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## Third Committee

### Summary record of the 43rd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 3 November 2016, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Mejía Vélez. . . . . (Colombia)

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Agenda item 60: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions (*continued*)

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

**Agenda item 60: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions** (*continued*) ([A/71/12](#), [A/71/12/Add.1](#) and [A/71/354](#))

1. **Mr. Valli** (Monaco) said that the need for humanitarian aid had tripled in 10 years due to armed conflicts, violence, persecution, poverty, food insecurity, natural disasters and extreme climate events. It was unacceptable that half of the 65 million forcibly displaced people identified by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) were children, some unaccompanied. There was a need for dignified, humane methods of ensuring the safety of those fleeing conflicts and persecution, particularly women and children, who were also subject to sexual violence.

2. His Government was ensuring that refugees would continue to be welcomed in Monaco, which offered them opportunities for full integration and self-sufficiency. It also supported countries aiding refugees by providing funds prioritized for children and those in need of urgent medical care. The recently signed New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants had paved the way for a global compact on responsibility-sharing for refugees that would guarantee a more predictable, equitable and adequately resourced response. The global compact must be based on international human rights and refugee law to ensure that the rights of refugees and asylum seekers were protected.

3. Particular emphasis should be placed on the educational needs of refugee children; schooling was a fundamental right of child refugees and an invaluable advantage for integration into the host society. Schools also provided a safe place for refugee children, especially those who had been turned out of their homes and witnessed the horrors of war.

4. **Ms. Al Khater** (Qatar) said that her delegation was pleased that the High Commissioner's report ([A/71/12](#)) mentioned the specific needs of youth. Children and youth paid the hardest price of all; in Syria, the future generation of the entire country was marked by violence, traumas and lack of educational opportunities. Education was a necessary precondition for social and economic empowerment, and the best

preventive measure against radicalization and terrorism. Investments by Qatar in teachers and classrooms had allowed over 600,000 children in Syrian refugee camps to continue their education. Qatar had repeatedly urged the international community to take action to avoid a lost generation of university graduates in conflict situations; it was important to invest in the training of future leaders who would be responsible for post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction. Her delegation welcomed the inclusion in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants of a commitment to ensuring children could quickly go back to school once they reached their destination countries.

5. Lifesaving humanitarian assistance was not sustainable without an effective development strategy from the very outset. Her Government hoped that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development would provide a key platform for the inclusion of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons in national and local strategies aimed at addressing social needs, including education and job opportunities. It also believed that investment in peaceful, just and inclusive societies would avert crises in the long term and lead to sustained peace.

6. **Mr. Adnan** (Iraq) said that the seizure of a number of Iraqi towns and cities by the terrorist group Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) had forced huge numbers of people to seek shelter in safer areas. Since June 2014, more than 3 million people had been expelled from their homes by terrorist groups. ISIL had also destroyed homes and villages, denying civilians their most basic rights to shelter and freedom of movement. ISIL courts had, moreover, issued fatwas and decisions that provided for the expropriation of property belonging to Iraqi civilians.

7. His Government had taken prompt action to ameliorate the situation of internally displaced persons, inter alia, by establishing a high-level committee to provide such persons with shelter and relief assistance, improve the services they received, and accelerate efforts to improve their living conditions. It had also established camps for internally displaced persons in safe areas, provided internally displaced persons with financial and other forms of support, issued them with identity documents and paid the salaries of internally displaced employees. The committee was also

facilitating the integration of internally displaced students into local schools and universities.

8. Despite the challenges posed by terrorism and the difficult economic conditions in Iraq, his Government was also providing shelter and educational services to almost 239,000 Syrian refugees who had fled their homes to escape the ongoing war in their country and the brutal crimes perpetrated by ISIL and the Nusrah Front. The Iraqi authorities were, moreover, making every effort to offer Syrian refugees the same assistance as they offered to Iraqi citizens.

9. As it moved forward with its operations to liberate Mosul and other Iraqi cities from ISIL control, his Government was according the highest priority to the human rights of the inhabitants of those cities and, to protect civilians, the country's military and security authorities were operating in accordance with the highest professional standards. Those authorities were using military vehicles and aircraft to evacuate civilians from the theatre of operations, opening humanitarian corridors to allow them safe passage out of conflict zones, and providing civilians with emergency humanitarian assistance. Although a number of cities had been liberated, retreating terrorist gangs were using civilians as human shields and planting mines in streets, homes, schools and hospitals. Those mines had killed numerous personnel conducting de-mining operations and were seriously impeding the return of internally displaced persons to their homes.

10. In closing, he underscored that, although the intervention of foreign military ground forces would not be necessary, Iraq would continue to require logistical and technical assistance from the international community so that it could liberate all parts of the country from terrorist groups.

11. **Mr. Uğurluoğlu** (Turkey) said that his Government welcomed the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, and urged the international community to focus on removing the root causes of displacement, expanding legal pathways, increasing resettlement quotas and providing refugees with dignified solutions. Turkey would actively contribute its experience in refugee response.

12. He would not dignify the utterly baseless allegations of the Syrian representative with a response. The international community was witness to Turkey's humanitarian efforts to help the Syrian people; his Government had pursued an open-door policy since the outset of the crisis for those who had had to flee from the brutal violence of the Syrian regime. Despite challenges, the open-door policy was still in force, and the principle of non-refoulement was well respected. Turkey was now hosting the world's largest refugee community of over 3 million people, 2.7 million of whom were Syrian. Some 10 per cent of Syrians were being accommodated in temporary protection centres, and all those residing inside and outside the camps were provided with free access to health services, as well as access to the labour market under certain conditions. The biggest challenge was in the field of education. There were about 835,000 Syrian children of school age in Turkey, but, despite efforts by his Government and by civil society, it was possible to provide only about one third of them with education. He called for support from the international community so that all Syrian children could be enrolled in school.

13. In the face of rising xenophobia, Islamophobia and racism against refugees and migrants, it should be remembered that refugees alone were not a source of insecurity and terrorism. New and existing United Nations initiatives such as the Alliance of Civilizations could have an important role to play. While addressing root causes, Turkey was exerting every effort to prioritize the strong link between human mobility and development. Turkey would continue to highlight the need for better cooperation between humanitarian and development actors on the ground in order to find sustainable solutions to the needs of refugees and other displaced persons.

14. **Ms. Farouq** (Nigeria) said that her Government had developed a national migration policy to ensure protection of the human rights of migrants and displaced persons and conducted an annual Migration Dialogue with all stakeholders. It had ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa and was currently domesticating its provisions.

15. The main challenges currently faced by Nigeria resulted from internal displacement caused by the

Boko Haram insurgency. She thanked neighbouring countries for giving refuge to displaced Nigerians and harmonizing regional cross-border efforts to curb insurgents. Nigeria sought regional means of combatting challenges and sharing best practices. Her Government had launched a number of national humanitarian efforts aimed at rehabilitating internally displaced persons, restoring damaged infrastructure and providing schooling and vocational training. It had also set up a victim support fund and established a national committee on missing persons. Her Government was committed to the effective implementation of the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act of 2015, under which gender-based crimes were punished, and also to ensuring free passage of relief material across its borders. It would continue to train its military and security personnel in their humanitarian obligations. She called on the international community to incorporate the issue of internally displaced persons into the global compact on refugees and migrants.

16. **Ms. Mxakato-Diseko** (South Africa) said that the unprecedented number of forcibly displaced people in Africa imposed an increasing burden on host countries, many of which had their own socioeconomic challenges, and necessitated a collective global response based on equitable burden sharing. South Africa was gravely concerned by the large-scale refugee crises in sub-Saharan Africa and recognized the urgency with which States must address the root causes of forced displacement.

17. South Africa supported the outcomes of the May 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, which had brought renewed focus to global humanitarian crises, none of which should enjoy more attention and receive more funding than any other. The positive response to the Secretary General's call for an increase in funding for the Central Emergency Response Fund was encouraging. South Africa urged donors to heed the Secretary General's call and contribute generously.

18. South Africa was committed to fulfilling its international obligations in addressing the challenges of forcibly displaced people. The fact that 3.7 million persons had been recorded as stateless in 2015 also required urgent collective action.

19. **Mr. Salam** (Lebanon) said that, in the context of the world's largest crisis of enforced displacement

since the Second World War, it was important to recognize that there were two groups of victims: refugees and displaced persons, and host communities. Lebanon currently hosted the highest ratio of refugees and displaced persons in the world per capita and per square kilometre, which multiplied the challenges facing the country by increasing pressure on already limited resources and infrastructure, reducing housing availability, raising unemployment levels, impairing economic activity and investment, and threatening security. The only way forward was a global shift from providing only humanitarian assistance to addressing the development needs of refugees and displaced persons as well as those of the host communities.

20. Burden and responsibility sharing remained fundamental principles in addressing the consequences of forced displacement, while sustainable solutions to refugee situations needed to address, first and foremost, the root causes of their displacement. The specific context of each situation should also be taken into consideration. For example Lebanon, under its Constitution, could not be a country for resettlement or naturalization. His Government therefore reaffirmed the need to make the return of displaced persons and refugees one of the chief priorities in the commitment for durable solutions, and to start working on repatriation even when it was not yet an option.

21. **Mr. Idris** (Eritrea) said that the root causes of the deterioration of humanitarian situations in many parts of the world must be addressed to solve the refugee and displacement problem. Eritrea warned against confusing refugees with economic migrants in order to ensure that the needs of refugees were protected, and called on UNHCR to make a clear distinction in that regard, and to focus on its core mandate of protecting and providing assistance to refugees. Certain camps which were ostensibly funded and administrated by UNHCR were becoming centres of armed recruitment, which must be prevented.

22. Eritrea was a signatory of the African Union Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, and its record in dealing with refugees and migrants was exemplary. It maintained a policy of voluntary repatriation and opposed all forced repatriation or expulsion. Repatriated Eritreans faced no persecution and were assisted with their reintegration.

23. UNHCR was duty-bound to seek policy clarifications from countries of concern instead of second-guessing such countries or seeking third-party interpretation before issuing ineligibility guidelines. UNHCR had been wrong to classify Eritrean economic migrants as bona fide refugees, which had been a main contributory factor to the large influx of Eritrean young people in Europe. His Government once again requested UNHCR to review and rectify that classification.

24. **Mr. Gebru** (Ethiopia) said that Ethiopia was deeply concerned that 86 per cent of global refugees were being hosted by least developed and developing countries. Member States must do more to implement the commitments in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. Burden and responsibility sharing through expanded resettlement of refugees and financial support for host countries and communities was of critical importance. Enhancing development support for countries emerging from conflict also facilitated conditions for voluntary repatriation and reintegration of refugees.

25. Ethiopia operated an open door policy for refugees, and hosted the highest number of refugees in Africa. His Government had successfully domesticated international instruments for the protection and assistance of refugees, and was committed to achieving the three durable solutions of repatriation, resettlement and local integration. It had devised a policy document for protection of and assistance to refugees in the country by providing them with access to education, employment, work permits, bank accounts and driving licenses, as well as birth certificates for children born in Ethiopia, and was expanding basic social and health services and promoting the generation of job opportunities for local communities and refugees.

26. **Mr. Tsutsumi** (Japan) said that his Government would firmly implement the commitments it had announced in 2016 at the World Humanitarian Summit, the G-7 Ise-Shima Summit, the Leaders' Summit on Refugees and the United Nations Summit for Refugees and Migrants. At the same time, it expected agencies to pursue maximum effectiveness and efficiency while providing assistance. UNHCR must implement the Grand Bargain on humanitarian finance adopted at the World Humanitarian Summit and make its operations even more efficient. Japan welcomed the emphasis

placed on the humanitarian-development nexus throughout those meetings, which indicated the start of a paradigm shift. Donor countries should further increase and coordinate humanitarian and development financing, and agencies should collaborate beyond their respective fields.

27. Japan called on the entire international community to provide additional humanitarian assistance inside Syria and to assist host countries surrounding Syria which were accepting a huge number of refugees. Meanwhile, it must not be forgotten that refugee and displacement crises on the African continent were still critical. In order to solve humanitarian crises, including refugee issues, their root causes such as poverty, inequality and instability must be addressed. In that connection, Japan had co-hosted the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development in August 2016.

28. **Mr. Wu** Haitao (China) said that surging numbers of refugees not only impacted the countries concerned and threatened regional peace and stability but also hindered the recovery of the world economy, disrupted international order and created openings for terrorists, in addition to triggering humanitarian crises. Wars, conflicts, poverty and underdevelopment were the root causes of the refugee problem. In order to reduce the number of persons displaced by wars and conflicts, countries needed to uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, settle disputes through dialogue, promote more inclusive and sustainable growth of the world economy and help countries of origin to achieve long-term peace, stability, development and prosperity. Policy and financial support for refugees must be increased.

29. The international community must strengthen cooperation to address the refugee crisis: specifically it should accelerate implementation of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, leverage the coordinating role of organizations such as UNHCR and develop and implement comprehensive solutions. Countries of origin, transit and destination must shoulder their respective responsibilities, in line with their capacities. UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies needed to strengthen their coordination, rationalize their use of resources, enhance the emergency response to the refugee crisis and alleviate the burden of developing countries that had been

hosting refugees for years. The humanitarian nature of refugee protection mechanisms must be preserved in order to prevent politicization and abuse.

30. China had provided significant humanitarian assistance to Syria and other countries in the Middle East. His Government planned to provide further assistance, specifically earmarked for refugees, to appropriate countries and organizations; allocate some of the resources of the Chinese-funded United Nations peace and development trust fund to supporting developing countries' efforts to cope with refugees; and explore opportunities for triangular cooperation with international institutions and developing countries in support of refugees.

31. **Ms. Elhassan** (Sudan) said that, despite the many serious challenges it faced, her country continued to welcome, provide shelter to and protect huge numbers of refugees. Indeed, recent statistics revealed that there were some 2 million refugees in Sudan, including refugees from Syria, Yemen and South Sudan. Despite those numbers, her country remained fully committed to upholding its obligations under all regional and international human rights instruments to which it was a party, including the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, and the 1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa.

32. In 2014, her country had enacted a law on trafficking in persons and had amended its Asylum Act, which contained provisions on combating smuggling and trafficking in persons, to bring it into line with international instruments. Sudan had also amended its Passport and Immigration Act. Furthermore, in coordination with the African Union and the European Union, her country had hosted the Regional Ministerial Conference on Human Trafficking and Smuggling in the Horn of Africa in October 2014, and a follow-up conference had been held on that theme in Italy later that year. Regrettably the recommendations made at those conferences had not been implemented. She therefore urged donor countries to facilitate the implementation of the outcomes of the conferences, and to provide Sudan with the support it required to combat human trafficking and smuggling effectively. Sudan had signed border control agreements with neighbouring States to strengthen its efforts to combat human trafficking and smuggling, and an agreement

with UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to address those phenomena, particularly in the east of Sudan, where most refugees and asylum seekers were located.

33. More than 600,000 refugees from South Sudan had taken refuge in her country. In accordance with international law, her Government had moved swiftly to register and classify those refugees, and was providing them with essential services. Her Government had also established a working group comprising representatives from relevant national authorities in Sudan and UNHCR to oversee the registration of refugees in states bordering South Sudan and in the capital, Khartoum.

34. Many Sudanese citizens who had taken refuge in neighbouring States over the years were returning home. For example, some 61,000 of the approximately 240,000 Sudanese refugees in Chad had returned to Darfur following the restoration of peace and security in that region. To encourage more Sudanese refugees to return home, her delegation urged UNHCR to implement repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction projects in Sudan to promote the safety of returnees and ensure that they enjoyed reliable access to water and to health and educational services.

35. In closing, she underscored that the National Dialogue, launched by the President of Sudan to promote social cohesion, would benefit all sectors of society, including refugees in Sudan. She reiterated Sudan's commitment to continued cooperation with UNHCR and the broader international community through partnerships that were based on burden sharing, and called for the cancellation of developing countries' debts.

36. **Ms. Sukkar** (Jordan) said that, while some States with much larger economies than the economy of Jordan had failed to offer asylum to more than a few thousand Syrian refugees, more than 130,000 Syrians — equivalent to almost 20 per cent of Jordan's population — had sought shelter in her country. Jordan was striving to provide shelter, job opportunities and education and healthcare services to the Syrian refugees in its territory, but its capacity to address their needs, as well as the needs of Jordanian citizens, was being undermined by the serious economic challenges facing her country and the region. Moreover, the assistance

provided by the international community to help Jordan address the needs of Syrian refugees had covered only 35 per cent of the costs it had incurred in that regard. She therefore urged Member States to increase their support to her country so that it could deal effectively with the repercussions of the crisis in Syria — a crisis that had become truly international in scope.

37. Humanitarian initiatives alone would not resolve the Syrian crisis: the suffering of Syrians could only be brought to an end on the basis of a political solution. The international community must therefore shoulder its responsibility to support Jordan by taking action to promote security and stability in the region and beyond, and by providing adequate financial resources so that Jordan could continue to provide humanitarian assistance to Syrian refugees — a critical task that her country was undertaking on behalf of all Member States.

38. Her delegation underscored the need to resolve the decades-long humanitarian crisis faced by Palestinian refugees, who must be allowed to exercise their inalienable right of return to their homes and their right to compensation, in accordance with international law, relevant United Nations resolutions and the terms of reference for the peace process.

39. In closing, she underscored that the long-term failure of the international community to resolve pressing regional issues, and its inability to find political solutions to conflicts that provided for the return of refugees to their homes, had exacerbated a sense of injustice and frustration, particularly among young people, that could, in turn, increase the appeal of extremist terrorist groups and the ideologies they espoused.

40. **Mr. Konfourou** (Mali) said that international solidarity was needed to end the humanitarian crises resulting from armed conflicts, natural disasters and climate change. The 2012 political and security crisis in Mali had compelled hundreds of thousands of Malians, primarily women and children, to flee their homes, with approximately 500,000 seeking refuge within Mali and 150,000 in neighbouring States. His Government had accorded a high level of priority to management of the crisis: *inter alia*, it had created a national humanitarian action policy, with an accompanying action plan for the period from 2016-

2020, which was currently being implemented; drafted regional emergency intervention plans for four areas in the north of the country in coordination with IOM, UNHCR and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; and, with UNHCR and three neighbouring countries, was working to optimize conditions for the return of 52,028 refugees and displaced persons. Along with partners, it was also providing comprehensive assistance to Malians in refugee camps and displaced persons within Mali. His Government would intensify its work to gradually normalize the security situation with a view to enabling all Malian citizens to return home.

41. **Mr. Kang** Sangwook (Republic of Korea) said that no country was insulated from the effects of the humanitarian crisis, which was of unprecedented magnitude and severity. 2016 was an important year for UNHCR: its new responsibility for implementing the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants was an opportunity to find a solution to the crisis. To tackle funding shortfalls, Member States needed to meet the funding commitments they had made at the World Humanitarian Summit and the Summit for Refugees and Migrants; they should seek to increase their contributions and engage more actively with the private sector. Member States should also use the scarce resources at their disposal as effectively as possible. UNHCR must be innovative in its responses, use cash interventions effectively, work closely with partners and strengthen collaboration with development actors from the onset of crises. At the same time it must steadfastly uphold the principle of non-refoulement and pay particular attention to the human rights of persons of concern in all its activities, in line with its core protection mandate.

42. Since adopting a refugee law three years earlier, his Government had upgraded the national asylum system and scaled up reception capacity. It was currently implementing a pilot resettlement programme. His Government had already significantly increased its financial contributions to humanitarian assistance, and had pledged an additional \$230 million in September 2016.

43. **Ms. Ilić** (Serbia) said that, as a country on the so-called Western Balkans route, Serbia had contributed significantly to mitigating the plight of more than 700,000 refugees and migrants over the past

18 months. A huge number of refugees and migrants remained along the route despite its having been officially closed since March 2016; in Serbia alone, 5,000 displaced people were living in reception and asylum centres. The country's capacity was being strained and, worryingly — as winter was approaching — international assistance was not forthcoming. A comprehensive solution was needed to share the burden in Europe, and elsewhere in the world.

44. Long before the current wave of migrants and refugees, hundreds of thousands of people had been expelled from parts of the former Yugoslavia and internally displaced from the southern Serbian province of Kosovo and Metohija. Efforts must continue to find permanent solutions. The situation of more than 200,000 internally displaced persons from or in Kosovo and Metohija had not improved since 1999; less than 5 per cent had returned home. Better coordination and cooperation between the UNHCR presences in Belgrade and Priština, and with the relevant local authorities, was required to facilitate displaced persons' return and their local integration.

45. Through the Regional Housing Programme, the Governments of Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Montenegro, supported by international partners and bilateral donors, were cooperating to find housing and durable solutions for refugees. The international donor community was urged to support the programme in order to find housing solutions for 75,000 people in the four countries. Serbia hosted the largest number of refugees and its implementation of the programme was the most complex; her Government therefore believed that no formal implementation deadlines should be imposed.

46. Her Government had not endorsed the April 2014 UNHCR recommendation on refugee status cessation for refugees from Croatia who had fled during the 1991-1995 conflict because it believed that the refugee problem could not be resolved through purely administrative measures, and the third progress report on implementation of the recommendation appeared to justify its position. However, the Croatian Government, which had wholeheartedly endorsed the 2014 recommendation, should follow up on the findings and recommendations contained in the progress report and provide a secure environment for the sustainable return of its citizens while ensuring that

their rights, including pension and property rights, were respected.

47. **Mr. Yaremenko** (Ukraine) expressed gratitude to UNHCR and the other international organizations, and countries, that were rendering humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons in Ukraine, in full compliance with the norms of international law and Ukrainian legislation, in the context of the great difficulties caused by Russian aggression and the hybrid war being waged against his country. Russian aggression and Russian-backed hostilities were the root cause of the forced displacement of Ukrainian citizens; the longer they continued, the greater the number of displaced persons and refugees would be. The Russian Federation was skilfully manipulating the figures on the number of internally displaced persons in an attempt to mislead the international community. Russian aggression was the sole cause of the dire humanitarian situation in parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The Russian Federation's provision of sophisticated weaponry, ammunition and mercenaries to the occupied part of Donbas and its support for and training of illegal armed terrorist groups were significantly destabilizing the situation on the ground. Those actions by the Russian Federation were well documented with satellite imagery by reputable international organizations including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the United Nations and international non-governmental organizations including Amnesty International.

48. Ukraine was home to the highest number of internally displaced persons of any European country: some 1.7 million people, most of whom were children and older persons. His Government was doing all it could to provide them with protection, shelter and social services, and ensure that their human rights were respected. It remained committed to cooperating with all relevant international organizations; in that connection, it looked forward to the High Commissioner's visit scheduled for November 2016, which should give fresh impetus to intensified activities to ensure that internally displaced persons would have decent living conditions over the winter.

49. Ukraine's rapid transition from a donor country to a recipient of humanitarian aid showed the need for a new paradigm for humanitarian action. His Government welcomed the New York Declaration for



Refugees and Migrants and would contribute to its implementation. There was an urgent need for an international mechanism to bring to justice a State that violated international law and fundamental freedoms, forcing civilians from their homes, and for an internationally binding framework to protect the rights of internally displaced persons. It was also high time to re-establish the position of Special Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons.

50. **Ms. Kalamwina** (Zambia) said that since gaining independence in 1966, Zambia had hosted thousands of refugees, most of them fleeing the liberation struggles in neighbouring southern African countries. It was currently hosting 54,000 persons of concern. Through an ongoing programme to integrate refugees from Angola and Rwanda, implemented with UNHCR and partners including the Governments of Canada, Japan and the United States, her Government had so far cleared 8,000 refugees for the issuance of residence permits, which would accord them the same rights and freedoms that Zambian citizens enjoyed. Along with cooperating partners, including UNHCR, the United Nations Development Programme and other international agencies, it was working to strengthen the socioeconomic development of the two areas in which the Angolan and Rwandan refugees were settled, which would benefit both the refugee and the host communities. Despite its efforts, however, the provision of essentials such as water and sanitation services, nutritious food, health care and shelter, remained a challenge. Her Government therefore welcomed the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which emphasized the need to support countries that rescued, received and hosted large numbers of refugees.

51. Her Government had adopted a national resettlement policy targeting internally displaced persons, the primary aims of which were to prevent illegal land allocation and create stable, sustainable settlements. It was in the process of introducing a refugee bill to replace the existing Refugee Control Act of 1970. The bill would address gaps in refugee protection and expand opportunities for durable solutions for refugees.

52. **Ms. Karimdoost** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that foreign occupation, terrorism, foreign interference, destabilization of legitimate Governments and regime

change policies continued to displace massive numbers of people, with far-reaching effects; there was little indication that the perpetrators of such acts had learned their lessons. Innocent civilians of affected countries bore the brunt of those intrusive policies. A joint response based on the shared responsibility of the international community was essential.

53. Her country had hosted large populations of refugees, sometimes amounting to over 3 million people, and had thus borne a heavy economic, political and social burden. She stressed the importance of international burden-sharing and the need for a clearly defined mechanism to assist countries that were hosting large numbers of refugees. The international community should take steps to solve the refugee problem through sustainable voluntary repatriation as well as resettlement in third countries.

54. Her Government had refrained from closing its borders and went above and beyond its international obligations in welcoming refugees, mostly on its own limited resources in the absence of international assistance. It provided refugees, inter alia, with education and free health and medical services, as well as job opportunities. The literacy rate among refugees residing in Iran had reached 67 per cent, and her Government was providing health insurance for all refugees with hard-to-treat diseases and groups in vulnerable situations. The 460,000 refugee children attending school free of charge in Iran constituted an enormous burden on the educational system; donor countries had clearly failed to meet their commitments related to those children. In the past 15 years only 13,000 refugees had left Iran to resettle in third countries, while the annual birth rate among refugees in Iran had reached 45,000. More countries needed to resettle refugees, therefore, and receiving countries should increase their quotas and treat the 10 per cent UNHCR-recommended quota as a baseline.

55. **Ms. Mballa Eyenga** (Cameroon) said that the scale of ongoing forced displacements precluded a response by individual States and posed overwhelming challenges for host countries and local communities. Governments around the world, with the support of international organizations and private sector and other partners, must take concrete action, underpinned by the principles of burden sharing and solidarity, to improve the management of the enormous movements of people

and to build refugees' resilience. Refugees' human rights and fundamental freedoms must be respected and they must be allowed to keep their independence and dignity.

56. Owing to the violence committed by the terrorist group Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region, 9 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance. Almost one third of them had lost their homes and possessions; thousands had taken refuge in camps, while others had been received by communities which were already living in poverty. A great deal of work and considerable resources were needed to ensure that their basic needs were met, in particular in the areas of health, education, food, shelter and drinking water and sanitation infrastructure, and to put in place an early recovery approach. Friendly countries and humanitarian organizations, including United Nations agencies, had drafted a plan for a humanitarian response for 2016. The plan had been costed at \$282 million, but only 31 per cent of that amount had been mobilized to date. She therefore called for more international support, which should initially take the form of emergency aid, but evolve over time to support resilience and recovery, and indeed development, through funding of socioeconomic projects for the benefit of local populations.

57. Her Government would continue to provide support to the affected populations to the extent that its capacity permitted. It had to both defend the country in the struggle against Boko Haram and attempt to meet the needs of the 350,000 refugees in its territory. It was pursuing solutions that would help displaced persons to become independent, such as granting them access to arable land and seeds. On the initiative of UNHCR, her Government had recently organized a training course on job seeking and self-employment for refugees in Yaoundé. Cameroon was hosting a large number of child refugees; in that connection, it was vital for the international community to ensure that the specific needs of displaced students were met.

58. **Mr. Joshi** (India) said that it was important to recognize the crucial contribution made by developing countries in hosting refugees despite the fragility of their economies. The international community must strengthen cooperation with host States and ensure that the burden was fairly shared. In order to protect refugees and meet their needs, it was essential to

clearly differentiate them from economic migrants. The primary responsibility for internally displaced persons lay with States; before mainstreaming any activities relating to internally displaced persons UNHCR should duly consider its mandate, the modalities of intervention, availability of resources and all potential implications. The root causes of forced displacement must be addressed by preventing armed conflicts, combating terrorism, building peace and facilitating sustainable development and governance. Sustained and coordinated action was needed to combat human trafficking and transnational organized crime.

59. There was a long history of large communities seeking shelter in India. Those seeking refuge had never been turned away; India had time and again demonstrated its commitment to the principles of protection. His Government continued to work with UNHCR as well as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, to which it contributed financially.

60. **Mr. Rabi** (Morocco) said that paragraphs 70 and 72 of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, as well as paragraph 5(d) of annex I, committed States parties to registering refugees, yet for over 40 years unregistered refugees had been living in the Tindouf camps. They were the only refugees in the world for which a census, a prerequisite for all refugee populations and for the implementation of the mandate of UNHCR, had been denied by the host country, in violation of international law. Noting that registration was the only way to guarantee the safety of refugees, he urged UNHCR and the international community to use all available means to ensure that the people living in those camps were properly registered.

61. Recalling paragraphs 5(e) and 6(f) of annex I of the Declaration, according to which States must "use the registration process to identify specific assistance needs and protection arrangements" and "increase support for cash-based delivery mechanisms and other innovative means [...] to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches its beneficiaries", respectively, he noted with deep concern the continued systematic, organized and large-scale misappropriation of humanitarian aid earmarked for the Tindouf refugee camps.

62. Recalling also paragraph 5(h) of annex I, which called upon States to "take measures to maintain the

civilian and humanitarian nature of refugee camps and settlements”, as well as paragraph 73 of the Declaration, which underlined that host States were responsible for ensuring that the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps was not “compromised by the presence or activities of armed elements”, he said that the Tindouf camps were the only refugee camps in the world run neither by UNHCR nor by the host country, but instead by an armed group with no internationally recognized authority, leaving residents isolated and vulnerable.

63. The Declaration did not contain any new obligations. It was based on international humanitarian law and was intended to reaffirm States’ obligations to refugees. As a host country, Algeria had a legal and a moral obligation to fulfil its commitments.

64. **Mr. Mziray** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that, as highlighted in the High Commissioner’s report (A/71/12), sub-Saharan Africa hosted the majority of refugees worldwide and continued to experience a significant number of simultaneous large-scale refugee crises. Developing countries were struggling to cope with hosting large numbers of refugees, who outnumbered locals in some areas. Challenges included inadequate resources, spread of disease and environmental degradation. In addition, as many refugees came from conflict zones, host countries also had to contend with the spread of small arms and light weapons, which meant that Governments had to find additional resources to deploy security forces to maintain peace and security.

65. Despite inadequate support, his country was striving to fulfil its commitment to address the refugee crisis; the United Republic of Tanzania was home to more than 270,000 refugees and asylum seekers and over 162,000 refugees from Burundi had been naturalized in 2014. However, his Government was struggling to finance its integration programme for naturalized citizens as the donor community had not delivered on its pledge to assist with funding. Moreover, as in other developing countries, refugee camps and settlements in the United Republic of Tanzania tended to enjoy better social services than the host communities; in order to build social cohesion and reduce friction, his Government had had to change its approach.

66. If there was one lesson to be learned from the previous few years, it was that individual States working alone could not solve the refugee crisis. International cooperation must be strengthened to address large movements of refugees.

67. **Mr. Mikayilli** (Azerbaijan) said that his delegation was deeply concerned by the magnitude of internal displacement; the international community should strengthen the level of its involvement to help host countries cope with the increasing refugee burden. His delegation supported efforts to increase the visibility of internally displaced persons. In that connection, he was pleased that reference had been made to internal displacement in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Agenda for Humanity and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. He also welcomed the signing of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa by 40 States and expressed the hope that other regions would follow suit in producing binding documents on internal displacement.

68. Azerbaijan was particularly sensitive to the issue of internally displaced persons given that the occupation of its territories had led to huge internal displacement. The country had one of highest rates of internally displaced persons per capita in the world, with more than 618,000 internally displaced persons. For more than 25 years, their right to return to their homeland had been denied. His Government had made significant progress in tackling the problem of internally displaced persons, spending over \$6 billion over the past 20 years and resettling more than 250,000 people. Its efforts in that regard had been recognized by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, with whom Azerbaijan cooperated closely.

69. In order to address the needs of internally displaced persons in Azerbaijan and ensure the full restoration of their human rights, a resolution to the conflict must be found and the occupation brought to an end. His delegation would spare no efforts to ensure the return of internally displaced persons to their native lands.

70. **Mr. Manano** (Uganda) said that the world was experiencing unprecedented levels of human mobility resulting from the search for new economic

opportunities and escape from armed conflict, poverty, food insecurity, terrorism and human rights abuses, at a time when globally the asylum space was shrinking. His Government's approach was that everyone should be treated with dignity. Refugee protection had been integrated into the second national development plan and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Uganda, and received dedicated funding from the national budget.

71. At the regional level, Uganda had championed the processes that had culminated in the adoption of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. His Government supported the move towards a global compact on refugees and believed that the Ugandan model would be instrumental in shaping the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework.

72. He called upon the international community to address the gap between humanitarian and development assistance by developing a refugee settlement transformative agenda based on the one contained in the second national development plan of Uganda, and to tackle the root causes of the refugee crisis so that refugees could return to their countries of origin at the earliest opportunity. In that connection, the international community and countries of origin should acknowledge that the refugee phenomenon was not permanent but transitional, which was the basis on which the refugee policy of Uganda was premised.

73. Noting that prevention was the best response, he called upon States to invest in disaster prevention, not only in their own countries but also in resource-stressed countries. He also urged the international community to emulate his country's integrated model, which had improved the lives of internally displaced persons and refugees and enabled them to contribute to Uganda's development, peace and stability.

74. **Mr. Bessedik** (Algeria) said that lack of infrastructure and resources made it extremely difficult for host countries to cope with large numbers of refugees. He therefore called upon the international community to share some of the burden.

75. Algeria was committed to fulfilling its obligations under international law and providing humanitarian assistance to the 165,000 refugees living in Tindouf. His delegation fully supported the work of

UNHCR, in particular voluntary repatriation in accordance with the relevant resolutions.

76. Responding to the statement made by the representative of Morocco, he said that his delegation rejected the allegations concerning the misappropriation of aid. Algeria provided humanitarian assistance to the refugees from Western Sahara in cooperation with a number of organizations based on the ground, including UNHCR, the World Food Programme, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and a dozen other non-governmental organizations. While registration was the responsibility of the host country, the refugees could not be registered until the question of Western Sahara had been resolved.

77. **Mr. Warraich** (Pakistan) said that 80 per cent of all refugees were living in developing countries; five countries, including Pakistan, hosted more than 50 per cent of those refugees. Many of those displacement situations were protracted in nature: of the 16 million refugees under the mandate of UNHCR, 6.7 million were in a protracted displacement situation, a state of affairs that did not receive the attention it deserved.

78. The adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants had been a momentous step; the next challenge was how to translate it into reality. His delegation supported the strategic direction of UNHCR, as set out in the five core orientations outlined by the High Commissioner, was a step in the right direction, and the proposed global compact on refugees. The compact should be based on the principle of fair and equitable burden-sharing: geographical proximity alone could not be the sole measure of responsibility. Host countries and communities needed continued support. Going forward, it was necessary to address the root causes of displacement and forced migration.

79. For nearly four decades, Pakistan had hosted millions of Afghan refugees. Despite dwindling financial support from the international community, his Government had pursued a policy of encouraging Afghan children to get an education, as well as providing access to other public services such as health care. It supported the safe and dignified return of all 2.5 million Afghan refugees living in Pakistan to their homeland. In the course of 2016, 500,000 refugees had returned to their homes, but UNHCR had only sufficient resources to repatriate a further 55,000. The

international community must, therefore, step up its commitment to providing the necessary resources to UNHCR to support the sustainable return and reintegration of Afghan refugees. His Government was looking forward to working closely with the Afghan Government and international partners to create the pull factors and conditions conducive to their return.

80. **Ms. Klein** (Madagascar), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that SADC would strive to address the plight of refugees and migrants and to tackle the root causes of forced displacement, principally underdevelopment, which manifested itself in armed conflict, pervasive poverty and unemployment. SADC was committed to upholding the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol, including the principle of non-refoulement, and to observing international standards for refugee protection.

81. She recalled the memorandum of understanding signed by SADC and UNHCR in 1996, which committed member States to addressing the social, economic and political issues in the southern African region that had a bearing on the root causes of forced population displacement, refugee protection, humanitarian assistance and the search for durable solutions. The collective efforts of all States members of SADC were needed to fully operationalize the memorandum.

82. SADC would continue to address the root causes of forced displacement through high-level political mediation and conciliation efforts, including peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction and development. In addition, SADC member States would work with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that the rights of forcibly displaced persons in their respective countries were upheld.

83. **Ms. Duran** (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that the main causes of forced displacement were well known. Yet not enough was being done by States to prevent and resolve armed conflict, and far too little was being done to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law. ICRC welcomed the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and would support the elaboration of the two global compacts outlined in the Declaration by sharing its experience and expertise.

Noting that the majority of people uprooted by armed conflict remained in their own countries, she called upon States to continue to focus on internal displacement, which continued to be one of the gravest humanitarian concerns of the day.

84. Where there were movements of people across international borders, a holistic approach was required, which should also seek to prevent and address internal displacement. Such an approach should include effectively protecting and assisting all civilians in countries affected by armed conflict, and much greater respect for international humanitarian law remained key. While ICRC was ready to play its part, she stressed that the primary responsibility for protecting and assisting civilians lay with the parties to armed conflict.

85. As part of its continued support for the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, ICRC had recently issued a report setting out the conclusions of a stocktaking exercise. The report identified lessons learned, good practices and key challenges regarding States' efforts to translate the Convention into real improvements for internally displaced persons and host communities. One of the cross-cutting issues that had emerged from the report was the need to engage in active dialogue with displaced and host communities. Internally displaced persons must be able to participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes so that their individual perspectives, needs and capacities were taken into account.

86. Displaced children were vulnerable to family separation and forced recruitment, and often had psychological and psychosocial needs related to the trauma of displacement. In addition, many did not have access to education. ICRC hoped that the upcoming High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges would explore how authorities and organizations could ensure the inclusion of displaced children in educational and other programmes. ICRC continued to engage with parties to armed conflict regarding their obligations to civilians under international humanitarian law, including the protection of schools, teachers and students. It also called upon States and parties to armed conflict to ensure that displaced children could continue to go to

school, including through the lifting of administrative barriers.

87. **Ms. Giordano** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) said that migrants and refugees faced many common challenges and had similar vulnerabilities, regardless of their status. The goals of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants must be translated into tangible action, as strong commitments by States were essential to combating abuse, exploitation and human trafficking. Far too many migrants and refugees were dying on the journey to safety, while unaccompanied children were disappearing and men, women and children were being preyed upon by gangs, or held and abused in illegal camps.

88. All States must take the necessary steps to ensure that migrants and refugees could travel in safety and dignity, and to protect them against accidents, attacks, forcible division of families and being trafficked and abused. States must ensure that migrants and refugees had access to health care, legal advice, food and shelter whilst travelling, as well as access to information in order to make decisions that would protect their safety and dignity. Once they reached their destinations, States must uphold their rights under national and international law. Their social integration should be facilitated, while politicians and the media must work actively to counter increasing xenophobia and racism in public discourse.

89. The international community must work actively together to change the current frightening narrative around migrants and refugees. While it was legitimate to have different points of view about migration and refugee flows, xenophobia was unacceptable. Discrimination and violence stemming from irrational fears based solely on national origin must not be tolerated. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies were working with, and for, vulnerable migrants and refugees to help them meet their immediate needs and integrate into their host societies. The experience and insights of the volunteers of those Societies could contribute to collective efforts to design a new global governance framework for migrants and refugees, through the negotiation and adoption of the proposed global compacts. IFRC stood ready to work with UNHCR and other partners to develop a far more comprehensive response at the

outset of large-scale refugee movements to address immediate humanitarian needs and include more development-humanitarian cooperation, alternative admission pathways, and support to host communities.

*Statements made in exercise of the right of reply*

90. **Mr. Gotyaev** (Russian Federation) said that it was regrettable that the representatives of Ukraine and Georgia had once again used a discussion on a humanitarian item of the Committee's agenda to raise issues that did not fall within its mandate and area of competence, namely the international legal status of certain territories. Georgia should acknowledge the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which had been independent sovereign States since 2008, and discuss any issues directly with the authorities of those countries or as part of the Geneva International Discussions.

91. His delegation stressed once again that the Republic of Crimea was an entity of the Russian Federation on a completely legitimate basis in full accord with international law. The human rights situation in the region had improved significantly since Crimea's reunification with the Russian Federation. Residents had full access to international human rights protection mechanisms in accordance with the Russian Constitution, Russian law, and international agreements to which the Russian Federation was a party.

92. Ukraine was once again spreading lies regarding the situation in the south-east of the country. It was clearly attempting to divert responsibility for the situation in Ukraine and to provide excuses for its criminal policies, which had forced tens of thousands of Ukrainians to leave their homes. The Ukrainian authorities were unwilling to take steps to rectify the situation. The real reasons for the forced displacement of Ukrainians abroad and their mass movements within Ukraine were the crimes committed by Ukrainian authorities and ultra-nationalists, which had initiated an internal armed conflict in the south-east of the country. Ukraine was, in essence, waging a criminal war against its own people.

93. The representative of Ukraine had failed to mention that the Russian Federation had accepted over 1 million Ukrainian citizens fleeing those threats, was regularly earmarking part of its voluntary contribution

to the budget of UNHCR for its operations in Ukraine, and was providing humanitarian assistance to the population suffering in south-eastern Ukraine from the criminal actions of the Ukrainian authorities; nearly 60 humanitarian convoys had been sent to Ukraine from the Russian Federation.

94. It was evident that the key to successfully resolving the issue of Ukrainian internally displaced persons and refugees was a permanent ceasefire and a political settlement of the situation in south-east Ukraine on the basis of the Minsk Agreements. Unfortunately, the Ukrainian authorities seemed to be doing everything possible to avoid their responsibility for those agreements. The rhetoric in Ukrainian statements at the United Nations revealed an awkward attempt to disguise the criminal inaction of Ukraine. His delegation called on the Ukrainian authorities to stop blaming external forces for their crimes and mistakes, and focus on overcoming the grave humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, including ensuring full protection of the rights of internally displaced persons.

95. **Mr. Yaremenko** (Ukraine) said that the representative of the Russian Federation did not seem to prepare for Committee meetings, and merely repeated the same propaganda that could be found on Russian television channels. Russian humanitarian assistance to Ukraine amounted to supplying weapons to Ukraine and deploying troops. In August 2014, 10 members of the Russian armed forces had been captured in Ukraine, and two officers from the Russian special forces were captured in May 2015. It was not clear what they were doing in Ukraine, but they had killed a Ukrainian army officer in Ukrainian territory. The only humanitarian assistance the Russian Federation could provide was to stop sending arms, ammunition and combatants to Ukraine and fully withdraw its troops. The existing problems had not been caused by internal conflict but by Russian aggression towards Ukraine. With regard to Russian allegations that his Government had harmed its people, he asked delegations to recall the two Chechen wars and the artillery attacks which had caused widespread devastation. The Russian Federation must leave the territory of Ukraine.

96. **Ms. Kupradze** (Georgia), responding to the representative of the Russian Federation, said that the comments her delegation had made at the 42nd

meeting, as part of its statement on the work of UNHCR, had been in reference to the attempts of the Russian Federation to undermine and politicize the right of return, a fundamental right of all individuals and one of the guiding principles of displacement. It was unwise to question that principle, and the comments made by the representative of the Russian Federation were irrelevant.

97. The right of return could not be fulfilled by the displaced Georgian population because ethnic Georgians had been subjected to several waves of forced expulsion from their homes, leaving their regions practically depopulated due to ethnic cleansing. Those regions were under illegal Russian military occupation, and no international monitoring mechanisms were allowed on the ground by the occupation forces.

98. With regard to the Geneva International Discussions, it should be recalled that there were two parties in the conflict; Georgia, which was defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the Russian Federation, which was continuously and aggressively violating it. Her delegation would continue to raise those issues at every instance, first and foremost at the United Nations, including at the Human Rights Council, until they were addressed in accordance with international humanitarian and human rights law, and international refugee law.

99. **Mr. Bessedik** (Algeria) said that the Moroccan delegation was fixated on Algeria. The issue under consideration at the United Nations did not concern Algeria, but Western Sahara, which had been a Non-Self-Governing Territory since 1963 and was seeking to exercise its right to self-determination. General Assembly resolution 34/37 urged Morocco to terminate the occupation of the Territory of Western Sahara and recommended that the Frente Polisario, the representative of the people of Western Sahara, should participate fully in any search for a solution.

100. The antics of the representative of Morocco were delaying a solution to the problem; the refugee situation was not the central issue, but a consequence that must be taken into account with all due attention. His Government's position would never change, as the situation was a matter of principle involving fairness, justice, solidarity and the right of people to freely determine their own futures. That position applied to

all Non-Self-Governing Territories as it involved decolonization, with which Algeria was familiar from its own experience. The Sahrawi people themselves, not Morocco, Algeria or any other party, must be able to decide for themselves on their status. A settlement to the conflict was required as a matter of priority.

101. With regard to the issue of torture and militarization in the occupied Sahrawi territories, his delegation's assertions were based on factual information set out in the reports of human rights treaty bodies. Those reports mentioned torture and imprisonment of all people, not just demonstrators, who advocated independence or self-determination. On the issue of diversion of humanitarian aid, it was puzzling that Morocco seemed to be calling for an end to humanitarian aid to people it claimed were Moroccan, which would mean that it would be starving its own people. As the host country, Algeria would ensure that registration of refugees was carried out when the global settlement process was started.

102. **Mr. Rabi** (Morocco) said that Algeria kept boasting about what it was doing for people in the Tindouf camps, yet it was shameful that the Algerian Government was profiting from impoverished refugees through the value added tax (VAT) it had imposed on humanitarian aid sent to the camps. The European Parliament had determined that, until the beginning of 2016, goods to be distributed to Sahrawi people in Algeria had been subject to local VAT, the rates of which varied depending on the goods. Since 2004, regular representations had been made to the Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Finance to recover those taxes. The European Commission had estimated that the amount of taxes paid on goods for refugees between 2010 and 2014 had totalled around 1 million euros, an average of 200,000 euros per year or 2 per cent of the amount provided by the European Union. While that sum could seem small in the humanitarian context, it was a considerable amount for needy refugees. Algeria was in no position to discuss humanitarian aid to the Tindouf camps when it was opposing all attempts to find a solution to the conflict and was benefiting from it financially.

103. Although Algeria denied the existence of diversion of humanitarian aid, a report by the European Anti-fraud Office issued in January 2015 had found that a significant amount of humanitarian aid to the

Tindouf camps had been diverted, partly by overestimating the number of refugees and therefore the amount of aid provided. The diversion of aid occurred when the goods arrived in the port of Oran in Algeria, and during the journey between Oran and the Tindouf camps. Instead of being distributed to refugees, goods financed by international aid had been stored in several secret warehouses to be sold in the camps for the personal enrichment of those responsible for the diversion. Prisoners of war had moved those goods and constructed buildings using international aid.

104. **Mr. Gotyaev** (Russian Federation) said that it was regrettable that the statements made by the representatives of Ukraine and Georgia were not relevant to the Committee agenda or to the item under consideration, once again confirming that both delegations were attempting to politicize the discussion on refugees. UNHCR had reported that internally displaced persons in Ukraine were unable to receive social benefits, including pensions, that freedom of movement across the demarcation line was highly restricted, and that the logistical and transport blockade continued in certain regions in south-eastern Ukraine. With regard to the comments made about Russian humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, Committee members should read the reports of relevant United Nations humanitarian agencies.

105. **Mr. Yaremenko** (Ukraine) said that, since the Committee was discussing internally displaced persons, it was fully relevant to point out that foreign aggression on the part of the Russian Federation was the root cause of the 1.7 million internally displaced persons in Ukraine. His delegation read all United Nations documents very carefully.

106. **Ms. Kupradze** (Georgia) said that the right of return, forced displacement, human rights violations and ethnic cleansing were all humanitarian and human rights topics, which was the reason that they were being considered in the Committee.

107. **Mr. Bessedik** (Algeria) said that the situation in Western Sahara was an issue of decolonization, as indicated in all relevant United Nations resolutions. Recent challenges included the attack against the Secretary-General during his visit to the camps, and the expulsion of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, which set a very



dangerous precedent. The Moroccan representative's focus on groundless allegations showed that he had run out of arguments and had not been able to convince anyone of his point of view. Such allegations would not change the reality of Sahrawi people, who aspired to the right to self-determination.

108. The report mentioned by the representative of Morocco had not been endorsed by any European institution, and the European Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources had indicated in 2015 that allegations of aid diversion were unfounded. His Government's position was unwavering and could not be changed by threats, pressure or blackmail. It was strange that the Moroccan representative had targeted Algeria alone, even though a number of countries supported the just cause of the Sahrawi people. The key issue was to find a solution on how to implement the right to self-determination.

109. **Mr. Rabi** (Morocco) said that the representative of Algeria was avoiding replying to the substance of his remarks. He had not made allegations, but had simply read from a European Union report, and it was incorrect to say that report had not been endorsed. An April 2015 European Parliament resolution had called on the European Commission to clarify the measures taken in response to the findings of the report and had urged the Commission to ensure that the Algerian or Sahrawi individuals incriminated by the report no longer had access to aid funded by European Union taxpayers.

110. Algeria claimed to champion the right of all peoples to self-determination, but continued to hold an unacceptable, incomprehensible and indefensible attitude towards the Kabyle people. Although Algeria continued to maintain that the issue was one of decolonization, in reality it was a matter of territorial integrity. The Algerian representative constantly neglected to mention that in 1963 it was Morocco which had raised the question of recovering Western Sahara, at a time when Algeria had only recently become a State Member of the United Nations and the Frente Polisario did not yet exist; its future leaders were living in independent provinces of Morocco. The Madrid Accord, under which Morocco would recover the Sahara, had been endorsed by the General Assembly, although the Algerian delegation would claim that it did not exist. The Security Council

addressed the issue of Western Sahara under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, which was not about decolonization, as the representative of Algeria was doubtless aware.

*The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.*