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Chair: Mr. Yaremenko (Vice-Chair) (Ukraine)

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In the absence of Mr. Braun (Luxembourg), Mr. Yaremenko (Ukraine), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 61: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions (continued) (A/74/12, A/74/12/Add.1 and A/74/322)

1. **Mr. Fernández-Zincke** (Observer for the European Union) said that he was concerned by the rising number of forcibly displaced people, who were estimated to have numbered over 70.8 million at the end of 2018. At a time when many refugee situations had continued to escalate and become more protracted, new displacement crises were also being witnessed, including mixed movements of refugees and migrants to Europe. The fragile situation across the globe, further amplified by conflicts, food insecurity and climate change, placed a huge strain on the capacity of the international community to address the wider ramifications of the refugee crises. Forced displacement was a global phenomenon requiring global solutions, yet it was developing countries that continued to suffer the most from the problem.

2. The European Union remained committed to finding solutions for the world's refugees. Within its own borders, it would do so by continuing to host refugees and by its member States considering resettlement and complementary pathways for those in need of international protection. Outside its borders, the European Union would continue to support the countries and communities hosting refugees, and to address the root causes of forced displacement by playing a full and active role in global conflict resolution and bringing together political, humanitarian and development instruments within an integrated and comprehensive framework. The European Union would also continue to support the global campaign of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to eradicate statelessness.

3. The first Global Refugee Forum, to be convened in Geneva in December 2019, was a crucial opportunity not only to take stock of the progress made to date and share good practices and experiences of comprehensive refugee responses, but also to demonstrate tangible support to ease the burden on refugee hosting countries and mobilize broader global support for refugees. Some European Union member States had already announced their sponsorship commitments or pledges for the Forum while others were still exploring how to contribute and share their different experiences. The

European Union itself would be a sponsor in four key areas: burden- and responsibility-sharing, education, jobs and livelihoods, and solutions.

4. The application of the comprehensive refugee response framework had already been a catalyst for change that had generated positive, concrete results for host countries and communities and for refugees themselves. Inclusive laws, policies and practices had paved the way for better socioeconomic inclusion of refugees, including access to documentation, health services, education and the labour market. In the long run that would lead to better outcomes both for refugees and for their host communities, while also making refugees better prepared for voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity to their country of origin.

5. UNHCR should continue to build partnerships and strengthen its engagement with host countries, communities and refugees themselves. In that regard, the European Union welcomed the growing partnerships with the World Bank that had resulted in the establishment of the Joint Data Centre on Forced Displacement in Copenhagen and the co-chairing of the Business Innovation Group with the World Food Programme.

6. It was important to address the full spectrum of forced displacement. That included internally displaced persons, who could sometimes be more vulnerable than refugees owing to security risks and a lack of humanitarian access. To increase international attention and engagement the European Union and its member States, together with 29 other States, had called on the Secretary-General to establish a high-level panel on internally displaced persons. They therefore welcomed his positive response in that regard. Properly addressing internal displacement required a strong collaborative effort by the mandated agencies, with a clear distribution of tasks in line with their respective mandates. While UNHCR had an important role to play in the broader humanitarian system, unfortunately its engagement with internally displaced persons had not been as consistent and predictable as its support for refugees.

7. It was encouraging that the level of funding to UNHCR remained solid, with over \$3.7 billion in fresh contributions in 2019, which signified a clear recognition of the work of UNHCR. However, the gap between needs and available resources remained high at over 50 percent. In that regard, the UNHCR decentralization process could help to increase efficiency and effectiveness while also strengthening oversight and accountability throughout the organization. At the same time, UNHCR must continue

to broaden the donor base and expand funding resources, including from the private sector.

8. **Mr. Al-Bander** (Iraq) said that Iraq was grateful to the High Commissioner for his efforts to find solutions to the problems faced by refugees around the world. Iraq had witnessed waves of displacement after terrorist groups had taken control of areas of the country. Following the liberation of those areas in 2017, a reconstruction and rehabilitation campaign had been launched, enabling the return of more than 4 million displaced persons to their places of origin.

9. Under the Iraqi Government's programme for 2018–2022, priority was given to the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons to their homes and to cooperation with all stakeholders, civil society organizations and United Nations bodies and specialized agencies. Grants were disbursed to support return, and the necessary assistance and services were provided to returnees. As a result of the efforts of the Government and the international community, a number of camps had been closed, notably in Mosul, Salah ad Din and Anbar. His delegation agreed with the High Commissioner about the importance of not politicizing the issue of returns. Any decision to return must be taken by the refugees or displaced persons themselves.

10. **Ms. Fontana** (Switzerland) said that, under the leadership of UNHCR, huge progress had been made in ending statelessness. In recent years, Switzerland had faced an increase in applications for recognition of stateless person status and wished to thank UNHCR for its regular collaboration on the issue of statelessness. Given the record number of displaced persons around the world, Switzerland welcomed the new policy of UNHCR on internal displacement, which should be translated into a more decisive and predictable commitment and an increase in UNHCR involvement in situations of internal displacement. The policy also complemented other efforts to improve the international community's response to internal displacement. Her delegation particularly welcomed the establishment of the High-level Panel on Internal Displacement and stood ready to actively support its work.

11. Switzerland was proud to be hosting the first Global Refugee Forum, which would be held in Geneva in December 2019 and was an important milestone in the implementation of the global compact on refugees. Switzerland was strongly committed to the Forum, as demonstrated by its sponsorship of the themes of education and protection, and was convinced that the objectives of the compact would only be achieved by bringing together stakeholders from different sectors and all parts of the humanitarian-development nexus.

Her delegation therefore encouraged participation in the Forum by cities, civil society, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, universities and, in particular, refugees themselves.

12. The situation in Syria and neighbouring countries continued to give cause for major concern. Switzerland had therefore decided to allocate CHF 61 million in 2019 to help those affected by the Syrian crisis, both within Syria and in the surrounding region. It welcomed the efforts of UNHCR to preserve the protection space in the region and to expand global resettlement activities. It also advocated the search for long-term solutions and, to that end, was continuing its own activities to resettle vulnerable Syrian refugees.

13. Multi-year, non-earmarked support was essential to enable UNHCR to respond quickly to emerging crises. The Swiss contribution was currently spread over four years, 45 per cent of which was non-earmarked. The flexibility and predictability of UNHCR core funding was essential for the agency to fulfil its mandate.

14. Switzerland welcomed the progress made in the UNHCR internal transformation process, particularly in terms of regionalization and decentralization. In that regard, her delegation encouraged UNHCR to continue to invest in its regional offices without weakening its global capacity. The technical integrity of UNHCR programmes in areas such as water, sanitation and shelter remained an essential part of its protection mandate. Switzerland supported UNHCR in its fight against fraud and corruption, and especially the abuse of displaced persons and sexual harassment within the organization. Proactive communication by UNHCR and the transparency that it demonstrated in serious cases of corruption were highly appreciated.

15. **Ms. Oehri** (Liechtenstein) said that the highest levels of displacement on record had been witnessed over the last few years. Among the most vulnerable populations fleeing were unaccompanied and separated children as well as stateless persons denied a nationality. They were at risk of being deprived of basic human rights such as education, health care, employment and freedom of movement.

16. Armed conflicts and other situations of violence had long been major reasons for forced displacement across and within borders. More than two thirds of all refugees came from five countries, all of which were affected by conflicts and violence: Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar and Somalia. While not in themselves causes of refugee movements, climate change, environmental degradation and natural disasters increasingly interacted with the

drivers of such movements and reinforced them. It was therefore important to address the root causes of forced displacement in a holistic way which, in addition to conflict prevention, also included climate justice.

17. The United Nations had created milestone achievements to respond to the causes and consequences of forced displacement. The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols formed the core of international humanitarian law, which regulated conduct in times of armed conflict and sought to limit its devastating effects. With the adoption of the global compact on refugees, Member States recognized that a sustainable solution to refugee situations required increased international cooperation. The compact provided a strong and balanced response to refugee movements and situations of prolonged displacement.

18. Liechtenstein was fully committed to international law, including human rights and humanitarian law, and the implementation of the global compact on refugees in the context of the Global Refugee Forum. It supported countries of first asylum, particularly in the context of its international humanitarian and development cooperation. Moreover, by increasing its annual contribution to UNHCR to 400,000 Swiss Francs, Liechtenstein had responded to the call for more financial support from Member States and hoped that other States would follow suit.

19. Forcibly displaced populations were particularly vulnerable to human trafficking and modern slavery, which required comprehensive responses involving a variety of relevant actors. Together with its partners from Australia and the Netherlands, Liechtenstein had launched a public-private partnership known as the Liechtenstein Initiative for a Financial Sector Commission on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. The Commission's final product, a blueprint for mobilizing finance against slavery and trafficking, had been presented during the recent high-level week of the General Assembly. It equipped the global financial sector to prevent and combat such human rights violations by means of sustainable and innovative financing, responsible lending and investment, as well as compliance and regulation. The United Nations could play an important role in the implementation of the blueprint and thus help to better protect forcibly displaced populations.

20. **Mr. Butt** (Pakistan) said that, unfortunately, despite the high level of population displacement around the world, the funding gap for UNHCR remained at 43 per cent, or \$3.5 billion. Funding was urgent and critical to alleviate human suffering, and greater efforts must also be made to find durable solutions to protracted

situations. Pakistan had itself hosted millions of Afghan refugees for almost four decades, extending sustained hospitality throughout the years despite its modest resources and multiple associated challenges relating to security, the environment, shelter and urban stress. The Government of Pakistan had mainstreamed the protection of the human rights of Afghan refugees into its national policies.

21. International cooperation remained a key to shouldering the collective responsibility towards refugees. The Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries was a useful framework to garner support. His Government remained committed to supporting the Strategy. Pakistan also remained committed to the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees in safety and dignity and would work together with other countries to create conducive conditions for their return and reintegration. The dignified return of refugees to their homes would enable them to contribute to the rehabilitation and rebuilding of their homeland.

22. His country had made major contributions to international humanitarian work and continued to work with UNHCR for the causes of refugees. The international community had an abiding responsibility to address the challenges faced by refugees, reduce gaps and fulfil their unmet needs. Unfortunately, the current scenario of humanitarian assistance remained uncertain. New modalities and solutions should not burden the host countries with more loans, as they were already grappling with their own developmental challenges. Promises of additional funding should bring stability to countries of origin and host communities while upholding humanitarian principles.

23. The recent increase in refugees worldwide was a reminder that significant work was still needed to prevent and solve conflicts, reduce inequalities, eliminate poverty and provide the right to development for all. Respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations remained the key to preventing many crises from emerging in the first place.

24. **Mr. Naeemi** (Afghanistan) said that the creation of an environment conducive to dignified voluntary repatriation was a fundamental right for those affected by displacement. To that end, enhancing collaboration and coordination between host countries and countries of origin was an imperative at both the bilateral and multilateral levels.

25. His Government was committed to taking the necessary measures to ensure the dignified return of refugees and internally displaced persons, such as

including displaced persons and returnees in national policies focused on improving their livelihoods and providing them with opportunities to settle into their new lives through land distribution and resettlement policies as well as food and cash assistance programmes. The Government was also focusing on investing at the provincial level to ensure that the resettlement process was sustainable and efficient. As a result of such efforts, as many as 5.2 million Afghan refugees and more than 5 million undocumented migrants had already returned to the country since 2002.

26. Peace and stability were fundamental for the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. The only sustainable solution would therefore come from a lasting peace settlement. On 29 April 2019, the Government had held a Peace Jirga with more than 3,200 delegates from across the country to determine the direction of the peace process and establish a unified position. With the cooperation of regional partners and friends in the international community, he hoped that a lasting peace could be achieved to enable those still displaced to return home.

27. **Ms. Chifwaila** (Zambia) said that her delegation remained concerned that over 85 percent of refugees globally were hosted by developing countries. However, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the global compact on refugees created an opportunity to improve the global response to refugee situations through the provision of timely, predictable and sustainable support to refugee hosting countries and communities.

28. Over the years, Zambia had experienced repeated and sustained mass influxes of refugees but had continued to provide a safe haven to refugees in various camps around the country. For at least 50 years, with the support of UNHCR, Zambia had offered protection and assistance to more than 300,000 refugees in six refugee settlements, mainly from neighbouring countries. The country was currently host to over 82,000 refugees and other persons of concern.

29. With support from cooperating partners, her Government had taken steps to ensure that appropriate reception measures and conditions were put in place in refugee hosting communities. It had also rolled out the comprehensive refugee response framework, which provided an opportunity to gather experience in dealing with new arrivals. At the technical level, a Steering Committee had also been established for the framework, with a mandate of coordinating humanitarian emergency response in the country.

30. The enactment of the Refugees Act No. 1 of 2017 had also provided the legislative prerequisites for the

application of the comprehensive refugee response in Zambia. The new Act represented a significant shift from the 1970 Refugee Control Act, whereby the Government broadened the scope of rights for refugees, including by taking steps to implement a settlement approach, granting refugees a variety of rights and access to services, and facilitating permanent residency or naturalization as an alternative legal status.

31. Despite those efforts, challenges still remained, especially with regard to the implementation of livelihood programmes, owing to the limited financial resources available to fully meet the required threshold for promoting self-reliance of refugees, as well as the inadequate reception capacity for small and large influxes of new arrivals. Zambia therefore looked forward to the launch of the first ever Global Refugee Forum.

32. **Mr. Sitnikov** (Russian Federation) said that UNHCR carried out effective work, especially in situations of humanitarian conflict in various countries and regions. His country would continue to provide support to UNHCR, whose work should be guided by the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. It was hoped that the memorandum of mutual understanding, signed in Moscow in 2019 between UNHCR and the relevant line ministry, would give added impetus to their joint response to emergency situations.

33. The Russian Federation played a leading role in hosting refugees and migrants, for which it had unique experience. In recent years citizens from over 50 States had received refugee or temporary protection status in his country. Reducing statelessness was also a priority area of his Government's migration policy. Over the past five years, over 40,000 stateless persons had become citizens of the Russian Federation.

34. The Russian Federation made a significant contribution to addressing the issue of refugees, as demonstrated by its large-scale humanitarian work in many countries, its political efforts to overcome crises and its provision of significant amounts of humanitarian assistance to countries experiencing refugee outflows. His country had accepted a large number of the residents from south-east Ukraine who had been forced to leave their homes as a result of the internal armed conflict. Over 2 million Ukrainian citizens had applied to regularize their legal status in the Russian Federation since April 2014, with 460,000 of them requesting asylum. Furthermore, following a 2018 Russian initiative to facilitate their voluntary return, over 300,000 Syrian refugees had returned to their homeland. He called on UNHCR to continue to provide assistance

for the return of Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons.

35. The Russian Federation supported the adoption of the global compact on refugees, which would help to strengthen the international regime for the protection of refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons and would also enhance the effectiveness of UNHCR work. His country also intended to be actively involved in the first Global Refugee Forum. However, Russia did not support the concept of shared responsibility for refugees and migrants, which was an attempt to shift the responsibility onto the shoulders of others, since the complex migrant situation in Europe was largely a result of the irresponsible interference of a number of countries in the internal affairs of sovereign States of the Middle East and North Africa in order to destabilize them and topple their unpalatable Governments by force. The Governments that had engaged in such interference should bear the primary responsibility for providing assistance to those who had become refugees and forced migrants as a result.

36. At the same time, there could be no doubt about the need for solidarity from the international community to address the issue of refugees in accordance with the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Protocol thereto. The most effective response to contemporary migration challenges was the political settlement of conflicts and the provision of socioeconomic development assistance to countries of origin for the voluntary return of refugees and their reintegration into society.

37. **Ms. Nyi** (Myanmar) said that the global compact on refugees had set out tangible measures to address the refugee issue comprehensively. Since colonial times Myanmar had been severely affected by influxes of displacement and by irregular migration. At the same time, as a result of 70 years of internal armed conflicts, it had also experienced outflows of displaced persons. Based on those experiences, Myanmar wished to underscore the importance of State-led approaches, owing to the unique circumstances and different natures of the challenges experienced, and to stress that issues between neighbours should be resolved bilaterally in an amicable and friendly manner. In 2016, for example, a programme for facilitating voluntary repatriation had been agreed by the Thai and Myanmar Governments. Since then, hundreds of displaced persons had returned to Myanmar. The return programme was led by the two neighbouring Governments with the support of United Nations agencies, including UNHCR.

38. Her Government was committed to realizing fundamental human rights without discrimination. The

newly adopted Child Rights Act guaranteed the right of registration at birth for all children, regardless of race, religion and gender. The national verification card was a pathway to citizenship, with the citizenship application process effectively shortened from 2 years to 6 months for card holders.

39. Myanmar was willing to repatriate the displaced persons previously resident in Rakhine State under a bilateral agreement signed between Myanmar and Bangladesh. According to the agreement, Myanmar would issue national verification cards to the returnees who did not possess valid legal documents. Those who qualified for citizenship under the Citizenship Act would be issued with citizenship cards. For repatriation of the displaced persons in Bangladesh, the Government was working closely with UNHCR, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to facilitate the implementation of the bilateral agreements between Myanmar and Bangladesh for the repatriation, resettlement and development of returnees. The Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine and the Independent Commission of Enquiry were among the many national entities established to find lasting peace, harmony and development for all communities in Rakhine.

40. Under a tripartite memorandum of understanding between Myanmar, UNDP and UNHCR, five rounds of field assessments had been completed in Rakhine State, covering over 80 villages. Based on the security conditions, UNHCR was implementing 34 quick impact projects, an additional seven projects had been approved in September 2019 and another two new projects had subsequently been proposed. Furthermore, a nationwide strategy had been agreed for the closure of the internally displaced persons camps in Kachin, Shan, Rakhine and Kayin States with assistance from the Swiss Development Agency. To implement the strategy, an action plan would be developed in line with international standards to meet the needs and concerns of the internally displaced persons and host communities.

41. A comprehensive and all-inclusive approach was needed to address the sensitive issue of refugees and internally displaced persons from a multidimensional perspective. Practical steps should always be the priority to shorten and lessen the suffering of the affected people and communities.

42. **Ms. Mukasa** (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community, expressed gratitude for the numerous reports submitted under the agenda item and

the hope that the contents thereof would be truly reflected upon and considered by all Member States.

43. **Mr. Bin Jadid** (Saudi Arabia) said that, as part of its response to the global refugee crisis, his Government had granted citizenship to over 50,000 refugees in the country, and another 800,000 whose residency status was irregular had received identity cards, enabling them to circulate freely, work, and obtain insurance and medical care. The benefits had been extended free of charge. His Government treated the 1,074,000 refugees living in Saudi Arabia as guests entitled to basic rights, housing them in high-quality residences and extending over \$16 billion in support. Domestic law conferred citizenship on all infants born in Saudi Arabia. His Government's response was informed by Islamic principles and precepts, which enjoined love, peace and fraternity and required the believer to help the needy; those commandments, in turn, were consonant with the humanitarian principles set forth in international covenants.

44. Guided by its role as an Islamic country, Saudi Arabia was one of the leading contributors of humanitarian and development assistance worldwide. It had spent around \$18 billion in various initiatives to alleviate the suffering of refugees, with support extended to Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Greece; Yemeni refugees in Somalia and Djibouti; and Rohingya refugees. Saudi Arabia had recently hosted a donor conference for Rohingya refugees in coordination with UNHCR, raising over \$250 million to address the Rohingya crisis. In addition, his country had provided over \$900 million in support for Palestine refugees, including its recent contribution of \$50 million to the budget of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

45. **Ms. Inanç Örnekol** (Turkey) said that the ultimate solution to the refugee crisis lay with the root causes. Without a political solution to the problem, people would not feel safe enough to stay in their countries of origin. It was therefore of the utmost importance for destination countries to support peace processes and promote the peaceful settlement of disputes in conflict-affected areas. Displaced persons also needed more than just an emergency response. They needed prospects for a future in which their rights were respected and they were able to benefit from and contribute to development. The international community had a duty to help build that future because no country could cope with the challenges of migration alone.

46. International cooperation was crucial to finding common solutions and best practices. Countries bearing

the brunt of mass refugee influxes rightfully expected the international community to show the necessary solidarity and act with greater sensitivity with respect to burden- and responsibility-sharing. Helping refugees was a moral responsibility. While financial contributions were certainly important, the international community should also open up more resettlement quotas as the current figures were far from meeting expectations.

47. As the largest refugee hosting country, Turkey attached the utmost importance to the global compact on refugees, which provided a great window of opportunity for the international community on refugee related matters. The compact could provide a basis for predictable and equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing among Member States and relevant stakeholders. During the implementation phase of the compact, more States should begin to assume their moral, political and legal responsibilities for the sake of humanity and human dignity, in conformity with their commitments under the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.

48. Turkey remained committed to voluntary, safe and dignified returns in areas where conducive conditions had been established. Working together, the international community should ensure that those who chose to return to their homelands fully enjoyed their rights.

49. **Ms. White** (United States of America) said that the United States and UNHCR remained strong partners in their efforts to protect and find durable solutions for the millions of refugees, stateless persons, internally displaced persons and other persons of concern around the world. The United States was committed to leading the world in humanitarian assistance and her Government had provided nearly \$1.7 billion to UNHCR over the 2019 fiscal year. However, it was also committed to promoting burden-sharing with partners and allies, and ensuring greater efficiency, transparency, accountability and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. In that regard, her Government would continue to press for the fulfilment of the commitments made under the Grand Bargain, especially those related to joint needs assessments and the reduction of management costs.

50. The first Global Refugee Forum would provide an opportunity for countries to showcase their overall shared commitment to increase the capacity for refugee protection. For the United States, that included best practices for maximizing the protection for women and girls in conflict areas as well as best practices on

education and burden-sharing. The Forum would also be an opportunity to improve the sustainability of humanitarian responses and highlight work through improved coherence between relief and development programming.

51. Effective oversight of UNHCR was critical to ensure protection for those most in need and the optimal use of limited resources. The United States recognized that the mandate of UNHCR required it to operate in high-risk environments. It commended UNHCR for implementing risk management 2.0, which helped to enhance the UNHCR culture of accountability and strengthen the organization. While the risk of fraud and misconduct would never be zero, UNHCR must minimize it. UNHCR had instituted several different measures, including the extensive overhaul of its oversight systems that was still under way. Those efforts would help to mitigate risk from the start and allow for a faster and more comprehensive response to misconduct, should it occur. Responding to ever-growing global displacement and humanitarian needs could not come at the cost of strong internal controls or the prevention of mismanagement or improvements in oversight.

52. The United States supported the continued reform efforts of UNHCR to ensure maximum efficiency, transparency and accountability, as well as its focused efforts to engage with the larger humanitarian system in a more comprehensive and coherent manner. Those changes would take consistent efforts and an institutional commitment to achieve the desired results.

53. Regarding the issue of regionalization, it was important to establish clear lines of accountability. UNHCR had stated that staff should be effectively positioned to make operational decisions in the field, with the aim of strengthening direct work with refugees and others of concern. That required strong and competent leadership in the field. Her delegation was therefore interested in the efforts that UNHCR was making to help build the capacity of staff in leadership positions so that they were well equipped for those enhanced responsibilities.

54. **Ms. Sánchez García** (Colombia) said that her country had continued to address its own situation of internal displacement. The number of internally displaced persons in Colombia since 1985, including those forcibly displaced, was 7,508,384 persons. Since 2002 that number had gradually decreased, owing to the public policies implemented and approximately 1.9 million persons had overcome their vulnerabilities related to displacement. Her Government was

committed to finding lasting solutions to the phenomenon of displacement.

55. However, the reality of the current situation was that Colombia had received 1,408,055 displaced Venezuelan citizens, approximately 34 per cent of all Venezuelan migrants, and 400,000 Colombian citizens had returned home because of the multidimensional crisis facing Venezuela. There had also been an increase in the number of applications to Colombia for refugee status, particularly from Venezuelan nationals. The countries most affected by the situation in Venezuela had come together to seek a regional response to the migration crisis, called the Quito Process.

56. In the 2019 regional response plan for refugees and migrants, a call had been made for \$738 million at the regional level, of which only \$176 million had been effectively provided. The plan also provided for \$315 million for the Colombian response, of which only \$81.5 million had been mobilized, a figure significantly lower than the amount required. It was therefore imperative to mobilize additional resources through international cooperation to support the major efforts being made by the Government of Colombia and other countries of the region to deal with the crisis.

57. **Ms. Banaken Elel** (Cameroon) said that her Government, facing a complex and unprecedented humanitarian crisis owing to an influx of refugees, had put in place a response plan to meet the challenge. It had begun to improve the situation by undertaking biometric registration and strengthening mechanisms for the registration of births and the prevention of statelessness. It was also enhancing security in refugee camps and training personnel in the international protection of refugees, among other measures.

58. At the institutional level, Cameroon had established an ad hoc interministerial committee to manage emergency refugee situations in the country, a technical secretariat to deal with applications for refugee status and asylum requests, and a centre for the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. On 7 March 2019, the Government had also signed an agreement for the transfer of the personal data of asylum seekers and refugees between UNHCR and Cameroon. Furthermore, to help stabilize the security situation in the Central African Republic, her Government had signed a tripartite agreement in June 2019 with UNHCR and the Government of that country to facilitate the voluntary return of 285,000 refugees to their country of origin.

59. To address the issue of internally displaced persons, her Government had launched an emergency humanitarian assistance plan. To date, some

40 operations under the plan had distributed supplies to different localities hosting internally displaced persons and victims of natural disasters in Cameroon. Regional coordination centres were another response to the urgent need to identify and register internally displaced persons and to follow-up on the work of the humanitarian partners of Cameroon on the ground.

60. Cameroon looked forward to the holding of the first Global Refugee Forum in December 2019 with a view to the more predictable and equitable sharing of responsibilities for managing refugees, thereby alleviating the burden on host countries.

61. **Ms. Melfald** (Norway) said that the global compact on refugees, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the comprehensive refugee response framework provided a strengthened and consolidated foundation for the international community's efforts to address contemporary refugee situations. Norway was a strong supporter of the global compact and shared the ambition of making the forthcoming first Global Refugee Forum a successful vehicle for the more equitable sharing of burdens and responsibilities. It was important to take a long-term perspective that would benefit both refugees and host communities.

62. There was an urgent need to find ways to better protect internally displaced persons and achieve durable solutions. The recent announcement by the Secretary-General to establish the High-level Panel on Internal Displacement was therefore welcome. It would provide a unique opportunity to galvanize international engagement in support of States with situations of internal displacement. The protection of refugees and a comprehensive response to refugee situations would continue to be a priority of her country's humanitarian policy, as outlined in its humanitarian strategy launched in 2018, which included continuing to give priority to education in situations of crisis and conflict.

63. There was a need to strengthen the humanitarian response to sexual and gender-based violence, including in situations of displacement. Such violence was the focus of an international conference in Oslo, held in May 2019, which had resulted in important financial and political commitments and had concluded that leaders at all levels should give immediate priority to combating sexual and gender-based violence across all sectors. It had also highlighted the fact that, while women and girls were particularly vulnerable, men and boys were also affected.

64. The Fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and

Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction would take place in Oslo from 25 to 29 November 2019. The priority of Norway was the protection of affected communities and groups who were particularly vulnerable, including refugees and the internally displaced. UNHCR had a key role in providing risk education on landmines and explosives for refugees who were returning to heavily contaminated areas in Syria, Iraq and other post-conflict areas until that threat could be removed.

65. Norway strongly supported the Secretary-General's initiative on United Nations reform and recognized the important efforts by UNHCR in that area. Her delegation encouraged UNHCR to continue its work to fully implement General Assembly resolutions 243 and 279 on reform of the operational activities of the United Nations.

66. Norway would continue to be a strong supporter of UNHCR and its mandate. Her country remained committed to providing unearmarked funding to enable well-coordinated, rapid and effective assistance, in line with its commitment to the Grand Bargain.

67. **Ms. Ali** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Syrian Government had taken many measures to support the safe voluntary return of displaced Syrians to their homes, including the publication of laws and decrees and the establishment of a national committee to facilitate return. The Government had expressed its willingness to discuss with UNHCR mechanisms to support the return of Syrian refugees and displaced persons, especially the provision of basic services and the rehabilitation of the necessary infrastructure, but had not received a positive response.

68. UNHCR should review its position that the conditions were not in place to allow the safe return of Syrian refugees in the light of the improved security situation in much of the country. It should refrain from any actions that might discourage return, fuel unfounded fears or convey an unrealistic image of the situation in the country. It should also break its silence regarding the violations faced by Syrian refugees in some countries, which exploited their suffering despite having helped to cause it by supporting terrorism and the occupation of Syrian territory. UNHCR press releases should promote the positive spirit of dialogue between the two parties. UNHCR should keep in mind the role that some States had played in prolonging the Syrian crisis in pursuit of their own agendas, which did not make them suitable candidates for hosting or chairing UNHCR events.

69. Her delegation hoped that UNHCR would remedy the issues the Syrian Government had raised with a view to continuing their cooperation in the interests of the

Syrian people and in accordance with the UNHCR mandate. In closing, she stressed that States should not continue to lament the fate of refugees while using them for political leverage. Instead, the countries concerned should lift the coercive measures that affected the lives of millions of Syrians.

70. **Mr. de Souza Monteiro** (Brazil) said that his country took its duties towards refugees very seriously and was currently dealing with a major crisis on its northern border owing to the situation in Venezuela. During his visit to Brazil in August 2019, the High Commissioner had qualified the response by Brazil to the crisis as exemplary. In June 2019, the National Committee of Refugees had decided to expedite the process of determining the legal status of asylum seekers from Venezuela, which was another manifestation of the long-standing solidarity of Brazil with the people of Venezuela, who were suffering unprecedented hardships.

71. The influx of Venezuelan refugees and migrants to Brazil from Venezuela had completely overwhelmed the northern border services. More than 480,000 refugees and migrants from Venezuela had entered the country, of whom 200,000 were still in Brazil. His Government had decided to respond to the crisis with a policy of open borders and open arms. All Venezuelans could apply for temporary residence or for refugee status in Brazil without the need for a visa. Brazil had also decided to accept expired Venezuelan passports as valid documents, including for travel within Brazil for another five years.

72. Given the overwhelming impact of the crisis on local government structures, a Government-led multisector, multi-agency task force had set up “operation welcome” to provide Venezuelan refugees and migrants with better living conditions and socioeconomic opportunities in cities away from the northern border. Since April 2018, more than 14,000 Venezuelans had been relocated to more than 200 Brazilian cities in various regions, where they continued to receive support from federal and local government, the private sector and civil society. More than 400 of the beneficiaries of working age had been able to find jobs within the first three month of relocation. The second phase of the operation had recently been launched, which included a set of measures aimed at ramping up social integration and self-reliance. As the influx of immigrants showed no sign of abating, the mobilization of international support and private funding, in a spirit of responsibility-sharing, would be crucial.

73. **Mr. Imnadze** (Georgia) said that the work of UNHCR was of critical importance, especially against

the background of new waves of mass displacement in different regions of the world. It was essential to reinvigorate Member States’ efforts to better address the root causes of forced displacement and mitigate the risks of grave human rights violations that millions of forcibly displaced persons faced on a daily basis.

74. In recent years, Georgia had implemented significant reforms aimed at ensuring the protection of the forcibly displaced. The International Protection Act specified basic principles and strengthened procedural safeguards at all stages of the asylum procedure, guaranteeing special procedures for persons with specific needs. In practical terms, since 2012, Georgia had received more than 8,100 asylum seekers. At the same time, more than 1,400 asylum-seekers had been granted international protection. Asylum seekers, refugees and humanitarian status holders in Georgia benefited from the State’s universal health care and enjoyed the right to education and labour rights. Internationally protected persons also benefited from a monthly allowance provided by the State.

75. Georgia actively cooperated with UNHCR and other international organizations in the context of guaranteeing efficient asylum procedure as well as socioeconomic assistance to persons of concern. His country also actively cooperated with the European Asylum Support Office and counted on UNHCR support in that regard.

76. The current year marked the midway point of the UNHCR campaign to end statelessness within 10 years. As a party to all United Nations conventions aimed at preventing and reducing statelessness, Georgia had amended its citizenship legislation in compliance with the international legal framework. It would continue to carry out activities aimed at further preventing and reducing statelessness as well as protecting stateless persons in Georgia.

77. Georgia had itself suffered severely from forced displacement. Hundreds of thousands of Georgian citizens had been expelled from the Georgian occupied regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali as a result of several waves of ethnic cleansing over the past 25 years. They continued to be deprived of their fundamental right to return to their homes in safety and dignity. While his Government continued its efforts to promote the socioeconomic integration of internally displaced persons and improve their living conditions until their voluntary, safe and dignified return to their places of origin, it was continuously prevented from extending protection to the population residing in the Georgian occupied regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, who had

been deprived of minimal safeguards for their safety and stripped of their fundamental rights and freedoms.

78. In that context, Georgia highly valued the contribution of the High Commissioner in addressing the humanitarian needs of conflict-affected people, including those living in the occupied regions of Georgia as well as in adjacent territories to the occupation line. The active engagement of the Tbilisi-based UNHCR office in the second working group of the Geneva international discussions had been particularly important in recent years. His delegation hoped that that practice would be maintained in the future.

79. **Mr. Mozaffarpour** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, as the number of refugees under the UNHCR mandate increased, it was more critical than ever for Member States to honour their international obligations under the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Protocol thereto and to share the responsibility of hosting and protecting refugees. Around 84 percent of refugees continued to be hosted by a few developing countries and those countries, including his own, shouldered that burden on behalf of the international community despite their own serious economic and social challenges. Such a situation was economically unsustainable and morally unacceptable.

80. The hospitality of a few countries hosting large number of refugees should not serve as an excuse for others to evade fair and equitable burden-sharing. To make the principles of solidarity and equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing a reality, a whole-of-the-globe approach should be promoted rather than a whole-of-society one. It was neither fair nor acceptable to impose the responsibility to protect refugees on a few countries or regions. Asylum seekers should be free to seek asylum wherever they desired to do so.

81. The forthcoming Global Refugee Forum was expected to strengthen the international refugee protection regime and preserve and expand asylum space not only in a few developing countries, but across the entire globe. For different reasons, including the unlawful unilateral coercive measures imposed by the United States, his country was host to the world's most protracted refugee situation and faced difficulties in meeting their needs. Such unlawful measures infringed the capacity of the Government to provide essential basic support in the fields of education, health and employment. The voice and needs of millions of refugees could not be left unheard or unattended only to satisfy a party that violated their rights by resorting to illegal acts. It was both unfair and unreasonable to expect Iran to single-handedly bear the burden that such illegal acts placed on the refugees.

82. Leaving protracted refugee situations unresolved undermined the efficiency and credibility of the international refugee protection regime. Iran renewed its call to the international community and UNHCR to take all necessary measures for the repatriation of the refugees living in Iran. Immediate global action was required to fulfil commitments towards assisting in their repatriation and resettlement.

83. **Mr. Schettino** (Italy) said that the United Nations should apply a coordinated, comprehensive and multidimensional humanitarian response to address the growing number of refugees. His Government therefore fully support the UNHCR ongoing internal process of reorganization and decentralization, as well as the strategy of the High Commissioner aimed at further improving coordination between UNHCR and other relevant United Nations agencies. It was also imperative for the international community to adopt a holistic and multilevel approach based on the principles of partnership, solidarity and shared responsibility. The global compact on refugees, if fully applied, could provide those solutions and eventually benefit both refugees and host communities.

84. The forthcoming Global Refugee Forum offered a unique opportunity to galvanize the implementation of the global compact on refugees and share lessons learned. On that occasion, Italy would display its best practices and commitments for the future on refugee issues in such areas as humanitarian corridors, emergency evacuations and projects for the local integration of refugees into the labour market of the host country. Such initiatives were a clear testimony of his country's commitment to address the root causes of mixed migration flows, to protect people on the move and to ensure the legal, safe and orderly transfer of particularly vulnerable refugees.

85. **Mr. Dollo** (Mali) said that achieving the objectives of the global compact on refugees through increased international cooperation was crucial in order to alleviate the pressure on host countries, strengthen the autonomy of refugees, increase access to solutions in third countries and promote the conditions for return to countries of origin in safety and with dignity.

86. Mali was no stranger to refugee management, following its 2012 crisis which had cause massive population movements to neighbouring countries, and was also host to some 147,800 internally displaced persons. In the face of that particularly worrying situation, his Government had taken the necessary measures to implement the tripartite agreements signed with UNHCR and the host countries of Malian refugees. Moreover, it had worked tirelessly and in good faith to

implement the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali emanating from the Algiers process, which provided the relevant framework for the return of the refugees and displaced persons to their places of origin.

87. While continuing with its domestic programmes for the provision of basic social services, the Government was grateful to bilateral and multilateral partners for their actions to alleviate the suffering of vulnerable people. He called for a partnership among countries to address the difficulties caused by refugee movements and population displacements in Mali and elsewhere. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the establishment of the High-level Panel on Internal Displacement.

88. **Ms. Aldaweesh** (Kuwait) said that her country was following with great concern the worsening refugee crisis in various parts of the world and, in that context, commended the adoption of the global compact on refugees. Under the leadership of the Emir, Kuwait had in recent years made great efforts to alleviate the plight of refugees. As of 2018, Kuwait had made financial contributions of in the region of \$430 million to UNHCR. There was close cooperation between UNHCR and the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, especially to provide support to States hosting Syrian refugees. Kuwait had consistently supported UNRWA and in 2018 had made contributions of \$50 million to the Agency.

89. Since the start of the Syrian crisis, Kuwait had provided support to the growing number of refugees and displaced persons. Between 2013 and 2015 it had also hosted three international donor conferences to mobilize support for the humanitarian situation in Syria. It had also participated in similar conferences held in London and Brussels between 2016 and 2019, pledging more than \$1 billion in total. Kuwait had also co-chaired international donor conferences to raise funds for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, at which it had pledged \$15 million dollars. During its membership of the Security Council, Kuwait had co-led an official visit by the Council to Myanmar and Bangladesh to see first-hand the situation of Rohingya refugees.

90. Her delegation called on the international community and international organizations to respect the Charter of the United Nations and international human rights and humanitarian law, which provided the legal framework for enhancing the protection of refugees and addressing migration and asylum challenges and their causes, such as poverty, conflict and violent extremism.

91. **Ms. Ahmed** (Sudan) said that humanitarian operations in the Sudan, overseen by the Sudanese

Humanitarian Aid Commission, were among the largest in the region. A number of joint structures and mechanisms were in place to coordinate the humanitarian assistance provided to approximately 5 million people throughout the country by the Government, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. The large influx of refugees and migrants from neighbouring countries posed major challenges. The Sudanese Government was making considerable efforts to eradicate smuggling and human trafficking and reviewed the relevant law to keep pace with developments. A national committee to combat smuggling and human trafficking had also been established. In the framework of the Khartoum Process, a conference had been held in Khartoum in July 2019 for national committees on combating smuggling and human trafficking in Africa.

92. With respect to the voluntary return of refugees and resettlement, the tripartite agreement between the Sudan, Chad and UNHCR had resulted in large numbers of voluntary returns on both sides. Following the significant improvement in the security and humanitarian situation as a result of the disarmament campaign, tribal reconciliation and the continuation of the peace process, large numbers of displaced persons were returning to the region of Darfur. The Sudan looked forward to constructive cooperation with UNHCR and the international community with a view to maintaining the peace and supporting the reconstruction and development process.

93. The new transitional Government was continuing to implement the 2017–2020 humanitarian strategy developed in cooperation with the United Nations, which aimed to achieve a transition from relief to reconstruction and the provision of a humanitarian response that was more suited to the urgent and long-term needs of all sectors of society across the country. The strategy reflected a clear commitment to improving the conditions of refugees during that transition.

94. Her delegation reiterated its commitment to establishing an effective partnership with UNHCR, the international community, the United Nations and its specialized agencies, based on the principle of shared responsibility and burden-sharing. The Sudan looked forward to participating effectively in the first Global Refugee Forum to take place in Geneva in December.

95. **Ms. Pejanović Đurišić** (Montenegro) said that solidarity with refugees and displaced persons must not be a matter of political decision or political choice but was above all a matter of humanity. Her country had provided shelter to a huge number of displaced persons who had fled as a result of conflict in the territory of the

former Yugoslavia. Over more than two decades, Montenegro had worked with the countries of the region to seek permanent solutions for those most affected by the war. As a result, significant progress had been made in improving their socioeconomic status, with a special focus placed on addressing their needs in the areas of education, health care and social protection and also resolving issues related to their legal status.

96. In cooperation with neighbouring countries and international partners Montenegro had successfully implemented several subprojects through a regional housing programme, which had permanently resolved housing issues for thousands of displaced persons and internally displaced persons. The Konik camp had now been closed and housing provided to 51 families. The five ongoing subprojects would provide permanent and sustainable housing solutions for the remaining 130 families.

97. In addition to addressing the issue of displaced and internally displaced persons, her Government had undertaken all necessary measures to prevent and provide an adequate response to statelessness. Efforts included recognizing the status of stateless persons to ensure the enjoyment of their rights and simplifying the procedure for registering the birth of individuals born outside of health-care institutions. Awareness raising of the need for birth registration had also continued. Montenegro had recently committed itself to further strengthen its national and local capacities to secure effective access to rights for persons granted stateless status, to enable immediate birth registrations of children abandoned by their mothers or missing identification documents, and to facilitate procedures for all refugees from the former Yugoslavia to obtain status as foreigners

98. In the context of the forthcoming Global Refugee Forum, Montenegro would present its pledges related to providing an effective protection regime, increasing reception capacities by 2021 and further developing a friendly socioeconomic environment for the integration of refugees through effective access to services. Montenegro supported the global compact on refugees and would remain a reliable partner in ensuring its full implementation. It was the duty of all countries to work together to ensure a better life for all displaced persons.

99. **Ms. Dilowathana** (Thailand) said that collective efforts were needed from various stakeholders to manage global migration challenges, including ensuring the timely delivery of humanitarian assistance, addressing international protection gaps and ending statelessness. Her Government had continued to do its part in addressing the issue of statelessness and people

with status problems through various measures, including by ensuring birth registration and amending relevant legislation. Its tireless efforts had resulted in some 10,000 persons with status problems being granted Thai nationality in 2018. Her Government had pledged to do its utmost to end statelessness by 2024 by promoting access to education; enhancing social protection; adjusting the regulations for granting nationality; enhancing access to and effectiveness of the civil registration service; expediting the process to address statelessness among older persons; enhancing partnership with all sectors regarding civil registration; and promoting international cooperation to address statelessness.

100. In cooperation with United Nations agencies, Thailand had been successfully conducting the voluntary repatriation of various groups of displaced persons to neighbouring countries. The Government had also recently hosted a regional workshop on the voluntary repatriation of refugees in order to share ideas of how to mobilize broad-based support and create the condition conducive to voluntary repatriation that was safe, dignified and sustainable.

101. At the national level, the process had almost been completed of establishing a domestic screening mechanism to separate mixed groups of migrants. In January 2019, a memorandum of understanding had been concluded among relevant government agencies and partners to end the detention of migrant children, followed by robust implementation.

102. Welcoming the adoption of the global compact on refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, her delegation reiterated its commitment to translating the bold objectives of those documents into reality while maintaining a balance between development, security and human rights. Thailand had adopted a whole-of-government approach and had established a national working group to coordinate and facilitate the implementation of the compacts. The working group had already finalized the pledges to be presented by Thailand at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019.

103. **Ms. Horbachova** (Ukraine) said that her delegation welcomed the work done by the High Commissioner during 2019, supported his activities aimed at strengthening UNHCR and appreciated the efforts to prepare for the first Global Refugee Forum as a part of implementation of the provisions of the global compact on refugees.

104. Ukraine had acceded to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness in January 2013,

pledging to settle and improve the status of stateless persons residing in the territory of Ukraine. Her Government was taking consistent steps to tackle the problem of statelessness, in particular by establishing an administrative procedure for registering children born in the temporary occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk. A decree on simplifying the process for registering the birth of those children had recently been adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine to effectively reduce the risk of statelessness. Addressing and ending statelessness meant raising awareness about statelessness itself and mobilizing the necessary political will and public support.

105. Ukraine appreciated the remarkable level of UNHCR engagement in providing protection and assistance to internally displaced persons and addressing the country's concerns, including through inter-agency efforts and by updating the policy on internal displacement. UNHCR initiatives in that field should result in the creation of new international mechanisms and strategies to deal with the situation of internal displacement. From its own experience, Ukraine placed a special emphasis on the need to build the capacity to provide humanitarian and development assistance and resolve the problem of internally displaced persons.

106. Nearly six years of international armed conflict caused by ongoing Russian aggression had resulted in a protracted and complex humanitarian crisis in Donbass. Around 5.2 million Ukrainians had been affected, of whom 2.3 million were estimated to be in urgent need of humanitarian and protection assistance, and some 1.4 million Ukrainians were registered as internally displaced persons. Civilians continued to face serious risks to their safety, well-being and basic rights owing to the ongoing hostilities. Continued Russian aggression could also lead to an ecological and epidemiological catastrophe. A cessation of hostilities remained essential to enable an effective humanitarian response and the protection of civilians and humanitarian personnel.

107. However, efforts aimed at supporting persons in need were being significantly complicated by Russian-controlled illegal armed groups constantly blocking access to the occupied territories for humanitarian aid from the Ukrainian Government and international organizations. The humanitarian and human rights situation on the territories had thus further deteriorated.

108. While the Ukrainian Government was doing its best to tackle humanitarian challenges, which were unprecedented in nature and scope, it could not address them alone. It highly appreciated what had been already done by international partners to assist those in need but

would need further support in order to meet the specific needs of the affected population, especially in the upcoming winter period.

109. **Ms. Esono Kiebiyene** (Equatorial Guinea) said that recent figures on refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons were disheartening. While there were multiple causes and consequences of forced displacement, the most vulnerable people were particularly affected. The role of Africa as a humanitarian leader, despite its limited resources and capacity to respond, was a positive example for other parts of the world. In that regard, her delegation recognized the commitment of the Africa Union to implement the Common African Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness, which had been integrated into Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. Her delegation also echoed the call of the African Humanitarian Agency regarding the need to address the root causes of humanitarian movements in order to find lasting solutions, including building the capacities of States and other interested parties in order to meet the challenges of forced displacement on the continent.

110. African efforts to strengthen cooperation and solidarity with refugees and affected host countries must be supported by and in line with international efforts. Her delegation therefore welcomed the cooperation between the African Union Commission and UNHCR, with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to ensure the implementation of the humanitarian architecture of the African Union through the Livingstone programme, in which her country had participated in December 2017. It also welcomed the adoption in 2018 of the global compact on refugees, acknowledged the critical work of UNHCR in implementing the compact and urged all countries to support that endeavour. All States had an obligation to facilitate urgent and practical solutions to deal with the global refugee problem.

111. **Ms. Bakytbekkyzy** (Kazakhstan) said that the flows of migrants and refugees looking for a better life and crossing national borders were unprecedented. The large-scale displacements were being caused by serious social, economic and political problems, which had long-term and widespread consequences. In many instances, refugees and their families were doomed to live in terrible and humiliating conditions. Horrific stories during transit flows of deaths, sexual abuse and gross violation of human rights were frequent. Even before seeking a new home abroad people often moved within their own countries. That was why priority should be given to measures that ensured security, stability and development in countries of origin in order to minimize migration.

112. Assessing the volume and composition of unregulated migration was not easy. Hence, improving the collection of data by all government agencies was the top priority. It was also important to improve continuous dialogue and exchange of information on refugee issues and to develop mechanisms for monitoring migration and refugee trends. Under the Almaty process, for example, Central Asian countries were engaged in a regional consultative process on refugee protection and international migration to, from and within Central Asia. It aimed to address the multiple challenges resulting from mixed migration dynamics.

113. Kazakhstan had brought home safely from Syria a total of 595 Kazakh citizens previously involved with Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), including 33 men, 156 women and 406 children. That had been possible only because of the very close international cooperation provided from January to June 2019. The aim was to save Kazakh citizens who had been led to Syria under false pretences and caught up in the armed conflict. They would undergo a rehabilitation programme to reintegrate them back into society.

114. **Mr. Rahman** (Bangladesh) said that his delegation welcomed the adoption of the global compact on refugees and supported the implementation of all four of its objectives on an equal footing. It wished to underscore that all assistance and funding disbursed for humanitarian crises should be separate from and additional to regular development assistance and cooperation.

115. The fact that Bangladesh was host more than 1.1 million forcibly displaced Rohingyas was taking a serious toll on its socioeconomic development. Regrettably, to date only 42 per cent of the 2019 Joint Response Plan had been funded. The international community must step up by providing much-needed support. The tripartite memorandum of understanding had now been reviewed for a second year but a conducive environment in Rakhine remained a far cry. The role of UNHCR was critical in supporting the voluntary, safe and dignified return of the Rohingyas to Myanmar.

116. He hoped that the holding of the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019 would help to encourage collective efforts to promote durable solution, including repatriation and resettlement.

117. **Mr. Moussa** (Djibouti) said that his delegation welcomed the holding of the forthcoming Global Refugee Forum within the framework of the commitments undertaken in the global compact on refugees as developing countries continued to bear the burden of the increasing number of refugees and

displaced persons around the world. However, while a global coordinated humanitarian approach was vital to strengthen refugee protection measures, the root causes of the problem would only be addressed by the international community through lasting political solutions.

118. Owing to regional instability and drought, flows of refugees were expected to continue to arrive in Djibouti. They desperately needed long-term emergency assistance and increased development assistance to help them meet their subsistence needs. In 2019, his Government had implemented a project to supply its camps for refugees and internally displaced persons with a reliable and affordable energy supply so that they could perform income-generating activities. At the legislative level, several laws aimed at protecting refugees by giving them access to basic social services, including health and education, had been promulgated. While Djibouti would continue to host the refugees facing unprecedented humanitarian challenges in the region, ongoing support from bilateral and multilateral partners remained vital.

119. **Ms. Marin Sevilla** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the various challenges facing her country should be seen in the light of the devastating impact of the implementation of unilateral coercive measures by the United States, its regional partners and the European Union, which were using the crisis to attempt to bring about regime change. Venezuela rejected the narrative of securitization imposed on the issue of human mobility, as well as the false figures being used to that end. Her country did not represent a threat to peace and security on the continent, as some claimed. The only true threat to peace and security in Venezuela and the regional as a whole came from the interventionist policies of the United States and its regional and European partners.

120. Venezuela was a peaceful country which, for many decades, had welcomed hundreds of thousands of refugees from Latin America, Europe and other parts of the world when they were seeking a better life free from war and discrimination. The large numbers of people living in Venezuela from Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru and elsewhere had enriched its national life with their culture and presence. They had never been subject to xenophobia and had always been protected by the Venezuelan State. It was a matter of great concern that the countries promoting destabilization and national crises were not complying with international law or paying attention to the significant increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers as a result of their military interventions and armed attacks in developing countries.

121. Venezuela had an advanced doctrine in terms of the recognition of refugees and its Constitution recognized and guaranteed the right to asylum. The underlying causes of the movement of refugees and asylum seekers would not be addressed by building walls or invoking the Charter of the United Nations. Human dignity and all human rights must be respected without any racist or xenophobic ideology of exclusion.

122. The global compact on refugees was an opportunity to strengthen cooperation in the global response to the massive displacement of refugees. Venezuela would therefore continue to contribute to strengthening the international mechanisms for its implementation.

123. **Ms. Kjellgren** (Observer for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that, over the past year, ICRC had taken stock of the progress made in the implementation of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. There had been significant improvements since the adoption of the Convention in 2009: more States had become parties to the Convention, and many had adopted concrete legal policy and practical measures to put it in place. However, more must be done to realize the full potential of the Convention and efforts must be stepped up at the national, subregional and continental levels. To make a substantial difference, States should take three simple steps: promote the Convention and its obligations, and communicate clearly with all relevant public authorities, internally displaced persons and host communities; ensure the participation of internally displaced persons and host communities in decision-making processes; and appoint a designated coordinating authority with the necessary mandate and legitimacy to facilitate a comprehensive and coordinated response.

124. People affected by armed conflict and violence were especially vulnerable to climate shocks as conflict harmed their capacity to cope. The interplay of displacement, climate risk and conflict created pressure on services and infrastructure, significantly challenging the capacity of institutions to meet people's needs. As such, the specific vulnerability of conflict-affected communities, including those internally displaced, needed to be captured in discussions on climate risk and disasters. In the absence of measures to support people's adaption to a changing climate, displacement would often be the only way for people to survive. A better understanding was needed of how climate shocks could exacerbate the vulnerability of individuals already displaced by conflict.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.