regional context. However, a basic fact had been neglected, namely that most of the countries that provided temporary asylum were under tremendous economic and social pressure and were unable to undertake additional commitments. Accordingly, that solution was not universally applicable.

17. In fact, the refugee problem was global in scale and constituted an international humanitarian problem. Each member of the international community was duty bound to share the burden and to work in conjunction with other members for durable solutions. Until the root causes of the refugee problem had been eliminated, it would be necessary to call upon some developed countries to offer more opportunities for resettlement.

18. The exodus of Indo-Chinese refugees, which had begun 10 years ago, was still continuing and, in 1986, there had been 45,000 additional refugees in South-East Asia, 33,000 of them Vietnamese boat people. Her delegation hoped that those refugees would return home as soon as possible, since their country was in need of them. However, the question that was posed was how that could be achieved with foreign troops still occupying Kampuchea. Many of those refugees had been living for a long time in neighbouring countries where their presence constituted an enormous economic and social burden. That situation could not continue indefinitely. Her delegation endorsed the comments that had been made on that subject in paragraph 107 of document A/AC.96/SR.696, to the effect that resettlement remained the principal durable solution for the Indo-Chinese refugees. China also hoped that the scope for resettlement would be broadened and that flexibility would be shown in the case of refugees who had been living in camps for a long time.

19. Her delegation noted with satisfaction that, in 1986, UNHCR had endeavoured to link refugee aid to development, since development assistance was extremely useful in meeting the urgent needs of returnees and in helping locally integrated refugees. It therefore constituted an important part of refugee aid. To some extent, development aid also affected the process of voluntary repatriation and local integration and UNHCR should therefore assign more resources for development aid and also co-operate more extensively with other development agencies.

20. Unfortunately, no tangible progress had been made in regard to the development projects identified at the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa. However, since there was no longer an emergency situation in Africa, the resources that had been provided in the context of additional bilateral assistance should be re-channelled to the development projects identified at that Conference. Her delegation hoped that the countries that had made commitments during the Conference would, together with the African countries concerned, take urgent steps to identify, and provide financial assistance for, the development projects of which the refugees and inhabitants of the regions in question were in dire need. With regard to the question of whether development aid should be tailored to the development programmes of the countries concerned, China thought that the wishes of the countries hosting the refugees should be respected.

21. Mr. VAN SCHAIK (Netherlands) said that he wished to state his delegation's views on resettlement and local integration. His country believed that resettlement was the least desirable of the durable solutions, particularly when it involved the transfer of refugees to distant regions where they would encounter a totally alien environment, and where there would be a higher risk of disappointment and failure. Consequently, if it were decided that the only viable solution for a refugee was resettlement, that decision should be taken only after close consultation with the Governments concerned, since UNHCR needed their co-operation in order to implement the decision. Any plan involving a general increase in resettlement, as a durable solution, ran counter to those considerations, and that was why his delegation had reservations concerning the Danish proposal as it appeared in document A/AC.96/SR.419.

22. On the other hand, once the need to opt for resettlement had been clearly established, resettlement opportunities should be offered in as many countries as possible. His delegation supported the High Commissioner's efforts to ensure that the number of resettlement offers met current needs. His Government believed that resettlement was primarily a means to protect refugees, rather than a means to improve their socio-economic situation or to meet the need for manpower in the countries of resettlement. In so far as the resettlement of refugees with professional qualifications formed part of national immigration programmes, it could even prejudice local integration programmes in the country of first asylum, in which groups of refugees would be deprived of their most qualified members. In cases in which the local integration of some refugees was impeded by economic obstacles, the international community should help to devise genuine opportunities for the integration of those refugees in the zone in which they were living, since that solution was preferable to resettlement in distant countries.

agencies, since that was their role. Similarly, his delegation wished to know the extent to which the improvement in the field supervision capability of UNHCR might make it possible to delegate more activities to NGOs and other partners. In conclusion, he hoped that the whole question of aid and development would continue to be given the attention it deserved.

29. Mr.INDER (Australia) said that many new refugee situations had developed since the thirty-seventh session of the Executive Committee, highlighting the difficult and sensitive task of determining the portion of assistance that should be allocated to the pursuit of durable solutions and that provided to emergency relief. With regard to assistance activities themselves, Australia expressed its satisfaction with UNHCR's focus on forward planning and preparedness, which would lead to an increased capacity to meet the needs of the refugees and to ensure value from its limited assistance resources. Australia, like many other countries, was facing stringent budgetary circumstances which inevitably affected its aid programme. It was thus all the more necessary to ensure the fullest co-ordination with other assistance agencies in order to make the best use of resources and to reduce administrative costs.

30. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the UNHCR budget allocated for durable solutions had risen from 24.8 per cent in 1985 to 40.5 per cent in 1987. Australia hoped that in 1988 a greater percentage of the funds provided for durable solutions would be focused on durable solutions other than resettlement for the vast majority of refugees. It seemed that, at that time, resettlement accounted for almost 50 per cent of the funds allocated for durable solutions.

31. His delegation congratulated the High Commissioner on his efforts to achieve durable solutions to the Indo-Chinese refugee problem. It believed that resettlement was part of the problem, as one of its consequences was to encourage the outflow of non-refugees from the countries of Indo-China. That did not mean that Australia was opposed to the resettlement of refugees; far from it. His delegation was compelled to note, however, that there had been a change in the nature of the outflow from the countries of Indo-China, necessitating a policy review in order to pursue other durable solutions if first asylum was to be preserved and the protection of refugees maintained.

32. Australia had accepted more than 106,000 Indo-Chinese refugees under its humanitarian programmes. It had also accepted 10,000 people directly from Viet Nam under its Vietnamese family migration programme, which provided people who qualified under emigration criteria with an alternative to departure in unseaworthy vessels.

33. Australia had suggested two particular measures in connection with durable solutions for Indo-Chinese refugees. One was to explore the possibility, through the good offices of the UNHCR, of identifying children under the age of 12 who could be reunited with their parents in Viet Nam. The second initiative had been to consider establishing further screening to identify legitimate asylum-seekers in the hope of deterring those others who might not be able to claim refugee status. Those proposals were highly sensitive, and it was necessary to move ahead cautiously and in full

23. That raised the question of the link between refugee aid and development. His country was aware of the efforts that the High Commissioner and his deputy were making to improve the co-ordination and concentration of international activities in such a way as to establish a link between refugee aid and development projects and activities. The common aim should be to achieve a balanced improvement in living conditions and in income-generating opportunities not only for the refugees but also for the population of the host country. His delegation had been pleased to learn that there had been an interesting exchange of views between UNHCR and non-governmental organizations on that question during a recent informal meeting and hoped that, in future, such meetings would be better planned and announced well in advance, so that all the parties concerned could participate effectively in them.

24. His country, which was in favour of UNHCR playing a leading role in that respect, would support any initiative designed to promote consultations within the United Nations system. It also believed that agencies such as UNDP should give some thought to the way in which active support might be enlisted for development projects relating to refugees without those initiatives becoming bogged down in fruitless discussions on additionality. Consideration should also be given to the adoption of methods such as those proposed by the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (A/AC.96/SR.418). The comments made by the Deputy High Commissioner in that respect were also relevant.

25. His country, which had made a substantial contribution of approximately \$10 million to the UNHCR/World Bank project in Pakistan, was willing, in principle, to continue supporting viable projects of that type and was in favour of amending the guidelines regulating the co-operation between UNHCR and UNDP in development activities for refugees and returnees.

26. With regard to the improvement of aid programmes, his delegation agreed with the External Auditors on the need to improve execution in that vital field. Although progress had indeed been made and the Evaluation Committee appeared to be useful, efforts needed to be made to improve the effectiveness of intermediate assistance, particularly in regard to the use and supervision of resources. His country was pleased to note that the High Commissioner was giving attention to that problem.

27. At the thirty-seventh session of the Executive Committee, his delegation had said that it would like the members of the Executive Committee to have a better understanding of the assistance programmes proposed by UNHCR in the light of the latter's objectives and priorities. His delegation hoped that action would be taken on the decision adopted at the thirty-sixth session of the Executive Committee, which had recommended consultations with the members of the Committee to that end.

28. With regard to UNHCR evaluation and supervisory capability, his delegation had the impression that UNHCR was now in a better position to discuss the design and costs of programmes with its operational partners (executing agencies). However, as the Deputy High Commissioner had rightly emphasized, UNHCR should not gradually assume the functions of a development agency. Although it was for UNHCR to promote development, implementation should, as far as possible, be undertaken by public or private development

consultation with the UNHCR and all parties involved. Nevertheless, the refugee situation in South East Asia called for the introduction of new approaches that would help to protect the countries of first asylum from the influx of non-refugees while at the same time ensuring that refugees would be granted asylum.

34. In recent years, there had been an increase in mass movements of people who were often described in sweeping terms such as "refugees", "economic migrants", "asylum-seekers" and so on. That continuing movement would be one of the major international issues of the 1990s. While pursuing durable solutions for refugees, it was necessary to address the problems at source, and at the same time provide fair and open procedures to ensure that refugees received the protection they deserved.

35. That tied in with the notion of aid and development, as an improvement in the economic and development prospects in countries of origin could reduce the push factors underlying some of the current outflows. His country supported the efforts made by UNHCR to promote development activities for refugees and returnees in co-operation with the World Bank, UNDP and other international and regional development agencies. His delegation believed that UNHCR's role should be one of initiator and catalyst, leaving the implementation of the development projects as far as possible to other agencies which had the appropriate expertise and resources for that purpose. The NGOs could also play an important role in implementing such projects. In recognition of the contribution development projects could make to the promotion of durable solutions, his Government had provided assistance in cash and kind for returnee projects in Ethiopia, Uganda, Laos and Cambodia.

36. Finally, his delegation recognized the concerns that had led Denmark to submit its proposal; however, like other delegations, it continued to have reservations about its key concepts, both from the viewpoint of principle and practicability.

37. MRS. RUESTA de FURTER (Venezuela), recalling that paragraph 2 of the Statute of the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees stated that the work of the High Commissioner was to be humanitarian and social, said that her delegation was gratified that the Sub-Committee of the Whole had adopted, inter alia, draft conclusions on refugee children, based on the Note submitted by the High Commissioner (EC/SCP/46). In his Note, the High Commissioner emphasized the discrepancy between children's rights, as enshrined in the universally recognized Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the actual situation of refugee children. In paragraphs 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 of his Note in particular, the High Commissioner indicated his concern at the special problems of refugee children, who suffered not only physical violence but also psychological and social harm which gave rise to extreme behaviour as well as severe adjustment problems on leaving the camp. The Note also stressed children's needs in the areas of nutrition, health, education and religious, cultural and recreational activities, as well as the problems of particularly vulnerable refugee children such as abandoned or disabled children, children who were unaccompanied or had been separated from their parents, or children who had been in camps for extended periods.

38. Although refugee children in developed countries of asylum were eligible for adequate social services, that was not the case in developing countries which did not have the necessary resources. The preamble to the 1951 Convention recognized that the granting of asylum could place unduly heavy burdens on certain countries and her delegation would like to know what action was being taken by UNHCR to help those countries bear such burdens since UNHCR was ultimately responsible for the cost and effectiveness of the programmes that were executed.

39. Furthermore, were there any principles and guidelines on the way to satisfy the social needs of special groups of refugees? In that context, her delegation thanked the Deputy High Commissioner for responding to its concerns by transmitting an explanatory note from the Social Services of UNHCR, which summarized the 1987 annual assistance programme, comprising 746 assistance projects established in the light of the breakdown by age and by sex of the refugee population. Her delegation would like to know, however, whether those projects took into account the special social problems brought on by the traumatic situations experienced by refugee children. It also wished to know whether UNHCR had sufficient specialized staff to resolve those problems, and whether it made use of the expertise of non-governmental organizations which were involved primarily with children and which could make a useful contribution to UNHCR's efforts in that area. It would also be interesting to ascertain whether those projects took account of the special situation of women refugees. Her delegation would like the former UNHCR Working Group on Women Refugees to be reconstituted and a report to be submitted on the situation of that vulnerable group, as well as on the special assistance projects designed for it, at the Executive Committee's next session.

40. In conclusion, her delegation stressed the need to train staff responsible for the social aspects of the various UNHCR programmes and the importance of preparing guidelines to satisfy the social needs of refugee women and children. She thanked the High Commissioner and his colleagues once again for the efforts they had made to submit to the Executive Committee high quality documents which not only provided detailed information on UNHCR's achievements but also indicated the shortcomings that needed to be corrected in order to enhance the effectiveness of the services for refugees.

41. Mr. HASSAN (Sudan), speaking on agenda item 6 (c), said that his delegation supported UNHCR's continuing efforts to enable refugees to become self-sufficient. Although UNHCR was not a development agency, it nevertheless had an important role to play in co-ordinating refugee assistance programmes with the development projects executed by various development agencies in refugee-impacted areas.

42. UNHCR co-operated with UNDP and the World Bank for the purpose of setting up development projects in the Sudan in line with the Sudanese Government's policy of combining development activities and assistance to refugees in its national development programmes which received additional financing from external sources. UNHCR was responsible for co-ordinating such programmes in refugee areas by ensuring that they were managed in conformity with the country's international commitments and would therefore be successful.

43. Mr. KUSUMOTO (Japan) said his delegation endorsed the fundamental principles on refugee protection in the context of voluntary repatriation set out in paragraph 47 of the note on international protection (A/AC.96/694). Japan was of the view that voluntary repatriation was the most desirable durable solution, but that when it could not be achieved, local integration should be pursued, even though it placed a heavy burden on the country of first asylum. The example offered by several African countries was highly encouraging, but measures to promote self-reliance must also be pursued, particularly when the refugees' stay in the country of first asylum was prolonged. The number of refugees in the countries of first asylum of South-East Asia was growing, and his delegation was of the view that efforts to facilitate resettlement in third countries must be continued and expanded. Japan, for its part, had received about 5,200 Indo-Chinese refugees and would continue to give assistance to all those who wished to settle in Japan.

44. With regard to the link between refugee assistance and development, his delegation strongly believed that when UNHCR initiated a new refugee-related development project in co-ordination with a development agency, it must provide assistance in the form of care and maintenance of the refugees, particularly at the beginning, but that when the situation became less critical, it should hold consultations with its development agency counterpart to enable that agency to take charge of the entire project. In the context of implementation of ICARA II projects, Japan had been contributing to the execution, in the Sudan, Somalia, Zambia and Zaire, of a number of projects designed to improve the living standards of both refugees and local population.

45. Finally, his delegation was unable to endorse the proposal made by the Danish delegation, for in its opinion, the world-wide application of the new scheme to solve the refugee problem might well encounter various technical difficulties and lead to international confusion. It was more important to pursue the ongoing process of holding informal consultations, among the countries concerned, on the problem of irregular movements of asylum-seekers, with a view to finding a common approach that was acceptable to all, than to put forward new ideas.

46. Mr. DEMIRALP (Turkey) said that his delegation had been pleased to note in document A/AC.96/696, that, in carrying out his task, the High Commissioner for Refugees, always sought to ensure precision in the evaluation of needs, credibility in the formulation of programmes and rigour in the implementation of projects, in conformity with the wish expressed by the Executive Committee at its previous session. His delegation welcomed the measures planned by UNHCR to secure a rapid response to emergency situations. Once the immediate danger and the crisis had passed, however, it was necessary to continue assistance activities in order to implement programmes aimed at improving the living conditions of refugees for whom no immediate solutions could be found. Self-reliance activities helped to meet the needs not only of refugees but also of their host countries, in which the protracted presence of the refugees was a source of economic and social tension. His delegation applauded UNHCR's efforts to strengthen the link between refugee assistance and aid for the social and economic development of the host country through, inter alia, co-operation with the United Nations development agencies. That was why Turkey welcomed the launching of the second stage of the UNHCR/World Bank

project on behalf of the refugees in Pakistan and similar initiatives undertaken in Somalia and the Sudan. Turkey hoped that similar action would be taken in the other countries where there were many refugees and that the ICARA II projects would be implemented.

47. There was no doubt that the ultimate objective of all UNHCR assistance activities was to find durable solutions to the refugee problem: that was why a proportion of UNHCR General Programme resources was allocated to those solutions. His delegation welcomed the progress made in implementing the voluntary repatriation programme, under which nearly 250,000 refugees had been able to return to their respective home countries in 1986. His delegation stressed the need to strike a fair balance, depending on the circumstances, between the two options of local integration and resettlement in third countries. Local integration could be put into practice only in those countries of first asylum or of transit in which it was feasible, and resettlement in third countries must be promoted in conformity with the principle of international burden sharing, as in some cases it was necessary to safeguard the options for temporary reception in countries of transit.

48. With regard to the proposal put forward by the Danish delegation, he said that it did not at first sight appear to offer a deal that took a balanced view of the difficulties of all the different countries which were required to cope with the refugee problem, particularly countries of first asylum and transit. If certain changes were made, however, it might be possible to arrive at a balance. It was in the interest of both refugees and of States for concerted action to be taken by the international community, in a spirit of solidarity and according to the principle of equitable burden sharing, in order to identify appropriate solutions to the refugee problem confronting many regions in the world.

49. Mr. STAUR (Denmark), speaking on agenda item 6 (c), said that although UNHCR was not a development agency and should not assume such a role, it must nevertheless co-operate with a number of United Nations development agencies, Governments and non-governmental organizations working in the development field in applying the durable solutions that formed part of its mandate. Accordingly, its role within the context of development must be defined.

50. His delegation wished to commend UNHCR for its efforts to focus the attention of United Nations development agencies on the need for development assistance to returnees and refugees for whom a durable solution took the form of local integration in the country of asylum. Denmark supported UNHCR efforts to take part in UNDP and World Bank meetings on countries that hosted large numbers of refugees. It was important, however, that UNHCR and other agencies in the United Nations system should take part in the development planning mechanisms of such countries. Appropriate mechanisms should also be developed to secure an orderly transition from humanitarian assistance to refugees provided by UNHCR to development co-operation activities undertaken by Governments, development agencies and non-governmental organizations, in order to assist the reintegration of refugees in their countries of origin or to promote local integration.

51. His delegation also wished to stress the need for UNHCR to start planning durable solutions at an early stage. UNHCR was aware of that necessity and emphasized self-reliance activities, pending durable solutions to the refugee problem, but further efforts needed to be made in that area.

52. Mr DELMI (Algeria) said that the steps taken to identify and implement the durable solutions referred to in chapter V of document A/AC.96/696, solutions which were the ultimate objective of all UNHCR activities, were indeed within its mandate, as was shown by the growing share of General Programmes resources allocated to them, namely \$110 million, which constituted one quarter of the total expenditure of UNHCR.

53. As noted in paragraph 79 of document A/AC.96/696, voluntary repatriation was unquestionably the most appropriate and most desirable solution. That solution was, however, closely tied to certain prior conditions such as respect for the wishes of the refugees or the need to resolve the problems that had originally led to their exile. In that respect, his delegation was completely convinced that, in the case of the Sahrawi refugees who had found asylum in Algeria, only a political settlement of Western Sahara conflict through the implementation of the relevant General Assembly and OAU resolutions was capable of creating the conditions that would enable these refugees to return to their country. It was not, of course, for the UNHCR to define or to implement those prior conditions, but the efforts made by UNHCR to require that they be respected should be noted.

54. The objective difficulties standing in the way of voluntary repatriation meant that in some cases recourse had to be had to the settlement of refugees in the country of first asylum or their resettlement in third countries. That was the best solution for certain refugees whose physical safety was threatened by those who had forced them into exile, as in the case of refugees from South Africa who had settled in the Front Line States. His delegation was concerned in that respect at the attitude of some European countries that were admitting fewer refugees or only "on an exceptional basis", as was noted in document A/AC.96/696, although that solution was a vital necessity in many instances for the refugees concerned.

55. His delegation welcomed the efforts made by UNHCR, in conjunction with UNDP and the World Bank, to encourage development activities for refugees. It also approved the idea of extending that activity to programmes for returnees and for local populations because it viewed it as fair compensation for the efforts made by low-income developing countries on behalf of refugees as a solution with appeal for UNHCR, which was thus called upon to develop fruitful co-operation with the international agencies and NGOs working along the same lines, and as a means of strengthening UNHCR activity.

56. Unfortunately, some of the ICARA II projects had not received the attention that they deserved. As it had previously stated, his delegation would like the Executive Committee to establish the causes of that delay and to assess its consequences. The explanations given in paragraph 136 of the document entitled "Overview of UNHCR Activities" (A/AC.96/696) failed to respond adequately to the concerns expressed by the African countries at the informal meeting of the Executive Committee and at the "Open Doors" organized by UNHCR.

57. The assistance activities conducted by UNHCR in conformity with its mandate, should be strengthened. The document on the UNHCR assistance activities (A/AC.96/693) showed that the volume of aid to refugees was declining. Although it was true that the international economic situation partly explained the reductions made by UNHCR, the fact ought not to be overlooked that those reductions quite often placed an additional burden on the countries of exile that had the highest refugee population concentrations. Every effort to increase the assistance capacity of UNHCR was welcome because, if no such efforts were made, the objective of refugee self-reliance to which the international community was committed would be difficult to achieve.

58. Algeria welcomed the efforts made to help the Sahrawi refugees, and thanked those concerned. The aid provided by UNHCR went mainly on projects in the areas of education, health, housing and subsistence, with special emphasis on self-reliance.

59. The co-operation between the Algerian Government and UNHCR was exemplary, and several UNHCR technical missions visited refugee camps and settlements in Algeria every year and assessed their needs: the proposals submitted to the Executive Committee, proposals that the Algerian delegation stressed were well founded and modest in relation to the very great needs of the Sahrawi refugees, had been drawn up on that basis.

60. Mr. KUMBU-KI-LUTETE (Zaire) recalled that the direct assistance activities of UNHCR invariably led to a plan for self-reliance, whose implementation involved the gradual withdrawal of UNHCR aid and the transfer of operations to more appropriate sources of assistance. In the case of Zaire and other neighbouring countries, however, once the stage of activities concerned with self-reliance was concluded, the infrastructures set up for refugees were handed over solely to the local authorities which did not enjoy the support of international institutions. It would therefore be desirable for UNHCR to consult with other agencies in the United Nations system in order to establish a procedure for infrastructure transfer that would enable the agencies concerned to take over the programmes inherited from UNHCR in conjunction with the Government of the country of asylum and to integrate them progressively into the local socio-economic infrastructures.

61. He considered that it would be highly desirable to hold an international conference on assistance to refugees in southern Africa, as proposed by the Organization of African Unity, because of the specific problems arising in the region as a result of the intrigues of the South African régime. A decision should be reached rapidly so that the conference could be convened as soon as possible.

62. Mr. KOIKAI (Observer for Kenya), recalling that Kenya had acceded to the 1951 Convention and ratified the 1967 Protocol, said that his Government was pursuing a liberal policy towards refugees who had access without discrimination to Kenya's well-developed infrastructures. Currently, there were more than 8,000 refugees from 13 African countries. Assistance programmes for them were administered and financed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the All Africa Conference of Churches, and were carried out by the National Christian Council of Kenya and

66. Mrs. POC MONA (Observer for Democratic Kampuchea), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, answered the preceding orator by reading out an extract from the message addressed to the fortieth session of the United Nations General Assembly by H.R.H. Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, the President of Democratic Kampuchea, stating in substance that the United Nations resolutions on Kampuchea and the Declaration of the 1981 International Conference on Kampuchea had drawn the outlines of a generous, just and lasting solution; that, on 17 March 1986 he had himself submitted an eight-point proposal for the political settlement of the problem which was consistent with those resolutions and the Declaration; that, as long as the Hanoi leadership refused to negotiate with the representatives of their opponents, no political solution was possible; that the negotiation proposals made by the Hanoi leadership were designed solely to enable them to remain indefinitely in Cambodia and that Democratic Kampuchea had, even before the opening of negotiations, already made all the concessions necessary to enable its adversary to withdraw without loss of face.

67. The CHAIRMAN said that the two statements would be duly reflected in the summary record, but that the High Commissioner for Refugees was unable to settle the problems referred to by the two speakers.

68. Mr. DEWEY (United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees) said that, before replying to the questions asked during the debate, he wished to express his satisfaction at the positive nature of the discussion which had enabled the Executive Committee to focus its full attention on the very complex questions considered under item 6.

69. A number of delegations had noted that the informal exchange of views held on 3 October, before the opening of the session, had been very useful in providing an opportunity for more detailed study of questions such as complementarity, the definition of self-sufficiency and assistance to displaced persons in countries such as Angola and Mozambique, where the United Nations system had no clearly defined agency to carry out its programmes. UNHCR intended to act on that exchange of views before the next session of the Executive Committee.

70. Many delegations had expressed their approval of the idea of expanding UNHCR's co-operation with other agencies concerned with development activities. It was important that UNHCR should be widely supported by all bodies, in particular the UNDP Governing Council.

71. Replying to the questions regarding women refugees, he said that UNHCR would provide the Executive Committee, at its following session, with a detailed report on assistance activities for women refugees. UNHCR also planned to revive the working group on women refugees.

72. In connection with the second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, a number of delegations had expressed the view that the special appropriation fund should be re-established. For its part, UNHCR hoped to receive the support of the General Assembly and donor countries in that regard. A number of delegations had mentioned the fact that their countries were carrying out bilateral projects as a follow-up to the Conference. It would be helpful if they communicated precise information on them to UNHCR, which was responsible for the exchange of information on all development projects undertaken as a result of the Conference.

the Kenya Catholic Secretariat. The National Christian Council of Kenya provided social services such as counselling, subsistence aid and medical assistance, and it had job placement offices and made loans and grants for the establishment of small businesses. The Kenya Catholic Secretariat, for its part, ran an educational programme, the aim of which was to assist refugees to integrate more easily into the country and to achieve self-reliance. Refugees thus had access on an equal footing to pre-primary, elementary, secondary, occupational, technical and university education. Most of the refugees came from urban areas and naturally preferred to settle in Kenyan towns. The limited facilities and opportunities were thus subject to heavy pressure. The refugees had complete freedom of movement.

63. Kenya applied the established refugee determination procedures in handling applications for refugee status, and no one who requested asylum or refugee status was turned away if he was a genuine refugee and not merely an economic migrant. Kenya was firm in its resolve to co-operate with UNHCR and other organizations in seeking durable solutions to the problems of refugees.

64. The CHAIRMAN, announcing that the following speaker was in exercise of his right of reply, said that, while it was difficult to remain silent on the political causes of the refugee situations currently under consideration, Member States which felt compelled to refer to those political causes or to respond to allusions to them should endeavour to avoid controversy as far as possible.

65. Mr. NGUYEN VAN SON (Observer for Viet Nam), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that a certain delegation had made statements which in no respect corresponded to the actual situation in South-East Asia. The refugee problem in that region was primarily a matter of peace and stability and responsibility for it lay with those who continued to pursue a course of confrontation in order to further their own selfish interests. For their part, the three countries of Indo-China were endeavouring to find a judicious political solution to the question. In that connection, he recalled the main points of the policy recently adopted by the People's Republic of Kampuchea, inviting opposition groups, with the exception of Pol Pot and his henchmen, to return to the country in order to take part in its reconstruction and expressing readiness to assign a high position in the State apparatus to Samdech Sihanouk. Vietnamese volunteer forces would withdraw totally from Kampuchea as soon as foreign aid directed against the People's Republic of Kampuchea was discontinued, whereupon general elections would be held to install a coalition government to build a peaceful Kampuchea. The People's Republic of Kampuchea recommended the opening of direct or indirect negotiations to settle the question of the Kampuchea-Thailand border and, with regard to the refugee problem, was prepared to hold discussions with the international humanitarian organizations and the parties concerned with a view to the voluntary and orderly repatriation of Kampuchean refugees currently living in Thai territory. Finally, an international conference would be held to guarantee the agreements concluded and the independence of Kampuchea. The conference would be attended by the two Kampuchean parties to the conflict, the countries of Indo-China, the ASEAN countries, India and the five major Powers. He expressed the hope that those efforts would receive wide support from the international community.

73. The representative of the European Economic Community had stated that funds were available under paragraph 204 of the document of the third Lomé Conference for projects involving assistance to refugees and repatriates and that a number of projects currently in preparation concerning the Sudan were to be financed in that way. He invited the Governments of other African countries to submit their projects in order to benefit from that assistance.

74. Replying to the questions asked on the increase in the monitoring capacity of UNHCR, he said that the expansion of that capacity was intended to enable UNHCR to monitor the execution of some of the most important projects more closely. Some representatives had asked whether that meant that UNHCR would make greater use of non-governmental organizations for project execution. It should not be forgotten that, except for activities concerned with the international protection of refugees, almost all programmes had always been carried out directly by Governments and non-governmental organizations.

75. Some delegations had noted that UNHCR's activities in Africa seemed to have diminished in 1987, compared with the preceding year. The fact was that UNHCR had been able to gradually withdraw its assistance to certain special programmes, for example in Sudan and Somalia, in view of the developments in the refugee situation. He thanked those countries which had promised UNHCR substantial financial support and those which had provided moral support for its work.

76. The CHAIRMAN said that the Executive Committee had concluded its general debate on agenda item 6.

REVIEW OF UNHCR PROGRAMMES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS IN 1986-87 AND ADOPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1988 (agenda item 7)
(A/AC.96/693 (Part I) and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/AC.96/693 (Part II), A/AC.96/693 (Part III), A/AC.96/693 (Part IV) and Corr.1, A/AC.96/693 (Part V) and Corr.1 and Add.1)

77. The CHAIRMAN announced that, as was customary, the Executive Committee would consider the item region by region, beginning with Africa, and country by country in alphabetical order.

78. Mr. KPENOU (Head, Regional Bureau for Africa) reported that during the previous year, the African continent had been buffeted by numerous refugee movements: 20,000 Sudanese and 7,000 Somalis had sought refuge in Ethiopia; a new influx of Angolan refugees to Zaire had led the UNHCR to consider re-opening the sub-office at Kimpese. In Malawi, displaced Mozambicans who had numbered some 70,000 in November 1986, currently totalled 296,000 according to Government sources. Under those conditions and against a background of natural disasters and general economic crisis, the UNHCR had conducted its activities which, as always, were organized with the complementary aims of protection and assistance.

79. With regard to protection, UNHCR was concerned about certain practices affecting the physical security of refugees and returnees. Cases of illegal detention and forcible recruitment into the army had been reported and the

Regional Office had made repeated representations about them. With regard to expulsions, it was to be noted that generally speaking, national authorities did not have a specific policy of sending refugees back to their country of origin, refugees were occasionally involved in regrettable police operations. There were borderline cases which amounted to refoulement, but it was difficult to persuade the authorities to reconsider their decision.

80. The staff of organizations working in the field for refugees were also experiencing security problems. There had been cases of kidnapping and even of deaths. For example, a Ugandan, Sampson Odrajia, a member of the local staff, had been killed in an ambush on 19 September 1986 during a repatriation operation in the Ugandan province of West Nile. In all cases of this nature, UNHCR protested and intervened but it was unable to make the vigorous protests that some expected of it, because its work would be disrupted as a result and that would be to the detriment of the refugees.

81. On a more positive note, he was able to report that voluntary repatriation operations, both spontaneous and organized, had been carried out to the general satisfaction. Thus the people who lived along the borders of Chad had gradually returned from the Central African Republic, the Sudan, Cameroon and Nigeria. In 1986, Uganda had had nearly 80,000 returnees from Zaire and from southern Sudan. No incident had been reported thus far in the Djibouti operations. In Kenya, the movement had slowed down and perhaps even backtracked, as a fresh contingent of refugees had arrived; those new asylum-seekers were required to submit to very strict procedures in order to determine eligibility, and the UNHCR was following this matter carefully, on the spot. He wished to assure the Executive Committee that in all those operations, repatriation was voluntary and UNHCR continued to be vigilant in every respect.

82. With regard to assistance programmes, he reported that security problems also affected project implementation, particularly the transport of emergency equipment and the organization of convoys. There were occasions when operations had to be suspended. The resultant delays had an indirect effect on project funding, in that the progress achieved was not impressive.

83. Nevertheless, concrete measures had been taken to strengthen UNHCR's capacity for rapid intervention. For example, at the beginning of the year technical missions had visited Malawi and Mozambique at the first warning signs so that it was possible to plan assistance systematically and intervene rapidly and effectively in spite of the difficulties.

84. The pursuit of durable solutions through self-reliance and settlement in the countries of asylum was an equally important component of UNHCR assistance. In Africa with its sizeable refugee flows and rather limited social and economic infrastructure capacity, solutions must be designed with a broader approach, extending to the host communities sharing their limited resources with the refugees and coming within the scope of regional development efforts. Accordingly a joint UNHCR/UNDP mission had visited Ethiopia in June 1986 to evaluate assistance projects for returnees and to establish a programme that was designed to ease their integration and to contribute to Ethiopia's development efforts. UNHCR collaboration with the World Bank had also been consolidated in Africa. A project identification

They continued to stand in the way of free elections, refused to countenance a SWAPO electoral victory and were attempting to impose on the Namibian people a puppet confederation of bantustans which would make Namibia a neo-colony of South Africa. By perpetuating its illegal occupation of Namibia, the South African régime was arrogantly defying the will of the international community, and particularly the authority of the United Nations, which had direct responsibility for Namibia's transition to independence.

91. Notwithstanding, SWAPO of Namibia, with the generous assistance of the international community, including UNHCR, would continue to improve the living standards of Namibians in the refugee settlements and centres in both Angola and Zambia.

92. Reviewing the aims and achievements of UNHCR assistance programmes for Namibian refugees, SWAPO noted that limited progress had been made recently owing to a combination of factors, including delayed implementation by UNHCR headquarters, technical problems and budgeting discrepancies. A multisectoral mission, sent from Geneva in November 1986 to review projects implemented by SWAPO had recommended specific projects in respect of agriculture, a vehicle workshop, self-help housing and a shoe-making workshop. Although those projects had been approved by SWAPO, they had been unable to start up owing to a considerable difference between the budget proposed by UNHCR and the estimate submitted by the company in charge of the works. Although that company had submitted new quotations and SWAPO had sent its proposals on the matter to Geneva, no decision had as yet been made. Equally, the equipment for the shoe-making workshop and the textile workshop which had been postponed owing to technical problems had still not been purchased. The limited progress made by the 1986 assistance programme was due to the reasons he had just stated and not to the inadequate technical and organizational capacity of the operational partner, SWAPO, as was stated in paragraph 1.1.2 of document A/AC.96/693 (Part I).

93. SWAPO was deeply concerned by the situation and wished to recall that at the thirty-seventh session of the Executive Committee, it had received an assurance that the projects in question had only been postponed and that there was no question of cancelling them. It urged UNHCR to take the necessary measures immediately to ensure the speedy implementation of the projects and appealed to the international community, in co-operation with UNHCR and the United Nations system as a whole, to increase its financial assistance in order to realize them and to consolidate those projects that were under way.

94. Mr. KPENOU (Head, Regional Bureau for Africa), replied that the capacity of an operational partner comprised a number of factors which would take too long to explain at that juncture. He suggested that he should have a meeting with the observer for SWAPO and give him the appropriate explanations.

95. Mr. BANDA (Observer for Malawi) said that his delegation was satisfied with the assistance programme for Malawi whose level of funding was commensurate with the magnitude of the problem; it would go a long way towards giving some relief to the displaced persons. He assured UNHCR and the other organizations involved in programme execution that they could always count on the support of the Malawi Government.

mission was currently in Sudan; in Somalia, studies on the Furjano and Tugwajale agricultural projects were under way and negotiations had been started with the World Bank and IFAD. Such projects should not be viewed merely from the standpoint of the withdrawal of UNHCR and the transfer of responsibilities to Governments, for they also made it possible to use resources more rationally, to share the workload more efficiently and to resettle refugees in countries of asylum more successfully. Such an approach called for data as accurate as possible, and censuses of refugees had therefore been conducted in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Somalia.

85. He drew attention to the problem of the former rural settlements that had been handed over to the Governments of the countries of asylum whose resources were no longer equal to paying for the upkeep of the basic infrastructure. The large-scale flows which had occurred in Africa in recent years had diverted attention from the settlements. However, studies in Tanzania and in Uganda had pointed to the need to promote rehabilitation projects to integrate the settlements more successfully into the regional economy.

86. With regard to the achievement of the objectives of the second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, he recalled that UNHCR was ready to co-operate fully to that end, but that UNDP remained the liaison centre for the projects referred to in paragraph 5 (c) of General Assembly resolution 37/197.

87. He conveyed the thanks of the Regional Bureau for Africa to non-governmental organizations, parallel institutions, intergovernmental bodies and to all the countries of asylum and donors for their active co-operation in its work.

88. Mr. AKWENYE (Observer, South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO)) said that SWAPO, recognized by the United Nations as the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people, enjoyed good relations with UNHCR. It wished in particular to thank the UNHCR branch offices in Angola and Zambia for their co-operation in its efforts to alleviate the plight of displaced Namibians.

89. SWAPO had noted with interest recent personnel changes in the UNHCR branch office in Luanda and hoped that they had taken into account SWAPO's appeal at the last session of the Executive Committee for the assignment of field officers conversant with the concrete realities of the region. The new UNHCR staff responsible for Namibian refugees in Angola could rely on SWAPO's co-operation as an operational partner. SWAPO appreciated the High Commissioner's visit to the Namibian Transit Centre in Luanda a few months earlier, which had doubtless enabled him to understand better the situation of the Namibian refugees and the need to find durable solutions.

90. The general situation in southern Africa had been further aggravated by the murderous policies of the Pretoria régime which, far from heeding the unanimous demands of the international community, continued to respond to the popular resistance in South Africa and Namibia by the most savage repression, with fascist measures such as martial law, states of emergency, curfews, wanton killings, mass arrests and other acts of brutality. The neo-Nazis of Pretoria had turned Namibia into a huge barracks for their occupation forces.

96. Malawi, a small landlocked country whose population was grappling with the problems of social and economic development, had nevertheless fulfilled its responsibility towards the Mozambican displaced persons. Initially, the Malawian families in the border areas had received the displaced persons but after some time when the number of such persons had greatly increased, the Malawian Government had been obliged to step in. For several months, his Government had shouldered the full burden of the refugee problem, but as the number of refugees continued to increase, it had become necessary to seek the assistance of the international community. He wished to thank all those who had assisted his Government - the members of the European Economic Community, the Government of the United States, Canada and Australia, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies, CARITAS, World Vision International and naturally the World Food Programme and UNHCR. He hoped that they would continue to support Malawi in its efforts to help the refugees.

97. Mr. RENZAHU (Observer for Rwanda) thanked UNHCR and the governmental and non-governmental organizations and friendly countries which had provided assistance to Rwanda.

98. With regard to the situation of refugees in Rwanda, the report on UNHCR activities (A/AC.96/693 (Part I)) stated in paragraph 1.11.1 that "refugees settled in rural areas ... had succeeded in attaining self-sufficiency" whereas "younger refugees ... cannot find sufficient land to support themselves". In his opinion, it was out of place to speak of "self-sufficiency" in the rural areas since the Rwandese living in those regions had barely 0.5 hectares of land per family. The lack of arable land, one of Rwanda's most serious problems, was also mentioned later on in the report, in paragraph 1.11.4.

99. Mr. KPENOU (Head, Regional Bureau for Africa) said that the apparent contradiction between the two paragraphs quoted by the observer for Rwanda was due to the fact that "self-sufficiency" was a relative term which only described the situation of refugees in relation to that of the local population; it encompassed different situations in different countries. What it had been intended to convey in the present context was that the refugees who had settled in Rwanda were living in conditions comparable to those of the nationals. If the observer for Rwanda so wished, he was ready to meet him to discuss the use of the term "self-sufficiency" and perhaps to find another formulation.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.