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Sixty-first session

Summary record of the 642nd meeting

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Chairperson: Mr. Woolcott.....(Australia)

later: Mr. Badr (Vice-Chairperson).....(Egypt)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

General debate (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Garcia** (Philippines) said that the global humanitarian situation was growing more complex and that the shrinking of humanitarian space and the increase in violence against humanitarian workers needed to be addressed squarely and effectively. He therefore welcomed the more active role played by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the global humanitarian system and the strengthened coordination between UNHCR and other United Nations agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and regional and national agencies. The States of the region of Asia and the Pacific should also strengthen their cooperation with UNHCR and the humanitarian system as a whole.

2. Given its large overseas diaspora and its key role as both a host and a transit country, the Philippines took a close interest in refugee and migration issues. In 2009, the Government of the Philippines had signed a memorandum of agreement with UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on the transit of refugees. The Philippines greatly appreciated the assistance and cooperation afforded by UNHCR, particularly in the organization of meetings and exchanges, capacity-building, training on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons and the development of a legislative framework relating to asylum and statelessness.

3. **Ms. Rodrigues** (Mozambique) said that progress towards the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals had been hampered by the crises, natural disasters and armed conflicts that had struck States around the world. With regard to the displacement of populations both within and outside their countries of origin, it was necessary, first and foremost, to resolve armed conflicts by tackling their underlying causes.

4. Emphasizing the importance of voluntary repatriation programmes, which should be implemented in a climate of trust, security and dignity, she welcomed the role of the High Commissioner in that regard. She noted, however, that while many refugees living in Mozambique were expected to return to their home countries by the end of 2011, Mozambique had, since 2009, faced growing and increasingly disorderly influxes of migrants, particularly from the Horn of Africa, a phenomenon which placed a strain on resources. It was important to find effective solutions to those problems, with the support of the international community. In that connection, Mozambique welcomed the holding, in Dar es Salaam in September 2010, of a regional conference on refugee protection and international migration.

5. **Mr. Anwari** (Observer for Afghanistan) said that the fresh upsurge in violence in Afghanistan had resulted in large-scale internal displacement, mostly in the south. However, despite weak security and socio-economic problems, particularly in the areas of education, health, sanitation and employment, more than 5 million Afghan refugees had returned to Afghanistan since 2002. The Government of Afghanistan was determined to create the conditions necessary to facilitate the return of refugees, inter alia through its national development programmes.

6. The Government of Afghanistan was grateful to the Islamic Republic of Iran and to Pakistan for the hospitality that they had afforded to the 2.7 million Afghan refugees remaining in their territory and would continue to endeavour, with the assistance of those countries and in cooperation with UNHCR, to support the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of the Afghans concerned. The contribution of Afghanistan to international relief operations conducted in response to the recent floods in Pakistan, albeit modest, reflected the solidarity of Afghanistan with the Pakistani people. The Government of

Afghanistan was aware of the need to combat the growing phenomenon of illegal migration from Afghanistan, a problem that was placing a strain on its bilateral relations with destination countries.

7. **Ms. Masri** (Observer for the African Union), recalling that the year 2010 had been declared Year of Peace and Security in Africa, welcomed the support provided by ICRC, the International Save the Children Alliance, UNHCR and other United Nations agencies for the activities of the African Union to promote peace and security, particularly through the African Peace and Security Architecture.

8. Referring to the troubling situations in Somalia, the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, she welcomed the progress made in West Africa and commended those States members of the African Union that were receiving refugees and asylum-seekers. She noted with particular satisfaction the naturalization of some 162,000 Burundian refugees in Tanzania in 2009 and drew attention to the fact that 29 States members of the African Union had signed the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, adopted at the Special Summit of Heads of State and Government on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, held in Kampala in October 2009. The Summit had led, in particular, to a plan of action whose implementation would require significant resources in the medium and long term and greater support from States members and partners of the African Union. Urban refugees remained a cause for concern in the context of protracted refugee situations in Africa, and host countries should endeavour to find new ways of assisting the populations concerned.

9. **Ms. Kangiwa** (Nigeria) said that, while the number of refugees in West Africa had fallen, mixed migration flows and internal displacement were posing new challenges. Referring to the growing role of natural disasters in, and the effects of climate change on, population displacement, she welcomed the adoption of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa and expressed the hope that the measures provided for in the Convention would eventually be extended to other vulnerable groups. The Government of Nigeria, which was fully aware of its responsibility to protect internally displaced persons and refugees, continued to seek a lasting solution to the plight of such persons in Nigeria.

10. **Mr. Gamezde** (Observer for Swaziland), commending the efforts of the High Commissioner, said that the Government of Swaziland had set aside funds for the restoration of a refugee reception centre housing a medical facility at which treatment was provided free of charge. Refugee children of primary school age were furthermore provided with cost-free schooling, while older refugee children were given the same opportunities for education and vocational training as young Swazis. Swaziland was taking measures to facilitate the integration of all refugees and encouraged those who had been living in Swaziland for more than five years to apply for citizenship. A refugee bill, which was to incorporate in domestic legislation all the provisions of relevant international instruments, was under consideration. Swaziland was committed to protecting refugees and asylum-seekers and ensuring that they were treated with dignity and respect.

11. **Mr. Sesay** (Observer for Sierra Leone) said that he welcomed the ongoing reform process within UNHCR and the Global Needs Assessment initiative. Since Sierra Leone was still undergoing the transition from war to peace, it lacked the financial and material resources necessary to provide adequate assistance to refugees. However, an agreement had been signed on the transfer of ownership and sharing of land between local community members and refugees and that process was being pursued in new communities also.

12. With the support of UNHCR, national legislation on refugees had been strengthened and the agencies responsible for receiving and assisting refugees had become fully

functional. The competent authority in the area of asylum had conducted interviews to determine the status of refugees and had issued decisions on applications for asylum. Given the socio-economic situation in Sierra Leone, the number of refugees and asylum-seekers receiving assistance from the State was of concern, and the continued support of the international community, particularly UNHCR, was needed. UNHCR was therefore requested to pursue its capacity-building activities in Sierra Leone for the next four years.

13. **Mr. Sohau** (Benin) said that his delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Djibouti on behalf of the African Group.

14. Benin, which had long been a host country for refugees, had received some 150,000 refugees during the 1990s; now, by contrast, refugees numbered no more than a few thousand, owing to a significant improvement in the socio-political situation. Anxious to ensure the well-being of refugees, Benin had undertaken to encourage, and to strengthen the procedure for, voluntary repatriation for those wishing to return to their home countries and, in cases in which repatriation was not possible, to support local integration by strengthening artisanal and agricultural activities and improving access to microcredit. Since the financial resources required for successful repatriation operations and the encouragement of local integration of refugees were severely lacking, Benin continued to rely on the support of the international community in order to carry out effectively its activities to assist refugees.

15. **Mr. Grigg** (New Zealand) said that it was regrettable that the world situation was leading to the shrinking of humanitarian space and that the number of refugees showed no signs of decreasing. Afghanistan, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen were among the countries that faced population displacement, partly as a result of natural disasters.

16. The time had come for United Nations Member States to reflect on the long-term consequences of the economic crisis and to develop more cost-effective initiatives. In that regard, New Zealand welcomed the introduction by UNHCR of results-based management and encouraged the Office to continue to strengthen its oversight and accountability functions. However, it was regrettable that progress towards compliance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards had been slow. The organizational reforms undertaken by UNHCR should be pursued further and the use of financial resources should be optimized in order to meet the expectations of stakeholders.

17. New Zealand had established a close working relationship with non-governmental organizations engaged in humanitarian and development work and was ready to share its experience in that area, at the request of the Standing Committee. It continued to cooperate with States and UNHCR in seeking durable solutions for Bhutanese refugees in Nepal and welcomed the support provided by the Government of Nepal and UNHCR for efforts to resettle those refugees. Lastly, New Zealand welcomed the participation of UNHCR in the Bali Process as a positive step in combating trafficking in persons.

18. **Mr. Taima** (Zambia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of African States.

19. Economic recession, poverty, pandemics, climate change and rapid population growth were just some of the challenges that States faced in striving to protect refugees and displaced persons in their territory, and the need to foster solidarity and cooperation in order to achieve that objective was more pressing than ever before.

20. Zambia, which in 2009 had signed the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, had participated in the conference held in Dar es Salaam in September 2010 on the theme of mixed migration movements and

irregular migration, which had highlighted the need to develop regional response strategies and to strengthen legislative capacity.

21. Zambia maintained a liberal asylum policy and was carrying out legislative reform with the aim of strengthening the protection afforded to refugees. As part of an exercise to re-register and conduct a census of refugees, using the UNHCR “proGres” database, refugees in Zambian reception facilities were being issued with electronic identity cards showing their status as refugees. A policy to support urban refugees was being implemented in parallel with a policy to assist refugees in camps, in full conformity with national legislation.

22. There was a need to address the issue of Rwandan refugees in Zambia and establish and strengthen mechanisms that met international standards in order to determine the need of each such refugee, on the basis of his or her individual circumstances, for continued protection, so that those whose circumstances no longer justified international protection could be repatriated. The country’s long-term strategy was based on voluntary repatriation or, where possible, local integration. Thousands of Angolan refugees had left Zambia to return to Angola, in view of which it could be expected that, by the end of 2011, the “ceased circumstances” cessation clause could be invoked with respect to Angolan refugees. Many Congolese refugees that had been granted asylum in Zambia had returned voluntarily to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which would not have been possible without the active participation of the Government of that country.

23. **Mr. Guterres** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he welcomed the open policy of asylum maintained by the Philippines and the current process of emergency transit of refugees awaiting resettlement. He noted with particular satisfaction the excellent cooperation between UNHCR and the Philippines in establishing a protection cluster in the wake of the floods that had ravaged that country.

24. He concurred with the representative of Mozambique that the mixed migration flows taking place between the Great Lakes region in East Africa and the southern African subregion were particularly complex and that it was essential to strengthen regional cooperation with a view to meeting the needs of populations and protecting the lawful interests of States.

25. It was important that Afghanistan should successfully complete its operations for the voluntary return of Afghan refugees in Pakistan under conditions that ensured the refugees’ lasting integration into the community, although it was recognized that the overall operation was the largest of its kind worldwide. The State and the provinces were playing a key role in that regard, particularly with regard to the allocation of land and the construction of housing for refugees who were resettling.

26. He welcomed the exemplary cooperation between UNHCR and the African Union, which had undertaken considerable efforts to stabilize the continent and consolidate peace. The Kampala summit and the resulting plan of action were of critical importance in that regard. He also commended the mediation efforts of the African Union with respect to the issue of the Sudan and expressed the hope that the referendum would be held under optimal conditions.

27. He reaffirmed the full readiness of UNHCR to work with the authorities of Nigeria to address the problem of internally displaced persons in that country, particularly in the light of recent natural disasters.

28. He welcomed the local integration policy and the new law on refugees adopted by Swaziland, which would no doubt contribute effectively to the protection of refugees in that country.

29. He commended the Government of Sierra Leone for its determination to establish an operational asylum system and for its generous policy on voluntary repatriation and local integration. He also welcomed the successful application of the cessation clause and the adoption of durable solutions for Sierra Leonean refugees.

30. Acknowledging Benin as playing a lead role in the protection of refugees in Africa, he noted that the policy of voluntary repatriation and local integration in Benin had been a success, but that the continued support of the international community was needed in that country.

31. The measures implemented by the Government of Zambia in the road map for invocation of the cessation clause with respect to Rwandan refugees set an example for countries in a similar situation that planned to invoke the clause. He commended Zambia on the success of its voluntary repatriation programmes for refugees from Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as a result of which two additional camps would be closed in 2010.

32. **Mr. Strohal** (Austria) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

33. He noted that the number of internally displaced persons had risen at a worrying pace in 2010 and had now reached 27 million. Austria was concerned at the shrinking of humanitarian space as a result of non-compliance with international law, a situation that must not be tolerated, since it placed the lives of humanitarian workers and civilians in danger.

34. Underscoring the need to reinforce protection capacity, he recalled the efforts undertaken by Austria in 2009, in its capacity as member of the United Nations Security Council, to promote the rule of law and the protection of civilians. Those efforts had facilitated the unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 1894 (2009) on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, implementation of which would be crucial, particularly for the work of UNHCR. Austria looked forward to the issuance, in October 2010, of the first report of the United Nations Secretary-General pursuant to that resolution, and to close cooperation with UNHCR in that regard.

35. In view of the particular importance of partnerships with local, national and international actors in protecting and assisting internally displaced persons, he welcomed the increased support that UNHCR provided in that area.

36. **Mr. Ousman** (Observer for the Gambia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Djibouti on behalf of the Group of African States.

37. For several decades, the Gambia had received refugees from countries in conflict in the subregion and offered them generous assistance, despite its limited national resources. The Gambia continued to participate in peacekeeping operations and in doing so had contributed to the process of recovery from conflict in a number of countries of origin. Welcoming the effective application of the cessation clause in respect of Sierra Leonean refugees and the initiatives implemented to promote durable solutions, he expressed the hope that the cessation clause would also be applied with respect to Liberian refugees in the near future.

38. The Gambia was endeavouring to promote lasting peace in the Casamance region of Senegal in the hope that such peace would lead to the return of more than 7,000 Senegalese refugees, most of whom had been living in the Gambia since 2006. The ongoing conflict in the Casamance region was affecting the Gambian emergency response programme, given that the Gambia would continue to receive refugees as long as the conflict remained unresolved. It was worrying that the World Food Programme had suspended food aid to

Casamance refugees in the Gambia, thus increasing the burden on host communities. He thanked the international community for the support provided to the Gambia to help it to respond to the consequences of the floods of 2010, which had resulted in the displacement of 22,000 families and damage to infrastructure; however, further assistance was needed.

39. **Ms. Nahayo** (Observer for Burundi) expressed appreciation for the decision of the Government of Tanzania to naturalize 162,000 Burundian refugees; she noted, however, with regret that only 505 of 35,000 refugees had been returned from the Mtabila camp in 2010. In 2010, the Government of Burundi, in cooperation with UNHCR, had endeavoured to take the measures necessary to ensure the reintegration of returnees under secure conditions and had drawn up a plan of action for the economic and social reintegration of those vulnerable persons. She thanked the UNHCR office in Burundi for its interest in seeking durable solutions for Burundian returnees, particularly its work on “integrated rural villages” (also known as “peace villages”) for those without land or papers.

40. There were currently some 100,000 internally displaced persons in resettlement locations in Burundi, and the Government had launched a technical framework for exchanges on the modalities for implementing durable solutions for those vulnerable persons.

41. In December 2009, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and UNHCR had signed a tripartite agreement on the repatriation of Congolese and Burundian refugees in those countries. The repatriation operation had begun in October 2010 and the first 400 Burundian refugees had already returned to Burundi.

42. In 2010, Burundi had taken steps to increase the efficiency of its asylum management agencies and to strengthen their operational capacity. An operation to register all asylum-seekers had been carried out and those asylum-seekers had been issued with documents protecting them against refoulement. New refugee identity cards allowing freedom of movement and residence anywhere in Burundi were being distributed. As part of related capacity-building activities, Burundi and Belgium had signed a memorandum of cooperation between the Burundian National Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons and the Belgian Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons in the area of training. Burundi was planning to accede in 2011 to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons of 1954, the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961 and the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa of 2009.

43. **Mr. Dissanayake** (Observer for Sri Lanka) thanked UNHCR for continuing to provide humanitarian assistance to displaced persons who had lost their homes as a result of the ethnic conflicts that had ravaged Sri Lanka in the past three decades. By the end of the war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, in March 2009, some 280,000 displaced persons had been liberated by Government forces and brought under the care of the State. The President of Sri Lanka had appointed a task force for resettlement, development and security in the Northern Province. By the end of September 2010, 245,104 of the 288,938 persons displaced had been resettled. That process was moving forward rapidly and would be concluded once demining operations — for which the State had had to allocate considerable funds — were completed. UNHCR was assisting those displaced persons by providing them with financial assistance and basic equipment and was requested to continue to do so. The Government of Sri Lanka continued to provide displaced persons, the majority of whom had been resettled, with material assistance and to ensure the protection of their fundamental rights, with the support of the international community.

44. *Mr. Badr (Egypt), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

45. **Mr. Kang'ombe** (Observer for Malawi) thanked the High Commissioner for having organized jointly with IOM the regional conference on mixed migration flows held in

September 2010 in Tanzania, at which it had been highlighted that that phenomenon affected almost all States members of the Southern African Development Community and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa. He expressed the hope that the recommendations proposed at the conference would be implemented in order to address the problems relating to mixed migration flows.

46. Malawi was firmly committed to addressing the problem of refugees and was developing policy and legislation based on the fundamental rights of refugees. More than 100 refugees had been able to return to their home countries under voluntary repatriation arrangements in June 2010. It was to be hoped that that trend would continue in 2011, and Malawi was grateful to those countries where Malawian refugees were being resettled.

47. **Mr. Kammer** (Observer for the Council of Europe) said that, over the past 11 years, cooperation between UNHCR and the Council of Europe had developed into a comprehensive partnership. UNHCR participated as an observer in the work of the European Committee on Migration and the Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers and had recently participated in the drafting of the Guidelines on Human Rights Protection in the Context of Accelerated Asylum Procedures, which had been adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in July 2009. The role of UNHCR in Strasbourg involved advocacy and the provision of expertise in refugee-related matters. The Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly worked on many issues of interest to UNHCR and submitted regular reports on its activities to the Office. In 2009, UNHCR, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, had organized a round table on the social rights of refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons, with a special focus on housing and property restitution. UNHCR had also organized jointly with the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe in 2010 a conference on the need to find durable solutions for young refugees living in Europe.

48. Cooperation between the Council of Europe and UNHCR through the Council of Europe Development Bank demonstrated that it was possible to combine humanitarian assistance and long-term development operations effectively. The Bank had thus contributed to several UNHCR activities, particularly in September 2008, when it had supported a UNHCR operation in Georgia.

49. **Mr. Bhattarai** (Observer for Nepal) said that Nepal had received more than 100,000 Bhutanese refugees over the past 20 years and that the social, economic and environmental costs of the prolonged stay of such a large number had been high. The efforts undertaken by Nepal to resolve that humanitarian issue through a bilateral process had suffered setbacks, since Bhutan had failed to implement agreed decisions and had been uncooperative. Nepal had therefore been obliged to accept the generous offers of the Governments of Australia, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States to assist in the resettlement of Bhutanese refugees. The Government of Nepal was working closely with UNHCR, IOM and the core group countries and endeavouring to facilitate the voluntary resettlement process. It was grateful to UNHCR, the World Food Programme, donor countries, the core group countries and national and international organizations for their moral and material support in the protection and care of the refugee population and looked forward to working closely with them to find a durable solution to the protracted humanitarian situation.

50. **Ms. Pictet-Althann** (Observer for the Sovereign Order of Malta) said that since 1993, the humanitarian organization Malteser International had been implementing health protection projects for Karen and Myanmar refugees living in camps on the border between Thailand and Myanmar. Discussions were being held with UNHCR on the possibility of increasing the assistance provided to those refugees, who were entirely dependent on international support. In the north of Rakhine State in Myanmar, Malteser International was

assisting in the reintegration of returnees from Bangladesh, who were faced with poverty, destroyed social and family structures, malnutrition and infectious diseases. Since 2005, Malteser International had participated in disaster preparedness projects in the most vulnerable townships of Rathedaung and Sittwe. As UNHCR operations also covered those densely populated townships, the organization would welcome the chance to explore possibilities for cooperation in that area.

51. The activities of the Order of Malta in Sri Lanka were focused on the eastern and northern provinces of that country. In the districts of Batticaloa and Trincomalee, the infrastructure necessary to ensure water, sanitation and hygiene for returning displaced persons and host communities was being established. A project to assist returnees in the districts of Jaffna, Killinochchi and Mullaitivu was currently being prepared and was intended to complement the resettlement plan of the Government of Sri Lanka by improving access to health-care services and providing semi-permanent shelters and adequate sanitation and safe drinking water. Malteser International was holding discussions with UNHCR representatives on possible cooperation in enhancing capacity-building in those districts.

52. In Pakistan, the Order of Malta was engaged in activities to provide relief and early recovery support for victims of the floods in the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab and was planning other projects in the areas of rehabilitation and reconstruction, health and disaster preparedness.

53. **Mr. Demiralp** (Turkey) said that Turkey attached great importance to UNHCR training activities for national experts and that such activities should be stepped up.

54. Turkey, as a transit country for trafficking in persons, considered that transit countries should combat such trafficking more intensively. Since no country could combat the phenomenon alone, it called for full cooperation at the international level. Efforts to find solutions to the problems at the root of population displacement should be redoubled and the support provided to persons in need of urgent humanitarian assistance should be improved. With regard to cooperation among institutions, coordination was essential in order to avoid duplication and to optimize the use of limited resources.

55. **Mr. Mikayilli** (Observer for Azerbaijan) welcomed the generosity of developing countries in hosting large numbers of refugees and the fact that the large-scale population displacement resulting from the floods that had recently struck Pakistan had not weakened that country's generosity towards refugees.

56. Azerbaijan welcomed the growing involvement of UNHCR in the issue of internally displaced persons and noted with satisfaction that progress had been made at the global level in shaping legislative and regulatory frameworks relating to internal displacement, particularly with the adoption of the Kampala Convention.

57. Azerbaijan continued to face the problems of internal displacement resulting from the occupation of Azerbaijani territory by Armenia. In recent years, it had demonstrated that it was possible to improve the living and housing conditions of displaced persons without undermining their prospects for return. To date, 100,000 displaced persons had been resettled. That operation was being successfully pursued, priority being given to housing conditions for displaced persons living in urban areas. However, difficulties persisted owing to the magnitude of the task. In that regard, the creation of livelihood opportunities remained an important issue. The Government of Azerbaijan was including refugees and displaced persons in its poverty reduction and economic development projects and strategies implemented in the various regions of the country. It was also developing a return programme with the active participation of international organizations, including UNHCR, and intended to increase its contribution to UNHCR in the coming years in line with its economic development.

58. **Mr. Guterres** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said he agreed with the representative of Austria that the protection of civilians was an essential component of the activities of UNHCR.

59. He welcomed the refugee assistance policy that the Gambia was implementing in spite of the major development difficulties that it had faced and the limited space available to it, and took note of its request for food aid.

60. He commended Burundi for the success of the programme that it had implemented in recent years to reintegrate 500,000 Burundian refugees, a programme that was remarkable given the density of the population and the resulting strain on the environment. He drew attention to the importance of tripartite cooperation between Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and UNHCR in implementing the agreement on voluntary repatriation of Burundian and Congolese refugees and of the cooperation with the United Republic of Tanzania in resolving the problem of the Mtabila camp.

61. He took note of the determination of the Government of Sri Lanka to resolve the problems of resettlement of displaced persons and affirmed the need to pay continued attention to protracted situations of displacement. While progress remained to be made in certain areas, 85 per cent of displaced persons in Sri Lanka had been able to return to their homes.

62. He noted the concern of Malawi that all States that had participated in the regional conference on mixed migration flows should implement effectively the recommendations issued at that event.

63. He thanked the Council of Europe and its Development Bank for their excellent cooperation with UNHCR in all areas and emphasized the great importance that UNHCR attached to the decisions of the European courts on refugee protection.

64. Welcoming the position of the Government of Nepal on the resettlement of Bhutanese refugees, he thanked the Government for cooperating with the core group of countries and thus facilitating the successful implementation of many resettlement operations.

65. Noting with satisfaction the cooperation between UNHCR and Malteser International in Thailand, he expressed the hope that new cooperation activities could be carried out in Myanmar and Sri Lanka.

66. He had high expectations of his forthcoming visit to Turkey, which would provide an opportunity to review bilateral cooperation in the areas of mixed migration flows and activities to combat trafficking in persons.

67. Lastly, he commended the Government of Azerbaijan for improving the living and housing conditions of displaced persons.

68. **The Chairperson**, said that before adjourning the fourth plenary meeting of the sixty-first session of the Executive Committee, he invited the Standing Committee to consider and adopt the draft report on its forty-ninth meeting, held on 21 September 2010 (document EC/61/SC/CRP.28). If there were no comments, he would take it that the draft document could be adopted.

69. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.