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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

Thirtieth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 312TH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Friday, 12 October 1979, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. HESSEL (France)

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

UNHCR ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES (agenda item 6) (continued) (A/AC.96/564, Corr.1 and Add.1, A/AC.96/568 and A/AC.96/570)

1. Mr. CISS (Director, Assistance Division), replying to some of the questions raised and comments made by delegations during the discussions, said that, with regard to the problem of assistance to Sahrawi refugees in Algeria, it seemed preferable to seek a solution through discussions, which the High Commissioner was prepared to hold with the parties concerned. Within the limits of its terms of reference, UNHCR was prepared to assist all refugees, whatever their race, religion or political opinions.
2. During the discussions some delegations had dwelt on the statistics contained in the documents under consideration. Those statistics were taken from official communications from the Governments of countries of asylum. It was, of course, sometimes difficult for the authorities to obtain indisputable figures, particularly in the absence of on-the-spot censuses. In such cases, UNHCR had to make do with the best possible estimates. It had recently requested its field representatives to raise that question with the authorities of the countries in which they were stationed, with a view to obtaining more recent statistics.
3. The representative of Kenya had referred to the establishment of rural settlement centres for refugees and had implied that additional funds might be needed for that purpose in 1980. In that connexion, it should be remembered that the resources allocated for 1979 had not all been used and that, as indicated in paragraph 97 of document A/AC.96/564, the authority of the Executive Committee was being requested to carry over such unutilized funds into 1980. With regard to the hope expressed by the representative of Kenya that UNHCR might also assist Kenyan nationals, it was not unusual for nationals of countries of asylum to benefit indirectly from UNHCR assistance, which could for example, take the form of financing public services, such as hospitals or schools.
4. Some delegations had also expressed the view that additional funds should have been allocated for the financing of certain projects. In that connexion, it should be noted that, when UNHCR was preparing the documentation, it took into account, as far as possible, all the basic needs of the refugees that had been brought to its attention. Moreover, all programmes were subject to constant revision and, when additional funds were necessary, it was possible to utilize the savings made on other projects, the programme reserve or, in some cases, the system of revised programmes submitted to the Executive Committee in the following year. The High Commissioner's programmes were thus flexible enough for account to be taken of any changes that occurred. Of course, another factor that came into play was the absorption capacity of the agents responsible for programme execution, but, if urgent needs arose, UNHCR did everything possible to meet them.
5. With regard to the question of assistance to handicapped refugees raised by the representative of Zambia, he said that UNHCR was not, of course, ignoring that type of activity, which could be financed from the multipurpose funds envisaged for 1980.

6. He assured the representative of Uganda that the High Commissioner's appeal for the refugees would in no way prevent additional assistance from being provided under the General Programmes once the emergency programme had come to an end. Since the refugees in question, most of whom lived in settlements, had been uprooted as a result of the recent events, they should be the first to benefit from the funds arising from the special appeal.

7. The documents under consideration showed quite clearly that UNHCR assistance to Mozambique was under constant review and that adjustments were made as the size of the refugee population increased. UNHCR was, moreover, fully aware of the needs of the Zimbabweans who had voluntarily settled in Mozambique and, on the recommendation of the Government of Mozambique, measures had been taken to meet those needs in the context of the programme for 1979. An agreement to that effect had been signed by the Government of Mozambique and UNHCR; ZANU had been duly consulted and had taken part in the discussions. Efforts were being made to meet the needs of young mothers and babies through the assistance measures that had been taken in the five refugee settlements. The Government of Mozambique had recently informed the High Commissioner that, in order to meet those needs more effectively, a special centre had been established in the province of Nampula and that children, their mothers and groups of handicapped victims of air raids were being transferred there; their special needs would be given adequate consideration.

8. The representative of Argentina had rightly drawn attention to the absence of any budget allocation for the integration of the Indochinese refugees that his Government had agreed to accept. The assumption of responsibility for that type of expenditure should be one of the objectives of the fund for durable solutions and, pending its establishment, the High Commissioner would make every effort to find the resources needed for the current operation.

9. The High Commissioner would continue to provide assistance for as long as necessary to Honduras, Costa Rica and Panama. He assured the representative of Nicaragua that every effort would be made to assist that country.

10. Referring to the wish expressed by the observer for the Lao People's Democratic Republic that UNHCR should not only assist in the resettlement of returnees, but also continue its activities in favour of persons displaced within his country, he said that, since those two operations did not come under the annual programme, their financing depended entirely on contributions made specifically for the purpose. Although UNHCR had received assurances with regard to assistance for the resettlement of returnees, the same was not true of assistance for displaced persons. The High Commissioner would, however, continue to draw the attention of Governments and of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to that problem and would transmit any contributions he might receive for displaced persons to the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

11. It had been learned that more than 30,000 refugees from Kampuchea had arrived in Thailand during the last twenty-four hours. The High Commissioner had given instructions that an emergency relief plan should be drawn up on the basis of information provided by the Thai authorities. As soon as the latter so requested, UNHCR would, within the limits of its capacity, be ready to act.

12. He had duly noted the information communicated by the observer for Viet Nam that there were 35,000 refugees from Kampuchea in Viet Nam and not 30,000, as indicated in document A/AC.96/564. A working meeting had just been held between the delegation of Viet Nam and UNHCR officials, at which UNHCR assistance to those refugees and to persons displaced within Viet Nam had been discussed. He hoped that those explanations would satisfy the representative of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

13. Mr. HOMANN-HERIMBERG (Director, Administration and Management Division), replying to two questions which had been raised by the representative of Tanzania and to which the representatives of Algeria and Nigeria had also referred, said that the first had related to the recruitment of UNHCR staff on the basis of equitable geographical distribution. In recruiting his staff, the High Commissioner was bound by the provisions of article 15, paragraphs (a) and (d) of the Statute of UNHCR; he proceeded, of course, on the basis of the broadest possible geographical distribution since that would obviously guarantee the effectiveness of his Office. As for the General Assembly resolution that had been referred to at the preceding meeting, it related to the Secretariat of the United Nations and not to UNHCR.

14. The second question related to the junior professional officers scheme, which continued to be of the greatest value. He hoped that the number of junior professional officers from developing countries would continue to increase and assured the representative of Tanzania that he was doing his utmost to convince Governments to take part in the scheme and enlarge its scope, so that UNHCR might benefit from the co-operation of officers from the largest possible number of countries.

15. Mrs. SELLAMI-MESLEM (Algeria) said that she had not received a satisfactory reply to the two questions that she had asked. The first had related to the composition of the secretariat of UNHCR. Although the relevant General Assembly resolution was not of direct concern to UNHCR, UNHCR was part of the United Nations family and must therefore take account of resolutions adopted by other bodies.

16. The second question had related to the amendment of the chapter of document A/AC.96/564 on the problem of Sahrawi refugees in Algeria. Her request that the chapter should be amended had been supported by other delegations and she could not understand why it had not been met.

17. The CHAIRMAN said that the answer given by the Director of the Assistance Division to the latter question had been the only possible one. The problem raised by the delegations of Algeria and Morocco was not one on which the Committee could take a decision, for it could not amend UNHCR's mandate and must limit itself to finding ways in which the High Commissioner could act in a specific situation, bearing in mind the very great flexibility that characterized his activities. In the case in question, the only way of obtaining results without going beyond UNHCR's mandate

seemed to be to hold consultations. If the adoption of the text under consideration did not meet with the satisfaction of the parties concerned, they could, of course, enter reservations.

18. Mrs. SELLAMI-MESLEM (Algeria) said that she had the following reservations to enter with regard to document A/AC.96/564: in the first place, she did not understand why her delegation's request for the amendment of a chapter of that document had not been taken into account; she had been given no explanation. Secondly, her country had quite rightly requested that the humanitarian problem posed by 50,000 Sahrawi refugees should be covered in the General Programmes. At least eight members of the Executive Committee had supported that request, to which there had been only one objection, but no account had, however, been taken of it.

19. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the delegation of Algeria should draft a text explaining its point of view for inclusion in the appropriate place in the report.

20. Mr. KALONJI (Zaire), reverting to the question of the recruitment of UNHCR staff, said that he interpreted the explanations given by the Director of the Administration and Management Division to mean that the High Commissioner recruited his staff on the basis of the broadest possible geographical distribution even though he was not formally bound by the recruitment rules applicable to the Secretariat of the United Nations. UNHCR must on no account become a private club but must remain open to all Member States.

21. Mr. MATIKO (United Republic of Tanzania) said he supported the observations made by the representative of Zaire and hoped that the Director of the Administration and Management Division had not meant that, if UNHCR staff were recruited on a broader geographical basis, it would be less loyal. Moreover, the provisions of a Statute could always be amended by a decision of the competent body.

22. The CHAIRMAN said that the Director's reply did not call into question the allegiance of UNHCR staff, whatever its composition. It had merely reminded the Committee of the limitations of the texts.

23. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Executive Committee wished to adopt Schedule A, as contained in document A/AC.96/564, and paragraph 5 of document A/AC.96/564/Add.1, subject to the reservations which had been entered.

24. It was so decided.

25. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to examine document A/AC.96/568.

26. Miss BRISSIMI (Assistance Division) said that since the preparation of that document, which gave an account of UNHCR resettlement activities, 46,000 more refugees from Indo-China had been resettled. The credit for that achievement was due to the immigration officers of the countries of admission, their integration services and selection missions, and to ICEM and the voluntary agencies which had collaborated closely with UNHCR. Their hard and dedicated work had made it possible to speed up resettlement considerably between May and September 1979, and to spare the refugees any longer stay in camps than the unavoidable minimum.

27. The generosity of the countries offering resettlement opportunities to refugees from Indo-China had been promptly translated into concrete action, and thousands of refugees had left their camps for destinations in more than 30 countries. In the International Year of the Child, it was reassuring to note that an estimated 10,000 children and young people were leaving the camps every month for a milieu giving them a better chance of a normal life. Nevertheless, those figures should not encourage complacency, since 340,000 individuals were still waiting in the camps for a durable solution to be found to their problems.

28. Some Governments had been particularly generous in accepting handicapped persons; the countries bordering the Indo-China peninsula had been assured that handicapped refugees from south-east Asia would be given priority in those host countries. Only recently, UNHCR officials had been present when the Swiss authorities and voluntary agencies concerned had welcomed to Zurich a group of refugees of whom 50 per cent were physically or mentally handicapped. If such generosity continued, and extended among as many countries as possible, the few hundreds of handicapped refugees whose cases were still pending would, thanks to the co-operation of the Danish Refugee Council and the International Social Service, soon be resettled.

29. Another vulnerable group among the refugees from Indo-China which deserved special attention was that of unaccompanied minors. An expert from the Rädda Barnen organization had begun assessing their situation in all the countries of south-east Asia where there were Indochinese refugees. That was a particularly delicate issue and the willingness of numerous individuals and organizations to find those children a family had resulted in many offers of adoption. Only a tiny proportion of those unaccompanied minors seemed to be orphans, however, and the others still hoped to find their own families again. The problem had aroused much concern, but the UNHCR standpoint was that the interests of the children themselves had above all to be safeguarded. Its policy was thus similar to the recommendations made by the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) which, having considered the matter in July 1979, had advised that since in the existing complex situation it might be impossible to obtain the full information necessary for long-range decisions, no placement for adoption should be made in the immediate future. ICVA recommended foster placement, in a family or a group setting. There was no doubt that the situation whereby parents succeeded in tracing their children only to find that they had been legally adopted by another family in a far-off land had to be avoided at all costs. For those reasons, the High Commissioner had requested countries admitting refugees from Indo-China to give their attention to the problem so as to prevent insoluble difficulties being created through precipitate action by individuals or organizations. The situation was all the more difficult in that unaccompanied minors should be given high priority for resettlement.

30. Though the operations in Indo-China had recently dominated UNHCR activities, problems in other areas had by no means been neglected. The resettlement of the residual caseload of refugees in Latin America had been almost resolved; there had been admissions to some 30 countries in 1978 and 1979 and the few families left should not have long to wait.

31. Paragraph 10 of document A/AC.96/568 referred to the need to find a host country for some refugees currently in Djibouti where they could be offered the possibility of education or employment. UNHCR had approached a number of countries for that purpose and, with the help of OAU, the refugees who were unable to stay in Djibouti would soon be admitted to other countries. The representative of Djibouti had reminded the Committee that those refugees, for whom there was no opportunity for education or employment in Djibouti, ran the risk of becoming a serious problem if a solution was not found, and it was to be hoped that the international community would respond generously to their case.

32. Lastly, it should be emphasized how deeply refugees in camps felt the need to escape from their enforced idleness. As an example, she read out a letter which a young refugee resettled in an industrialized country had written to one of the UNHCR field offices expressing his delight at having found work and resettlement.

33. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there were no objections, he would assume that the Committee wished to take note with satisfaction of the report (A/AC.96/568).

34. It was so decided.

35. Mr. NSANZE (Observer for Burundi) said he was concerned to note that the Director of the Assistance Division had not referred in his replies to the case of Burundi, although that small country, economically little-developed, land-locked and affected by the international economic recession, had succeeded in absorbing 70,000 to 80,000 refugees over 20 years and had still to provide for the resettlement of 50,000 refugees in an area where there was neither hospital nor school. He wondered whether the Director's silence meant that UNHCR intended to remove Burundi from the list of beneficiaries of its technical and financial assistance.

36. The CHAIRMAN said that, to reassure the observer from Burundi, he wished to point out that the Executive Committee had been considering the problem of the resettlement of refugees far from their country of origin, which was not the case for the refugees in Burundi.

37. Mr. NSANZE (Observer for Burundi) said he agreed that the refugees in Burundi came from the neighbouring countries; in general, however, the problems involved in resettlement were the same.

38. Mr. CISS (Director, Assistance Division) said that UNHCR had certainly not forgotten Burundi, but that many States were asking for additional assistance and it had not yet been possible to consider every case. In Burundi, where the refugees had been integrated for several years, the needs seemed to be somewhat different. UNHCR had sent out a field mission and a Burundi delegation had also come for talks with the High Commissioner. Donor countries had been approached with a view to financing the projected school and hospital and he again urged those countries to make available supplementary assistance for child refugees in Burundi.

STATUS OF CONTRIBUTIONS AND OVER-ALL FINANCIAL SITUATION FOR 1979 AND 1980
(agenda item 8) (A/AC.96/565 and 566)

39. Mr. VOLFING (Director, External Affairs Division) said that, since the publication of the report on the financial situation on 30 June 1979, the estimates for the General Programmes for 1979 had risen from US \$88 million to US \$178 million,

an amount which should be fully financed despite the substantial increase involved. Grateful thanks were due to Governments and to all other donors.

40. In the case of the Special Programmes, however, the appeals for assistance to refugees returning to Burma, Nicaragua and Uganda had not been so successful. Full financing of the General Programmes was obviously the first priority for UNHCR and, in view of the increase in their cost, it was not surprising that the response to other appeals had been limited; it was to be hoped, however, that Governments would judge those Special Programmes on their merits irrespective of what they might already have contributed elsewhere. The appeal for Burma was still \$US 1 million short and there had been hardly any response so far to the programmes for Uganda and Nicaragua. In 1979, UNHCR had initiated several Special Programmes in south-east Asia which were linked to the General Programmes. The largest, requiring \$US 60 million, was for the establishment of a processing centre for 50,000 persons in the Philippines. The United States of America had made a substantial contribution, meeting 30 per cent of the cost, but \$US 40 million were still needed. Another Special Programme was concerned with the orderly organization of departures from Viet Nam; depending on the number of departures, the need would be for \$US 3 or 4 million over the next 12 months. Funds were needed urgently for those projects. The total requirement under General and Special Programmes for 1979 might therefore reach \$US 250 million, against the \$US 120 million forecast a year previously.

41. In 1980, the cost of the General Programmes would be \$US 234 million, which donor countries might well have some difficulty in financing. However, the amount reflected genuine needs, and it was to be hoped that the Executive Committee would help UNHCR to obtain the finance within the projected time-limit, so that assistance to refugees was not slowed down. Otherwise, UNHCR would have to reconsider the requests for funding from its Offices in the early months of the year, juggling with priorities and frustrating re-arrangements which, among other drawbacks, would hold up the effort to find durable solutions to the refugees' problems. The High Commissioner was therefore recommending, in a note to the Executive Committee (A/AC.96/566), that the ceiling of the Working Capital and Guarantee Fund should be raised to \$US 10 million. It would then be possible for that amount to be committed while awaiting contributions pledged by Governments. UNHCR also hoped that the majority of Government contributions would not be earmarked for any particular project or sector. There was a tendency for Governments, when earmarking contributions, to favour certain refugee areas so that other groups which were equally needy but less publicized did not receive sufficient help. UNHCR would obviously prefer to receive earmarked contributions - which in some cases it might be unable to obtain elsewhere - rather than none at all; but the situation became difficult if too large a proportion of the General Programmes funds were earmarked for particular projects.

42. A year previously he had suggested \$US 120 million as an indicative figure of over-all needs for each of the years 1979, 1980 and 1981; it had become necessary to raise it to \$US 250 million for 1979 and \$US 300 million for 1980. Such needs could not be covered without strong support from a great number of Governments, but UNHCR had no doubt that it would be forthcoming.

43. Mr. VERGNE SABOIA (Brazil) said that his country was keenly interested in the humanitarian activities of UNHCR. It had decided, therefore, as its representative had announced at the Geneva Conference in July, to make a special contribution of \$US 50,000 for the benefit of Indochinese refugees.

44. Mr. KONISHI (Japan) said that he would like to have some details of the technical aspects of the preparation of the budget. He was under the impression that, when the budget for 1980 was being drawn up, it had been assumed that the number of refugees in the countries of first asylum would remain stationary, and he wondered whether it would not be better for the secretariat to suggest several variants to take into account possible fluctuations in the number of refugees.

45. Mr. VOLFING (Director, External Affairs Division) said that, so far as possible, UNHCR took into account the numbers of refugees. In south-east Asia, for example, the number had declined between the date of publication of the original document and that of its addendum, but that decline had been offset by an increase in other regions, with the result that the total needs had increased. Evaluations were not made without taking into account the situation in other sectors, but it was not possible to set up several budget variants. All that could be done was to take into account the observed trends and the known situations.

46. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had completed its examination of documents A/CONF.96/565 and A/CONF.96/566.

47. Mr. EL-GAMAL (Sudan) said that, a week previously, his Government had made a contribution of \$US 6,000 to the UNHCR programme; he wished to emphasize, however, that his country's main contribution was the free grant of 200,000 hectares of land to refugees for the implementation of agricultural projects. His Government would participate in the costs of those projects (salaries, services and administration) until such time as the refugees became self-supporting, when the projects would be taken over by the local authorities.

48. It should not be overlooked either that his country also assumed other costs, the amount of which was difficult to assess in that the refugees were benefiting from the services provided by the Government for the population as a whole; in several hospitals, for instance, the majority of beds were occupied by refugees. The Government hoped, nevertheless, to be able in due course to state more exactly the amount of the costs incurred.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNHCR FUND FOR DURABLE SOLUTIONS (agenda item 7) (A/AC.96/569)

49. Mr. de HAAN (Deputy High Commissioner), introducing agenda item 7, said that, a few days previously, the High Commissioner had described the unceasing efforts of UNHCR to find ways of dealing more effectively with the changing requirements of refugees and the growing complexity of refugee problems. The proposed fund for

durable solutions provided an answer to that common search for new prospects and had four principal characteristics. Firstly, the fund would be geared to solving refugee problems all over the world. Secondly, it would be geared to the pursuit of solutions relating to voluntary repatriation, local settlement and resettlement in third countries, as well as to special operations of the kind currently under way in Uganda and Nicaragua. Thirdly, it would be geared to providing developing countries with more effective assistance in their efforts to help refugees and it would provide a new means of bringing about the durable solutions that everyone wanted. It would serve as a catalyst for integrating solutions to refugee problems into national, economic and social development. Fourthly, it would enable UNHCR and the international community to respond more speedily and more effectively to the need for durable solutions for all refugees throughout the world.

50. The fund would, in fact, be a logical extension of the efforts made by UNHCR to find such solutions. It would eliminate the climate of crisis that frequently developed and would remove the constant need for special appeals for funds to deal with certain problems. He thanked the delegations that had already expressed their support for the establishment of the fund and hoped that the Executive Committee would authorize its establishment and thus make it possible to respond more adequately to the needs of the millions of refugees who looked to UNHCR for help so that they could better help themselves.

51. Mr. KASTOFT (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that those countries looked favourably on new ways and means of increasing opportunities for durable solutions to refugee problems in all parts of the world. The notion of establishing a fund for that purpose had the advantage of combining the pursuit of durable solutions for refugees with development assistance; but as had already been emphasized by the High Commissioner, there was a need for ideas on the subject to crystallize further.

52. The Nordic countries considered among other things, that it was important to avoid creating new bureaucracies, to co-operate with other United Nations bodies and to enter into consultations on the matter as soon as possible. Lastly, an indication to the members of the Executive Committee of the potential additional resettlement opportunities already available would make their work more concrete and would no doubt help to bring it to an early conclusion. For their part, the Nordic countries were ready to take part in deliberations and consultations on the subject.

53. Mr. PALMER (United States of America) said that, as shown by the deliberations at the current session of the Executive Committee, the efforts made by the international community to cope with the refugee problem remained inadequate, and additional resources and new approaches were necessary to facilitate permanent refugee resettlement. It was essential to be able to give refugees the opportunity to become self-sufficient, but, for the time being, refugee concentrations were found mainly in developing countries which lacked sufficient resources to provide even for their own

populations. Ways must therefore be found to alleviate the burden which refugees placed on asylum countries, and it must be recognized that to provide for the bare subsistence of refugees year after year merely aggravated the strains and represented a waste of human talent.

54. The establishment of a fund for durable solutions seemed to have the support of all members of the Executive Committee. It should be possible for the technical questions raised by certain delegations to be resolved by consultations among Governments.

55. In the view of his country, the fund must be world-wide in scope, and must address the critical need of African refugees for permanent settlement as well as help to promote the resettlement of Indochinese refugees in third countries, while at the same time helping all developing countries with the permanent settlement of refugees. The fund should be used only when host Governments were both willing and able to accept refugees for permanent settlement. Moreover, since Governments were finding it increasingly difficult to meet the large and unpredictable increases in the cost of the General Programmes and to respond to the increasing number of special appeals made by the High Commissioner, the proposed fund should correct matters by providing financing for permanent settlement activities. The fund should not be used to finance development costs, but should bridge the gap between settlement activities and the development activities of the multilateral banks, United Nations development bodies and bilateral assistance agencies. It should be used to mobilize all the resources available for dealing with refugee problems. In that connexion, the High Commissioner should continue to collaborate with development banks and other organizations to ensure against any possible duplication. The fund should not be established as a separate institution, but that did not seem to be the intent of UNHCR; its functions fell squarely within the terms of reference and the current structure of UNHCR. Lastly, the fund represented a humanitarian undertaking which should elicit a generous response from individuals and private organizations, and UNHCR should encourage contributions from individuals and voluntary agencies.

56. As indicated by the Vice-President of the United States at the meeting on Indochinese refugees in July the United States was prepared, if the fund aroused enough interest in the international community, to make an initial contribution of \$20 million, which should represent about 30 per cent of its total resources. His delegation saw the undertaking as an important humanitarian effort deserving support from all organizations and Governments.

57. Mr. SCHURCH (Switzerland) said that his delegation approved in principle of the establishment of a fund, the basic purpose of which would be to integrate large groups of refugees or displaced persons in developing countries on a durable basis through the financing of projects related to agriculture, stock-raising and industry, projects which could also be of benefit to the local population. To achieve those goals, UNHCR would have to work in close co-operation with UNDP without, however, the financial resources of the fund being used to finance development projects. Nevertheless, his delegation could not give its final approval to the establishment of the fund until it had received fuller information, and it therefore recommended that a consultative group of experts be set up to consider the matter in depth and provide the Committee with detailed proposals and recommendations.

58. Mrs. SELLAMI-MESLEM (Algeria) said that she fully approved of the establishment of the fund proposed in document A/AC.96/569. She shared the concern expressed by certain delegations with regard to paragraphs 15 and 16 of that document, since it was extremely difficult to make a clear distinction between projects for durable solutions and projects for development as such; however, she hoped that the consultative group it was intended to establish would consider the matter carefully. She hoped that UNHCR would work in close co-operation with regional organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity, that were currently helping refugees. She sympathized with the proposals set out in paragraph 31 of document A/AC.96/569 and hoped that, wherever possible, projects would be implemented by **nationals** from the developing countries involved. The fund could contribute to the activities of UNHCR on behalf of rural refugees.

59. Mr. THOMSON (Australia) said he welcomed the proposal concerning the establishment of a UNHCR fund for durable solutions. The proposal was a valuable initiative which could contribute to the long-term solution of the refugee problem by facilitating resettlement. The value of the fund would depend mainly on the use made of it by resettlement countries. In his opinion, the establishment of the fund should not involve the setting up of a new international institution but should be possible within the framework of the existing structure of UNHCR, as the High Commissioner seemed to envisage in document A/AC.96/569.

60. His delegation thought that the prospects for financing the fund would be enhanced if donor countries which so desired could make contributions for particular projects. It supported the proposal in principle, on the understanding that the modalities for its implementation would be subject to more detailed consideration. Subject to agreement being reached on the scope and character of the fund, his Government would be prepared to contribute \$US 1 million to the fund, the said amount to be taken from the amounts it had recently contributed to the UNHCR programme for refugees.

61. Mr. SMIT (Netherlands) said he questioned the advisability of establishing a UNHCR fund for durable solutions, since he did not think that a new financial institution separate from the voluntary fund was necessary to enable the High Commissioner to play the role that was his in the search for permanent solutions. He endorsed the objectives mentioned in document A/AC.96/569, but wondered whether those objectives could not be achieved just as readily within the existing terms of reference of the High Commissioner, in view of the freedom of action which the High Commissioner's functions required and which the international community had always granted him.

62. His delegation thought, as the High Commissioner had himself said when summing up the general debate, that the matter needed further thought and that care must be taken to make a clear distinction between programmes of assistance to refugees and general development programmes. UNHCR had neither the competence nor the capacity required to become directly involved in global long-term development projects, and its role consisted above all in serving as a catalyst for efforts directed towards finding durable solutions through existing machinery. To that end, his delegation would support the efforts of UNHCR to strengthen its co-operation with other United Nations bodies and with non-governmental organizations.

63. Mr. OWOAJE (Nigeria) said that he fully supported the proposal to establish a UNHCR fund for durable solutions. However, as had been suggested by one or two delegations during the general debate, the success of the fund would depend on a global and not a regional approach, since the problems of refugees were the same all over the world. In his view, the establishment of the fund would enable the High Commissioner to accommodate the needs of certain groups of refugees whom no country wanted and who, for political reasons, had not been benefiting from the assistance of UNHCR under existing programmes.

64. His delegation was opposed to the establishment, proposed in paragraph 26 of document A/AC.96/569, of "a small consultative group of experts and internationally reputed figures whose advice the High Commissioner would seek as appropriate", and it proposed the establishment of a sub-committee of the Executive Committee to advise the High Commissioner on the administration of the fund. It hoped that the establishment of the fund would make it possible to correct the existing glaring imbalance between the amounts spent on African refugees and those spent on other refugees.

65. Mr. ANGKANARAK (Thailand) said he fully supported the establishment of a UNHCR fund for durable solutions, since the fund would serve a useful purpose by making available additional resources.

66. Mr. MacINNES (United Kingdom) said that he approved, in principle, of the establishment of a fund for durable solutions. All developing countries that wished to do so should be able to benefit from programmes financed by the fund. Duplication must be avoided, and the constitution and administration of the fund must be studied in greater detail.

67. Count zu RANTZAU (Federal Republic of Germany) said that he shared the views of the representatives of Denmark, the United States and Switzerland with regard to the establishment of a UNHCR fund for durable solutions. In particular, he supported the Swiss proposal that a working group be set up to consider the matter in greater depth. The idea of establishing a fund seemed good in theory, but it must not be forgotten that, under his existing mandate, the High Commissioner was already financing resettlement projects on the basis of special contributions made by Governments. Since 1975, in fact, his own country had contributed more than \$US 4 million for the financing of resettlement projects in Guinea-Bissau, the United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Swaziland, Zaire, Mozambique, Zambia and Thailand. It was currently contributing more than \$1 million for the camp at Dukwe, in Botswana, and \$300,000 for the construction of hospitals in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. He therefore found it difficult to see the practical value of a new fund. However, he was ready to play an active part in the work of the group that was to consider the question.

68. Mr. McKINNON (Canada) said that the idea of establishing a UNHCR fund for durable solutions was a very interesting one since it could help to correct a certain imbalance in the distribution of the funds available for refugees, as a number of African delegations had pointed out during the general debate. However, he felt that there were certain dangers in establishing such a fund, as already pointed out by certain delegations - such as duplication of work, increased bureaucracy and the involvement of UNHCR in development projects. It would therefore seem necessary to consider the question from two points of view: its terms of reference and its methods of operation. If the Executive Committee could achieve a precise definition of the terms of reference of the fund and could agree on the methods of operation, it could make the fund a very useful instrument.

69. He supported the proposal of Switzerland to set up a working group, which would be small but open-ended, to draft the fund's terms of reference and methods of operation and report to the Executive Committee at its next session.

70. Mrs. BEKKER (Observer for UNDP) said that it was difficult at the current stage to say exactly what contribution UNDP might make to the fund envisaged by the High Commissioner. However, UNDP was ready to advise any working group that the Executive Committee might set up.

71. Mrs. SHULMAN-PERRET (France) said that, while quite appreciating the generous intentions behind the proposal to establish a UNHCR fund for durable solutions, her delegation could not but share the reservations of the delegations of Denmark, Switzerland and Netherlands, since it considered that the establishment of such a fund would be a very heavy burden on the infrastructure of UNHCR, at a time when it had to cope with multifarious tasks, and could even obstruct its principal mission of giving immediate assistance and protection, which was already a very demanding one. It seemed desirable, therefore, for the High Commissioner to consider how to strengthen its co-operation with UNDP, WFP and any other organization for development assistance, in order to influence the action of those bodies whose mission and purpose was to promote development, in a direction that would take account of the specific needs of refugees.

72. Mr. BENNOUNA (Morocco) said that he had already spoken in favour of the establishment of a UNHCR fund for durable solutions in the general debate. He supported the proposal of Canada to set up a working group to consider the matter. He also supported the proposal of Australia to allow donor countries to make contributions to the Fund earmarked for specific projects. As Chairman of the Standing Relief Committee set up by the Red Cross and Arab Red Crescent Societies, he had been in a position to note that transit camps and temporary settlements gave rise to many problems, particularly security problems. The permanent settlement of refugees would make it possible to eliminate those problems and provide a durable solution which would lighten the work of the High Commissioner in the future.

73. Mr. SEFAKO (Lesotho) said he supported the establishment of a UNHCR fund for durable solutions. With regard to the proposal in paragraph 26 of document A/AC.96/569, he agreed with the Nigerian representative that, instead of sanctioning the establishment of a small consultative group of experts and internationally reputed figures, the Executive Committee should itself set up a sub-committee and appoint the members. He hoped that the projects for the resettlement and integration of refugees that could be financed through the fund would not be restricted to groups but would also apply to individuals, since otherwise his country's resettlement and integration policy would not allow it to benefit from the fund.

74. Mr. LIANG Yufan (China) said he supported the proposal for the establishment of a UNHCR fund for durable solutions, since he felt that it would make it possible to resolve refugee problems more effectively and that it was in keeping with the principle of sharing the load. He hoped that, when implementing the proposal, the High Commissioner would take account of the wishes of the different countries and would consult all interested parties, so that the fund could be used equitably and could meet the genuine needs of countries.

75. Mr. AHMED EL-BESHIR (Sudan) said that the establishment of a UNHCR fund for durable solutions was not just desirable but vital, particularly in Africa, since it was essential to integrate programmes with regional development plans in order to ensure the continuity and success of refugee resettlement programmes. His country had undertaken an integration project of that kind in 1971, but had been unable to complete it through lack of funds. He therefore welcomed the initiative taken by the High Commissioner. Projects financed by the fund should, however, be executed in accordance with the structures of the countries concerned.

76. Mr. MAGGIA (Italy) said that he had noted with keen interest the proposal for the establishment of a UNHCR fund for durable solutions, which evidenced the outstanding activity of the High Commissioner in the search for constructive solutions. No effort should be spared to find durable solutions for the problems of the refugees, but those solutions must be implemented in close co-operation with the bodies responsible for development problems. The High Commissioner's proposal needed more careful study and he shared the views of the delegations which had proposed that a working group be established for the purpose.

77. Mr. MOLTENI (Argentina) said he supported the establishment of a UNHCR fund for durable solutions, which would increase the possibilities for resettling refugees in developing countries. He was also in favour of setting up a working group to advise the Executive Committee on the establishment of the Fund. In his opinion, the group should have a very broad membership so that the points of view of donor countries and developing countries could be expressed, since projects would have to be carried out in the framework of the existing structures of the developing countries.

78. Mr. MATIKO (United Republic of Tanzania) said he was in favour of the establishment of a UNHCR fund for durable solutions, since it would make it possible to correct the existing imbalance between allocations for refugees in the various regions of the world. In his opinion, States should not be authorized to earmark their contributions to the fund for specific projects, since that would not resolve the problem of unequal distribution of resources and the fund would thus lose its main advantage.

79. The durable solutions set forth in paragraph 7 of document A/AC.96/569 did not, as some delegations seemed to fear, go beyond the High Commissioner's mandate. A number of countries, particularly in Africa, had offered to resettle refugees on their land, but lacked the funds to carry out such resettlement. The problem was not, therefore, as some delegations maintained, the limited number of resettlement countries, but the lack of adequate financial resources in such countries.

80. He, too, had reservations concerning the proposal in paragraph 26 of document A/AC.96/569 and thought that the Executive Committee should itself set up a sub-committee to study the problem.

81. Mr. KONISHI (Japan) said that, while supporting in principle the High Commissioner's proposal which would facilitate the search for durable solutions to refugee problems in the developing countries, he thought that it needed more thorough study. In his opinion, the problem raised by the proposal was that the fund would be concerned with both development aid and aid to refugees. He wondered, for example, if the feasibility studies referred to in paragraph 15 of document A/AC.96/569 would be undertaken by UNHCR or by a development body such as UNDP. He felt that it would be premature to take a definite decision on the establishment of the fund at the present session. He accordingly supported the proposal by Canada that a working group be set up to study the problem and make recommendations to the Executive Committee at its next session.

82. Mr. MUSUKWA (Observer for Zambia) said he supported the establishment of a UNHCR fund for durable solutions. However, in the case of refugees from South Africa, the only durable solution was the liberation of their country. It would therefore be necessary to define very carefully the way in which the fund should be used, so that it could be of benefit to South African refugees before their problem had been finally resolved by their country's liberation.

83. Mr. LUDUNGE-KAHADI-CHIRI (Zaire) said he welcomed with satisfaction the proposal to create a fund for durable solutions. He believed that that fund should be administered by UNHCR in the framework of its present structures and that it was thus unnecessary to create a special unit for the purpose. That fund, in his opinion, should be created in consultation with an ad hoc working group composed of donor countries and recipient countries.

84. Mr. De HAAN (Deputy High Commissioner) said he could assure the Committee that the High Commissioner would pay very close attention to the suggestions of delegations concerning the establishment of a UNHCR fund for durable solutions. The discussion had shown that Governments recognized that it was necessary to show greater flexibility with regard to durable solutions for the problems of refugees. The proposal to establish a fund for that purpose seemed to enjoy wide support and even a consensus; perhaps the Chairman should appoint forthwith a small working group which would report to the Executive Committee within a reasonable time.

85. The CHAIRMAN said that the establishment of a fund for durable solutions raised an important problem and that it was necessary to avoid certain pitfalls in that regard. First of all, no new institution should be created: there was general agreement that that should be avoided. It would not be sufficient either to leave the matter over until a further meeting and to await the report of a working group: the problem would then be left in suspense. A first step might perhaps be taken immediately by opening a special account in the UNHCR books so that contributions could be received; that would be a simple matter of book-keeping, with no administrative implications. Some might regard such a decision as premature, but, in that connexion, it would be remembered that the representative of Australia had already referred to a possible contribution; it was possible that other contributions approved by parliaments or Governments might also be received in the near future. It should be made quite clear that such a special account would not be a special fund, like UNICEF or UNFPA, for example.

86. Moreover, there seemed to be general agreement that a small working group should be set up, composed of members of the Executive Committee representing both industrialized and developing countries. He himself would be able to act as chairman for a small group of that kind, which might consist of six or seven members, distributed, for example, in the following way: one African, one Asian, one Latin American, two Europeans and one or two representatives of non-European industrialized countries. He could, perhaps, put forward a specific proposal on the subject at the beginning of the following week.

87. Mr. de HAAN (Deputy High Commissioner) said that the Chairman had summarized the situation very well and he hoped that the Executive Committee could proceed along the lines that had been indicated.

88. The CHAIRMAN suggested that a list of members for a working group should be submitted to the Committee at the beginning of the following week. At the same time, the Executive Committee would also be able to consider the possibility of opening a special account.

89. It was so decided.

VOLUNTARY FUNDS ACCOUNTS FOR 1978 AND REPORT OF THE BOARD OF AUDITORS (agenda item 5)
(A/AC.96/563 and Add.1)

90. Mr. HOMANN-HERIMBERG (Director, Administration and Management Division) said that the presentation of accounts in document A/AC.96/563 and Add.1 was still essentially the same as in the previous year. It contained two main financial statements: the balance sheet as at 31 December 1978 and the statement on all income and expenditure. Those accounts were supported by an annex and nine schedules, which provided detailed information on the status of contributions and obligations under the General Programmes and Special Programmes, including the trust funds.

91. Of the total income of over \$US 162 million, nearly \$146 million - or 90 per cent - originated from contributions made available to the High Commissioner, in cash or in kind, by more than 80 Governments. The balance was made up from private contributions, interest, loan repayments and various adjustments to prior obligations. As in the past, a detailed breakdown of contributions was to be found in schedule 1. The obligations entered into by the High Commissioner in 1978 had totalled \$134,680,000, of which \$40.5 million had been for projects coming under the annual programme and the Emergency Fund; thus, the target approved by the Executive Committee for 1978 had been achieved to an extent of 97 per cent. Expenditure under the Special Programmes had reached a total of \$94.2 million during the same period. The expenditure for 1978 had covered a total of 861 projects, or 200 more than in 1977. More up-to-date accounting equipment had made it possible to monitor the progress of the projects more closely, both at Headquarters and in the field offices; further improvement along those lines would soon be introduced.

92. The report of the Board of Auditors, annexed to document A/AC.96/563, had been examined by ACABQ, and was currently before the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly. The High Commissioner was paying close attention to the recommendations of the auditors which were being actively implemented. UNHCR shared the opinion of the auditors with regard to the procurement system, and it was expected that new forms and a new system for reporting deliveries would be completed by the end of the year. Introduction of a longer-term procurement plan had proved somewhat difficult to attain, but UNHCR would be mindful of the auditors' comments on bulk purchases. The preparation of draft instructions for internal procedures was in an advanced stage, with the help of an outside consultant. In connexion with an example mentioned in the report, he confirmed that, in the interim, the High Commissioner had received duly certified and audited financial reports. UNHCR was endeavouring to make certain improvements in the existing system of financial reporting, so that its implementing partners could comply closely with the stipulated reporting requirements. UNHCR would continue to impress on agencies and Governments that further improvements could be made in that area.

93. Mr. THOMSON (Australia) said that, in his statement the previous day, the Director of the Administration and Management Division had asked for the views of members of the Executive Committee on the note dated 9 October relating to the financing of administrative costs. The Director had, inter alia, underlined the difficulty of reconciling the Statute of UNHCR and the general policy of the United Nations in that field, while at the same time remaining sufficiently flexible. Such remarks gave cause for concern, and his delegation was awaiting the further information that would result from the study mentioned by the Director for the forthcoming biennial budgetary period. Referring to another remark made by the Director, he expressed the hope that the transfer of posts to the ordinary budget would soon be completed; the UNHCR workload would certainly increase still further and it should not be necessary to rely on uncertain voluntary contributions to finance posts. Moreover, such contributions should be applied to the purposes for which they had been made.

94. Mr. McKINNON (Canada) drew attention to the growth in the activities, personnel and finances of UNHCR; even the number of Executive Committee members had increased. As was well known, that growth had been necessitated by circumstances, but the result was that the Office of the High Commissioner had to do the work of a large international organization; the proposed budget of \$200 million reflected that state of affairs. Such rapid growth gave rise to the question whether the structures and budget of UNHCR were adapted to requirements; if that was not so,

then something would have to be done in the interest of UNHCR itself and of achieving its objectives. It was obviously necessary to maintain a certain flexibility and to avoid hedging the High Commissioner about with strict controls. Nevertheless, it was desirable that the over-all management of funds and activities should be undertaken on the basis of closer co-operation with Governments. For example, the commitments undertaken by certain countries to receive refugees from various parts of the world were well known; they must be implemented with the support of UNHCR and closer co-operation with Governments was therefore necessary. Continuous co-operation would also be useful in various administrative and budgetary fields.

95. His delegation had consequently proposed that a sub-committee should be set up to monitor such questions in co-operation with the High Commissioner. Objections to the establishment of another sub-committee might, of course, be raised, but it should not be forgotten that the last sub-committee set up within the Executive Committee, namely, that on protection, had done extremely useful work. Under the current system, budgetary, administrative and financial questions were discussed in a very summary way: it would be useful to have a more thorough and better defined dialogue with the Governments. His delegation was not trying to criticize: it merely wished to see changes made that would enable the High Commissioner to carry out his heavy duties more effectively.

96. Count zu RANTZAU (Federal Republic of Germany) said that his country's competent authorities would give careful attention to the comments made by the representative of Canada; they had taken note with satisfaction of the report (A/AC.96/563 and Add.1). However, in statement I - the balance sheet - the "balances" for the annual programme were about \$14 million in 1978 as compared with \$3,196,000 in 1977: the reasons for such a large increase should be given. The competent authorities of the Federal Republic of Germany also approved the auditors' report and considered that the recommendations made in paragraphs 5, 9 and 11 were particularly helpful.

97. The CHAIRMAN said he thought that the representative of Canada had made an important proposal. UNHCR came under the General Assembly and its budgetary organs; a certain flexibility was essential for its operations. If the establishment of an additional body meant that a certain unwieldiness would ensue, then it might perhaps be considered unwise to adopt the suggestions made by the Canadian delegation. He suggested that consultations should be held on the question before 16 October.

98. Mr. HOMANN-HERIMBERG (Director, Administration and Management Division), replying to a question put by the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, said that, in response to repeated appeals by the High Commissioner, some contributions for 1978 had been made earlier than usual - in December. The prompter payments accounted for the difference between the two figures that had been pointed out by the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.