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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

Thirty-sixth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 393rd MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva  
on Friday, 11 October 1985, at 3 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. CHIBA

(Japan)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

FIELD AFFAIRS (agenda item 9) (continued) (A/AC.96/658)

1. Mr. HORIMURA (Japan) said that the responsibilities of the Director for Field Affairs should be extended to enable him to carry out his inspection functions over all UNHCR assistance activities in the field. Recommendations emanating from his office should be implemented scrupulously by field establishments. Reports issued by his office should also be circulated to the donors as soon as possible.
2. The field affairs office with its consolidated mandate could play a vital role in the implementation of UNHCR activities in the field. His delegation would like the Secretariat to study further means of strengthening the inspection function of the field affairs office in the light of the strong views expressed by many member countries.
3. Mr. KUSSBACH (Austria) said he had read with interest the first report by the Director for Field Affairs since the establishment of the post in February 1984. In that connection, it should not be forgotten that he was the High Commissioner's principal policy advisor for field affairs, who was responsible among other duties for reviewing general policy questions regarding the efficiency of UNHCR activities in the field and making appropriate recommendations.
4. His delegation, which thought that The Director had done an excellent job in the space of 20 months, welcomed in particular his analytical approach to field affairs. It was clear from the 10 appraisals undertaken to date that a number of modifications would have to be made to policy formulation and methods of work in the field and that proper staff training was essential. The Director for Field Affairs had rightly emphasized in his report (A/AC.96/658) the need for strengthening co-operation in the field between UNHCR, other United Nations organs and the donor countries. He had also made it clear, in presenting his report, that appraisal operations had made a valuable contribution to policy planning in general. Lastly, his delegation was sure that the difficulties described by the Director were not insurmountable.
5. Mr. VOELZKE (Federal Republic of Germany) said that refugee assistance projects, in view of their complexity, should be implemented with the highest degree of efficiency, particularly at the field level. Consequently, his delegation fully supported the decision to establish a field affairs office and in particular a post of Director of Field Affairs, in the interests of greater efficiency and decentralization. Assistance to refugees, both in emergency situations and in connection with development, presupposed effective co-operation between UNHCR and its executing agencies, more clearly defined roles and responsibilities and the sharing of resources. By acting as a catalyst for field-based appraisals, the Director for Field Affairs could make a major contribution to the definition of responsibilities as among field offices and suboffices in order to facilitate the decision-making process, the rational utilization of staff resources and UNHCR's co-operation with the host Government, non-governmental organizations and other agencies of the United Nations system. Another positive feature was the greater staff participation in the assessment of field priorities and needs, especially where field offices were faced with sudden emergencies caused by a large influx of refugees.

6. He welcomed the new procedures for delegation of responsibility and the definition of authority levels; every effort to maintain an ongoing dialogue between headquarters and the field was to be encouraged. Greater emphasis should also be placed on staff training, especially in administrative and financial management procedures, as recommended by the United Nations Board of Auditors and the Joint Inspection Unit.

7. His delegation expressed its appreciation to the Director for Field Affairs for having drawn the attention of the Executive Committee to the significant contribution of local staff to UNHCR's activities in the field. The familiarity of local staff with the language, culture and traditions of the local population was an indispensable element in the success of any refugee assistance project.

8. Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco) said that the Director for Field Affairs had referred to the UNHCR mission to Tindouf. His delegation disagreed with some of the observations made, particularly the assertion that the refugee camps were located at a reasonable distance from the frontiers of the country of origin. It would be interesting to know whether that statement represented the Director's own views or merely reproduced allegations by the neighbouring country.

9. The only criterion to be taken into account with regard to voluntary repatriation was the wishes of the individual refugees, for which there could be no substitute. His delegation hoped that it would be possible in the future for the report by the Director for Field Affairs to be circulated in writing before the start of the session.

10. Mrs. KSENTINI (Algeria) congratulated the Director for Field Affairs on a concise and objective report on his activities, which had provided members of the Executive Committee with information of the calibre they were entitled to expect; it had confirmed the need for increasing the number of field missions and reviewing their activities regularly. Her delegation was pleased to note that the UNHCR representative at Algiers had been able to form an accurate picture of the situation in her country and she urged UNHCR to increase the scale of its activities for which maximum support would be forthcoming from her Government. She invited any member of the Executive Committee who so desired to send a representative to Algeria in order to obtain full and complete information regarding the situation of refugees who had sought asylum in Algerian territory, and on their needs and their deeply felt aspirations.

11. Mr. HOMANN-HERIMBERG (Director for Field Affairs) said he wished to inform the representative of Morocco that the UNHCR mission that visited the Tindouf region had itself been able to establish accurately the whereabouts of the refugee concentrations, which were located to the south-east of Tindouf at least 50 or 60 kilometres from the frontier or, in other words, at a distance which complied with the requirements of the OAU Conventions. He agreed that the aim should always be to initiate a closer dialogue with the refugee populations.

REFUGEE AID AND DEVELOPMENT (agenda item 8) (A/AC.96/662)

12. Mr. HARTLING (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he shared the views of a number of delegations on the need to link refugee aid and developmental assistance as soon and as much as was feasible, especially since

large numbers of refugees were currently concentrated in low-income countries where developmental projects, which benefited refugees as well as the local population, were probably the best means of helping the refugees to support themselves. He was pleased to inform the Executive Committee that further progress had been made in that direction since document A/AC.96/662 had been prepared.

13. In Pakistan, the rural vocational training project (A/AC.96/662, para. 20) had been the subject of further study by the World Bank in connection with UNHCR's participation in the project. A World Bank mission would be discussing details of that participation with the Government and with the UNHCR mission in Pakistan. The Government had also decided, a week previously, on the type of financing to be adopted for a second income-generating project for refugee areas, similar to the pilot project currently being implemented (*ibid.*, para. 18). UNHCR would certainly do its best to promote financing of the new project with the support of the concerned Governments.

14. In the Sudan, his Special Adviser and the Head of the Specialist Support Unit had visited Khartoum and Kassala province during the second half of September in order to discuss possible action with the Sudanese authorities and with the World Bank mission in the Sudan. Both the Government and the World Bank mission took the view that it would not be feasible to extend any of the three current World Bank projects (*ibid.*, para. 22). The Government proposed, however, that a World Bank mission should identify, in co-operation with the Government itself and UNHCR, a new project intended to strengthen the capacity of selected areas to sustain productively both the refugees and the local inhabitants. Such a project would meet the normal criteria applicable to International Development Agency (IDA) operations. If the project was accepted, the Government would request an IDA credit along the lines suggested in his note (*ibid.*, para. 17). That would open the way to a project having an even greater impact than the pilot project in Pakistan, since it would cover additional sectors and would be able to draw on financial resources both inside and outside the World Bank which were not available for projects promoted by UNHCR alone. He therefore hoped that the reaction of the World Bank to the proposal would be positive. Finally, the World Bank representative at Khartoum had mentioned a new project in the forestry and watershed management sector in the Kassala province, and possibly in other areas, where refugees provided the bulk of the available labour force. UNHCR would consider participation in that project in the form of a loan in implementation of the Principles of Action agreed upon in 1984, if it provided direct, substantial and durable benefits to refugees.

15. In Ethiopia, it was not feasible to extend any of the projects referred to in paragraph 24 of his note, since the areas in which the returnees were concentrated were not among the Government's priority areas.

16. The first contacts made in Somalia (*ibid.*, para. 27) appeared to have been positive and he hoped to have further discussions with the Somali delegation before the end of the session. If the Government so desired, he would send a mission to Somalia as soon as possible to examine the potentialities for refugee-related development projects.

17. The World Bank's response to the proposed mission to the Sudan had been received, that morning, and it was unfortunately not very positive. The Bank's financial and manpower resources available for the Sudan were committed for some time to come, which precluded any additional identification mission in the near future. If however, UNHCR wished the World Bank to develop a project and could

guarantee complete financing, it would be prepared to recruit consultants to prepare such a project under its supervision. However, in the current general situation, it would not be very realistic for UNHCR to envisage a solution of that type. If the Executive Committee agreed, he would advise the World Bank that the project could not be undertaken without the Bank's financial and manpower resources. The decision would then rest, in the final instance, with the member States of the World Bank and in particular with the members of its Board of Governors. In that connection, Governments - and there were many of them - which were concerned about the problems faced by the least-developed countries that were harbouring large numbers of refugees should bear that problem in mind when examining, in the governing bodies of developmental organizations, the current and future activities of those organizations in the low-income countries.

18. It all clearly demonstrated how long it took to agree upon a refugee-related development project, and then to get it started. UNHCR did not give up hope easily, however, and was prepared to pursue any line of action likely to help refugees to support themselves and contribute to the development of the host country.

19. Mr. VOELZKE (Federal Republic of Germany) said that there was no doubt whatever of the need to combine refugee aid with development. It should not be forgotten that the local population in a developing country faced the same difficulties and had the same needs as the refugees and development-oriented assistance to refugees should thus be regarded as a contribution to the economic and social life of the host country and should be included from the outset in the planning of activities to meet refugee needs. The planning of refugee assistance required the political will to establish settlements for the benefit of both the local population and the refugees. He paid tribute to those Governments of developing countries which had made valiant efforts in that direction.

20. It was absolutely essential to afford refugees the opportunity to achieve self-sufficiency and, in consequence, to examine all possible forms of income-generating projects such as those at Ulyankulu and Katumba in the United Republic of Tanzania, which had demonstrated that the concept of combining refugee aid and development was a viable one. Incidentally, the handing over of such projects to Governments should not mean that all further funding was excluded. Experience of his country's bilateral assistance projects had indicated that follow-up measures had to be adopted to keep such projects alive (for example the provision of spare parts or special equipment, for which foreign currency was required). The High Commissioner might, perhaps, consider establishing a special budget line for the funding of a limited number of follow-up assistance activities for phased-out projects.

21. His delegation believed that particular account should be taken, when planning development-oriented projects of the problems of refugee women, who constituted the majority of all refugees, and his Government promoted projects designed to improve the living conditions of women in the developing countries within the field of development co-operation.

22. As for the planning and management of refugee assistance projects, his delegation welcomed the High Commissioner's appointment of the Chief of the Specialist Support Unit as special adviser for refugee-related development projects, with particular responsibility for promoting action beyond and outside UNHCR programmes. His Government had co-operated with that Unit in the appraisal of

water supply resources in Somalia and was ready to participate in the preparations for the UNHCR workshop on future directions of assistance to refugees in the eastern Sudan, to be held in December 1985 or January 1986. It was also considering the establishment of a short-term expert fund to assist the Specialist Support Unit in promoting technically viable solutions.

23. The newly established Emergency Unit was also playing a catalytic role by focusing its activities on emergency preparedness and by contributing to the introduction of emergency assistance procedures. His delegation had also noted with satisfaction the introduction of emergency management training for the staffs of UNHCR and its operational partners and the improvement and updating of the UNHCR handbook for emergencies.

24. His delegation, like a number of others, commended the High Commissioner and the Governments concerned on the action already taken - which should certainly be followed up - to secure the co-operation of the World Bank, UNDP and other developmental institutions, including non-governmental organizations. The World Bank's pilot project in Pakistan was making good progress and should provide valuable lessons for the future. Discussions should be continued with the World Bank on the possibilities of rural development in the refugee or returnee areas of Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Mexico and Costa Rica.

25. There was no doubt that refugee-related development projects had to be financed or co-financed by interested Governments. His Government was participating in the operation in Pakistan through its financial assistance agency, the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau. The World Bank should also commit its own resources to refugee-related development projects. UNHCR co-operation with UNDP on joint projects through the Office of Project Execution and the United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development was also encouraging. Ways should be explored of strengthening co-operation with United Nations regional commissions, in particular ECA, ESCAP and ECLAC, in the implementation of training courses and the holding of workshops so as to enhance horizontal co-operation among the developing countries of each individual region. His delegation was in favour of the idea of holding a joint workshop of voluntary agency and UNHCR officials in order to make joint use of the lessons learnt in assistance activities to refugees.

26. It emphasized once again the importance of decentralization and the delegation of authority, both within headquarters and from headquarters to the field, as recommended by the Executive Committee at its thirty-second session. The recommendation, made at the thirty-fourth session, on effective programme delivery and improvement of the reporting system should also be followed up.

27. With regard to the appraisals procedure, his delegation was pleased to note that the Joint Inspection Unit had reported progress by UNHCR in international evaluation; such evaluation should focus on improving the delivery of assistance and some aspects of operational capacity and emergency response. The change-over from emergency operations to durable solutions should be given special attention. Suitable training was also needed to raise the standard of self-evaluation reports.

28. His delegation would like to see still more done to improve commodity management and distribution procedures, with special emphasis on port operations and storage and on distribution to the refugees. The findings of such follow-up evaluations might result in the preparation of a new handbook on the mobilization, purchase, management and distribution of commodities. Future plans and activities regarding evaluation should be focused on the adaptation of assistance activities to the durable solutions envisaged. Evaluations were particularly important in the fields of small-business loans, food-aid management and delivery, assistance to refugees in Mexico (with special emphasis on income-generating activities) and emergency preparedness and response in selected countries, with special emphasis on the transitional phase to development-oriented refugee assistance projects.

29. His Government had always co-operated closely with UNHCR in promoting durable solutions, emphasizing in particular integrated rural settlement programmes. It had contributed DM 3 million to UNHCR in 1984 for the local settlement of Ugandan refugees in the southern Sudan and DM 2.2 million in 1985 for an integrated settlement project for Guatemalan refugees in Quintana Roo, Mexico, to which the Mexican authorities had made a substantial counterpart contribution (provision of suitable sites and highly qualified local personnel in the areas of agriculture, education, health and sanitation). His Government was prepared to support that important project with further contributions of DM 2 million in 1986 and DM 0.6 million in 1987, provided that the corresponding agreement was concluded in time. He associated himself with the High Commissioner's comments on the efforts made in the Contadora Group and on the importance of the Cartagena Declaration. His Government was aware of the very difficult refugee situation in the Sudan and would extend its financial support to the settlement project for Ugandan refugees in the southern Sudan by contributing the same amount in 1986 as in 1985, namely DM 1 million. It was hoped in that way to reduce the deficit on UNHCR's General Programmes and at the same time to contribute to the self-sufficiency of the refugee and local populations in the project area. It would also be making a special contribution in 1986 to the ILO/UNHCR project on income-generating activities in the eastern Sudan, in the hope that operations could be initiated in 1986 without delay.

30. Mr. DELMI (Algeria) said that the idea of linking refugee assistance with development aid would undoubtedly solve many of the problems of countries which were harbouring refugees, since it would make it possible for refugees to achieve self-sufficiency and reduce their dependence on international assistance. The Principles of Action agreed at the Mont-Pélerin Meeting of Experts and the ICARA II action programme should therefore exert a positive influence on the process of promoting refugee self-sufficiency. Since, moreover, some local populations were living under the same difficult conditions as refugee groups, it was logical to attempt to deal at the same time with the difficulties common to both.

31. By accepting the principle of the interdependence of refugee assistance and development aid, the international community had opened up some interesting prospects for durable solutions, while at the same time meeting the expectations of host countries. The implementation of that principle raised the problem of co-ordination with developmental organizations; UNHCR could act as a catalyst and co-ordinator by mobilizing the specialized agencies and voluntary organizations to assist both refugees and the host countries, a task which would be facilitated by the appointment of a special adviser for development projects. He hoped that the consultations between UNHCR and interested parties would soon produce agreement, so as to permit a rapid execution of ICARA II projects.

32. Mr. HORIMURA (Japan) said he wished to reaffirm the importance of the link between refugee aid and development advocated at ICARA II. His Government was particularly interested in the water supply and sanitation projects submitted by five African countries to ICARA II. One such project, relating to the transport of food aid for refugees in the Sudan, had already been completed and his Government was continuing the study of other projects in that country as well as in Somalia and Zambia, and every effort would be made to achieve early completion of the relevant projects in close co-operation with the countries concerned.

33. UNHCR should carefully plan its medium- and long-term policy for development-oriented assistance, co-operating closely with developmental organizations such as UNDP, IFAD and the regional development banks. A clear division of labour would be necessary between the organizations concerned, with due regard for UNHCR's current financial difficulties.

34. Mrs. HÖGLUND (Sweden) said that there was general agreement on the concept of integrated programmes for the benefit of both refugees and local populations. The appointment of a special adviser and the establishment of the Specialist Support Unit constituted evidence of the importance which UNHCR attached to development assistance. It was encouraging to find from the documentation that the work was making good progress; she welcomed, in particular, the dialogue which had been started with the World Bank and the workshop which it was planned to hold with other specialized agencies. One very important task was to provide refugees with new opportunities to undertake some form of activity. The experience of the specialized agencies would be particularly valuable in co-operative projects, especially small-scale integrated projects relating to local structures.

35. Mr. INGEVICS (Australia) said that the importance of development-oriented assistance to refugees and returnees in the developing countries was generally recognized. The link between refugee aid and development had been the subject of considerable discussion in international forums, before taking on practical significance as refugee situations began to lose their exceptional character. There was increasing acceptance of the need for durable solutions and for examination of the root causes of mass flows. The search for durable solutions should be accompanied by new arrangements for sharing the burden between the affected countries and the international community as a whole.

36. His government had always supported UNHCR's role as a catalyst for the provision of assistance to refugees, displaced persons and returnees, but there were other agencies technically and financially better equipped than UNHCR to handle development aid. His delegation therefore welcomed the action taken by UNHCR to develop co-operative arrangements with the World Bank, the regional development banks, UNDP and the non-governmental organizations. Co-operation between refugees, the host countries and donors was also necessary. Development-oriented assistance for refugees would have to take into account the additional infrastructural and ecological requirements resulting from a refugee influx.

37. His delegation shared the High Commissioner's view that the proposed development projects to benefit refugees or returnees in Pakistan, Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia needed further examination with the relevant specialized development agencies. It had noted the High Commissioner's comments on the problems raised



by the proposed projects in Sudan and Ethiopia. As far as the Sudan project was concerned, it would certainly not be realistic for UNHCR to undertake to provide all the financial resources required. The governing bodies of the development agencies should bear in mind the problems involved when examining the activities of those agencies in low-income countries.

38. His Government had, under the auspices of ICARA, contributed \$A 2.4 million for the integration of refugees and returnees into the development process and had recently announced a contribution of \$A 250,000 for a returnee project in the Hararghe region of Ethiopia. It had also contributed to similar projects in other regions.

39. Mr. FORD (United States of America) said that his delegation had read with interest the note on refugee aid and development, a subject to which the Executive Committee had been paying close attention for several years, and particularly at the time of ICARA II. His Government supported the efforts made in association with international financing institutions for the establishment of effective development programmes in regions particularly affected by the presence of large numbers of refugees, especially in cases where a start had already been made with the integration of refugee populations into the local economy.

40. Mr. BOLDUC (Canada) said that he wished, first of all, to acknowledge the generosity of the countries of first asylum, which had welcomed so very many refugees. His delegation believed that the integration of refugees in the development process was a desirable means of sharing the burden of costs, whenever it was possible to link refugee assistance with the development process. That would necessitate, however, a direct commitment on the part of the international community, the refugees, international organizations and the host countries. Based on closer co-operation between UNHCR, the other United Nations organs and the NGOs, particular emphasis would have to be placed on development projects which would benefit refugees and also the local population. UNHCR's role would then essentially be that of a catalyst and a co-ordinator of the various specialized agencies.

41. His delegation supported all the measures taken by UNHCR to that end; it accepted the fact that larger financial resources would be required to assist the most closely affected countries.

42. Mr. DE MAIO (Italy) said that, in 1985, his Government would be contributing \$2 billion to refugee assistance in Africa which it regarded as the priority region. Particular emphasis had been placed on the implementation of projects under ICARA II, for which a contribution of \$15 million had been allocated. His Government intended to support other projects also, mainly in the Horn of Africa, particularly a water-supply project in the Sudan. Support was also planned for a number of projects in countries for which the High Commissioner had launched an emergency appeal; \$3 million would be pledged for that purpose.

43. Mr. PAPULI (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) said that UNIDO had recently become the sixteenth specialized agency of the United Nations system, at a time unfortunately of increased needs and dwindling resources. UNIDO would, however, do its best to promote system-wide co-operation in the industrial sector, so as to contribute to a balanced recovery and a sustained pace of economic development.

44. In its 1984 report, the Executive Committee had stressed the importance of development-oriented assistance and the need for refugees to be integrated into the economic development process as the best means of helping them to support themselves and contribute to the economic and social life of the host country.

45. The provision of technical training and the creation of job opportunities in industry were areas in which UNIDO could make an important contribution to the work of UNHCR and it was ready to make available its considerable knowledge and competence in providing technical assistance for industrial development. UNIDO was prepared, in particular, to undertake a joint identification and formulation of specific industrial programmes, especially conceived to address the needs of particular groups of refugees. Preliminary contacts had already been made and a mission from UNIDO headquarters would be visiting UNHCR at the end of October 1985.

46. Mr. QUINLAN (International Council of Voluntary Agencies) said, with reference to the link between durable solutions and development-oriented projects, that in some cases durable solutions could be achieved by direct assistance to refugee groups in conjunction with aid to the local population. Such solution thus contained some development aspects, but the main thrust of the aid was focused directly in refugees. Some of the best examples were to be found in Tanzania. Nevertheless, the deterioration of the economic situation in many third-world countries made it necessary to approach refugee situations in a much wider context and integrate refugee assistance projects in development programmes, a task in which UNHCR was called on to act as catalyst and co-ordinator.

47. Three sources - two Governments and the entertainment world - had just provided over \$1 billion for the drought-stricken countries of Africa which were currently harbouring more than a million refugees or returnees. It should be possible for part of that sum to be used for development programmes which would benefit at the same time refugees, returnees and the local population. The voluntary agencies were prepared to apply for further financial resources to institutions and other sources and to discuss with UNHCR how best they could make themselves useful in that field. It had to be understood, however, that the agencies could play an active role only if the development programmes which included a refugee assistance component were conceived in a community development context, and if the agencies themselves had been associated in the design, implementation and evaluation of the programming process, so as to be in a position to obtain the necessary funds from suitable sources, leaving the refugee components of such programmes to be financed by UNHCR.

48. A number of ICVA agencies were members of the World Bank/NGO Committee which had been established a few years previously to explore ways in which the Bank's macro-approach could be combined with the agencies' micro-approach for the greater benefit of the target groups. While most voluntary agencies would not be in a position to implement large-scale World Bank infrastructural projects, they could provide the indispensable link between the project and the beneficiaries. UNHCR might therefore consider approaching ICVA - in view of its unique expertise in both refugee assistance and community development - for the implementation of some elements of World Bank projects of benefit to refugees.

49. The response of the voluntary agencies to ICARA II projects had been limited in spite of all the Council's efforts. Although some of the projects were obviously suitable for participation by the voluntary agencies, others needed further study. Practical arrangements for working with UNDP had taken a long time

to work out. Lastly, it was a matter of concern that some donors, instead of allocating new funds for emergency purposes, had diverted funds originally allocated for ICARA II projects.

50. The UNHCR/NGO Workshop on Refugee Aid and Development should provide a means of determining in which cases a development-oriented approach was necessary for the achievement of durable solutions in specific refugee situations. ICVA members saw that workshop as the beginning of a new process and looked forward to analysing its results.

51. The Council fully endorsed the principle of the full participation of the refugees themselves in the programming process, and believed that evaluation teams composed of representatives of the host Government, the general population and refugees benefiting from such schemes, UNHCR and, where appropriate, the voluntary agencies involved, would constitute a useful means of assessing the results of the efforts of the international community and provide appropriate guidance in further improving assistance to refugees.

52. Mr. MALLANIA (United Republic of Tanzania) said he welcomed the close co-operation that had been established between UNHCR and UNDP, the World Bank and the non-governmental organizations. He shared the view of the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany that current projects should be supported for some further period after they had been phased out. Support should be given, as a matter of general policy, to projects under ICARA II specifically aimed at solving problems which arose on the road to self-sufficiency. Suitable criteria were needed in particular for project evaluation.

53. His delegation thanked all those countries which had made contributions to refugee assistance and development aid.

54. Mr. van SCHAIK (Netherlands) said he agreed with the High Commissioner as to the importance of establishing a link between refugee assistance and development aid and thought that that should be done as soon as possible. The assistance would have to be effectively integrated into development projects and his delegation welcomed UNHCR's efforts to play the role of a catalyst. It hoped that progress would be possible in that field and endorsed the comments by the representative of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies.

55. His delegation appreciated the High Commissioner's efforts to find the best possible partners for the purposes of co-operation. It was regrettable that UNDP had not been more forthcoming and that the reaction of the World Bank on the subject of the Sudan had not been more encouraging. That viewpoint would have to be expressed to the Board of Governors of the World Bank and the Governing Council of UNDP. His delegation wondered whether, in borderline cases between refugee assistance and development aid, the difficulties were due mainly to lack of resources or to other factors.

56. Mr. HEIDLER (Special Adviser for Refugee-related Development Projects) said that the three points raised by the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany were the very ones that were to be discussed at the proposed UNHCR Workshop with the non-governmental organizations; the practical approach that should emerge therefrom would yield good results if everyone was prepared to adopt it.

57. As for the proposal that a budget line be established for renewable project expenditure, the objective of UNHCR was to encourage projects designed to secure refugee self-sufficiency, and thus prevent such expenditure. Although that objective was not often achieved, that was the principle it followed. UNHCR thanked the Federal Republic of Germany for its intention to provide extra funding for the Specialist Support Unit. It also agreed with the delegation of Japan concerning medium- and long-term planning of development-oriented assistance. It appeared that the delegation of Canada shared the High Commissioner's view that, as a catalyst and co-ordinator, he should not be expected to assume sole responsibility for the financing of projects.

58. Where it was a question of assisting the poorest of the poor - and refugees certainly belonged to that category, the emphasis had to be on small projects, but it was also very important to stimulate refugee participation in local development. The voluntary agencies could do a lot in that field and the High Commissioner had put his views on that subject to the World Bank.

59. As for the last question by the delegation of the Netherlands, there could be no doubt that the World Bank and other funding agencies were in genuine financial difficulties but that was not the only reason. The East African Department of the World Bank was short not only of money but also of staff. The refugee question was also handled with great circumspection, since it was regarded as a very delicate and political issue; the World Bank and other funding agencies feared that they might create difficulties for themselves. Although the pilot project carried out in Pakistan with the co-operation of the World Bank had helped to dissipate that fear, there was still a long way to go. The suggestion by the delegation of the Netherlands that States should request their representatives on the governing bodies of those financing agencies to bring up the question was a good one.

60. Mr. HARTLING (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that special budgetary allocations existed, but they should not conflict with the general budget and he hoped that donors would make special contributions. He thanked the Federal Republic of Germany for supporting the promotion of durable solutions.

61. He was also grateful to the various delegations which had agreed with him that UNHCR could not consider financing projects on its own, and he supported the idea that Governments should bring that question to the attention of their representatives on the governing bodies of the financing agencies. He would be happy to discuss all those questions with UNIDO, and laid great store on co-operation with ICVA.

UNHCR'S ROLE IN PROMOTING DURABLE SOLUTIONS (agenda item 10)  
(A/AC.96/663 and Corr.1)

62. Mr. ZOLLNER (Director, Assistance Division) recalled that, according to the Statute of UNHCR, the search for and implementation of durable solutions to refugee problems was the very essence of refugee assistance activities. If, in view of current financial stringency, UNHCR had to choose between certain activities, it would be very dangerous to sacrifice the many activities linked with the promotion of durable solutions in order to meet the vital needs of refugees. For that reason, all the General Programmes submitted by the High Commissioner, including those relating to durable solutions should have the same priority.

63. The High Commissioner was always ready to give active support to any measures aimed at creating conditions suitable for the implementation of durable solutions and would continue to do so on condition that the necessary resources could be found. He was, however, powerless without the political will and co-operation of the Governments concerned. That was so, for example, in the case of voluntary repatriation where he could only record the wishes of the refugees, almost all of whom desired to return home, and the respective positions of Governments, and hold himself in readiness to assist when the time came, leaving to other competent bodies responsibility for the necessary political discussions. The implementation of self-sufficiency projects, economic and social integration in the countries of first asylum or final integration as a result of the acquisition of a new citizenship likewise depended on the willingness of the Government of the country of asylum to accept the refugee and give him the opportunity to become independent. It was also, on occasion, necessary to refrain from treating large numbers of refugees as pawns in a political game.

64. There were also cases where only the rapid transfer of the refugee to another host country could guarantee his safety, which was one of the priority aims of UNHCR resettlement programmes. There again, the solution depended entirely on the goodwill and generosity of host countries.

65. For all those reasons, the High Commissioner had launched an urgent appeal to the Governments of countries of asylum and countries of origin to take the necessary steps for the implementation of durable solutions and to Governments of resettlement countries not to let their generosity dry up.

66. It was clear from the note on durable solutions (A/AC.96/663) that activities aimed at promoting self-sufficiency and integration accounted for by far the largest part of the resources allocated to durable solutions, in view of the fact that the countries concerned assumed a large measure of responsibility for resettlement and voluntary repatriation expenses. The in situ integration of refugees in the least developed countries was a long and costly task, but UNHCR was becoming progressively better equipped to do it, thanks to the teams of technicians, special technical groups and sources of expert knowledge on which it could draw.

67. Although durable solutions were an essential element in assistance activities, it was difficult to view them in isolation from the provision of material assistance and it might perhaps be better to go back to considering questions relating to the implementation of durable solutions and those relating to assistance activities in general under the same agenda item.

68. Mr. VOELZKE (Federal Republic of Germany), having emphasized the importance of the three forms of durable solution available, all of which required the assistance of the international community, said that voluntary repatriation was the most satisfactory of them all and that UNHCR's untiring efforts in that field deserved all praise. Resettlement in a third country should be adopted only as a last resort, since it entailed the greatest risk of a failure in human relations.

69. In view of the difficulties involved in voluntary repatriation and resettlement, UNHCR had to concentrate its activities on rural resettlement programmes in countries of first asylum, so as to ensure that refugees became self-sufficient as soon as possible. Once that stage had been reached, financial assistance should be phased out, although some follow-up activities would still be necessary.

70. The provision of suitable sites and diversification of income-generating activities, were essential if rural resettlement projects were to succeed. His delegation had noted with satisfaction that the Specialist Support Unit had at its disposal the services of an "income-generating" expert from ILO for the development of such projects. The implementation of such income-generating projects in Djibouti, Pakistan, Somalia, Mexico and the Sudan was a welcome development.

71. In conclusion, his delegation noted with satisfaction the steady increase in the proportion of the UNHCR budget allocated to durable solutions, and assured the Executive Committee that the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany would continue its support for those important UNHCR activities.

72. Mr. JENNY (Intergovernmental Committee for Migration) said that ICM was only too well aware of the difficult challenge which the High Commissioner had been called on to face in recent years, as a result not only of the spectacular increase in the refugee population throughout the world, but also of the growing complexity of refugee situations.

73. ICM shared the serious concern expressed by previous speakers about the continued high influx of asylum-seekers into Western Europe. It welcomed the High Commissioner's initiative in deciding to consult the Governments concerned with a view to defining policies which would take into account the need to protect those who had a genuine claim to refugee status and seek alternative solutions for those who were manifestly not refugees. It was imperative that refugee status should be restricted to those who risked persecution in their homelands, without forgetting, however, that those who did not strictly fulfil the criteria were often in need of humanitarian aid; they included human beings who had fled their homelands for a complex mixture of social and economic factors which often prevented them from living a life of human dignity. Alternative solutions had to be found for that category of persons whether in the country of asylum, by facilitating emigration to third countries or, where feasible, by assisted voluntary return migration to their homelands. Those two latter solutions had been promoted by special ICM programmes carried out in co-operation with some European Governments, programmes which could be further extended, in close collaboration with Governments and if necessary with UNHCR.

74. Voluntary repatriation remained the most desirable durable solution to the refugee problem and ICM supported the High Commissioner's efforts in that direction. It was necessary to deal directly with the country of origin and, frequently, to prepare the material conditions for the return of the refugee.

75. ICM, which had been co-operating with UNHCR for many years in the implementation of voluntary repatriation programmes, had its own specific programmes aimed at facilitating the return to and reintegration into developing countries of highly skilled and skilled individuals for the purpose of promoting the economic and social advancement of those countries. The complementary nature of ICM and UNHCR programmes had been brought out clearly in the recent return home of former Argentine and Uruguayan exiles, some assisted by UNHCR and others by ICM.

76. Another area of co-operation with UNHCR was in the implementation of the Programme of Orderly Departure from Viet Nam; ICM had provided transportation from the very beginning and, due to the significant increase in outflows in recent years, had since extended its structure to Hô Chi Minh city itself. All those arrangements had been made under the UNHCR umbrella. In a few months,

the ICM programme would have enabled about 100,000 Vietnamese migrants to leave the country. Over the last 18 months, ICM had spent about \$US 20 million on transportation costs under the Orderly Departure Programme, financed primarily by direct governmental contributions; it would continue to provide active support to UNHCR and to Governments within the framework of the Programme.

77. In the case of South-East Asia, ICM was in agreement with the High Commissioner that, in the absence of other durable solutions, resettlement was unavoidable and he joined UNHCR in expressing recognition for the continued high level of resettlement offers from most industrialized countries. Although resettlement was not always the most desirable nor the most practical solution, it was still unavoidable in many cases. The international community had not remained indifferent to that situation and, during 1985, ICM expected to facilitate the movement of 120,000 refugees accepted for resettlement in almost 90 countries of the world.

78. A particular problem was that of so-called long stayers in the many refugee camps in South-East Asia. ICM had recently agreed with UNHCR to compile special resettlement files for such long stayers, in addition to the files which ICM had already been maintaining on physically and mentally handicapped refugees since 1982. Those files were at the disposal of UNHCR for submission to Governments interested in receiving handicapped refugees.

79. Mr. PURCELL (United States of America), having welcomed the progress made in the promotion of durable solutions mainly as a result of the generosity of some African countries and the activities of UNHCR, said that voluntary repatriation was the prime solution and it appeared that some refugee situations were ripe for its implementation. UNHCR should use its good offices to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of the many refugees desirous of returning home, such as the Lao refugees in Thailand. His delegation appealed to the Governments concerned to accept back the refugees who wished to return.

80. His Government recognized that, in some cases, resettlement might be the only durable solution and would continue its active participation in UNHCR settlement projects, for example in South-East Asia. He urged Governments which had not yet done so to make resettlement offers. Nevertheless, UNHCR should attempt to find other durable solutions and his Government would support any initiatives to that end.

81. Mrs. AHLUWALIA (Canada), having commended UNHCR and the Governments involved on the durable solutions reported in document A/AC.96/663, said that her delegation would like to see a much greater percentage of voluntary funds being devoted to durable solutions. When conditions permitted, voluntary repatriation was the preferred durable solution and all necessary efforts should be made to achieve it, if need be through the personal intervention of the High Commissioner. Voluntary repatriation had been possible mainly in Africa and to some extent in Latin America, but only on a very restricted scale in South-East Asia. It was therefore encouraging that UNHCR had initiated a programme in favour of Lao returnees and her Government would be contributing \$Can. 100,000 thereto.

82. On the other hand, her delegation welcomed the fact that the generosity of host countries and the efforts of UNHCR - in particular by linking refugee assistance to development aid - had enabled progress to be made with the in situ integration of refugee populations. She wished to emphasize, in that connection, the importance of the direct link between refugee assistance activities and durable solutions.

83. Mr. ROBERTSON (Australia) said that the Director of the Protection Division, had made it clear that resettlement opportunities were diminishing. At the same time, his delegation agreed with the view expressed by the Director of the Assistance Division concerning the importance of assistance activities for the achievement of durable solutions, although he would not go so far as to say that those solutions fell entirely under the head of assistance aid and should no longer be considered as a separate agenda item.

84. With refugee problems proliferating, the emphasis had to be on preventive action, in other words on identifying refugee outflows in their early stages so as to prevent or minimize their effect. To that end, UNHCR should co-operate closely with the States directly involved and with other appropriate United Nations agencies. That need to examine both the causes and the effects of refugee movements should also be emphasized against the background of the set of principles on voluntary repatriation that had been drawn up at the San Remo meeting. The consultative procedures, inherent in the High Commissioner's mandate, should be used not only to further voluntary repatriation but also for tackling refugee problems as they arose. He supported the views expressed by the representatives of the United States of America and Belgium in that connection.

85. The High Commissioner's note (A/AC.96/663) made it clear that, although some progress had been made with voluntary repatriation in Africa and Latin America, significant refugee populations still remained in those regions. In South-East Asia, some small progress had been made on voluntary repatriation to Laos. The screening programme had succeeded in limiting refugee outflows from Laos at the frontiers, thus reserving protection and assistance for those whose circumstances justified it. It was encouraging to note that the departure rate from Viet Nam under the Orderly Departure Programme was higher than the disorderly outflow of refugees by sea.

86. The abolition of the post of Regional Co-ordinator for Indo-China had reduced administrative expenses, but the effective promotion of durable solutions required the presence of a co-ordinator exercising his functions in South-East Asia. Lastly, his delegation believed that UNHCR could effectively pursue durable solutions only to the extent that the High Commissioner received support and direction from the member Governments.

87. Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco) said that he had noted with interest paragraphs 30, 31 and 32 of the document on durable solutions (A/AC.96/633) which dealt with the activities of the UNHCR representative in Algeria. The document in question was dated 25 July 1985 and the representative had assumed his duties in March 1985, so that he had not yet had time to become fully operational. There were a number of questions which the Moroccan delegation would like to have answered regarding the missions which the representative had carried out to camps in the Tindouf region, namely, whether he had required prior authorization to visit those camps, and if so why; how often he had visited the camps and how long he had stayed in them; whether he had been alone; and whether he had been allowed to contact persons in the camps and discuss matters freely with them in the absence of witnesses.

88. In one of the paragraphs he had mentioned, the UNHCR representative was quoted as stating: "There appears to be widespread agreement that a durable solution for those identified by the Algerian authorities as Sahrawi refugees will depend entirely on a general political solution to the problem of Western Sahara." It should be realized that that was the position adopted by the neighbouring country, which did not wish to see UNHCR discharging its mission in full. The political solution mentioned should not be dealt within



the Executive Committee; nevertheless, he recalled that his Government had proposed the holding of a self-determination referendum under United Nations auspices and had pledged itself to the General Assembly, at its 1983 session, to respect the freely and individually expressed wishes of those who could be identified as genuinely originating from the former Spanish Sahara.

89. According to the document, the persons concerned desired voluntary repatriation, without the proviso of a general political solution. In that connection his delegation would like to know whether the neighbouring country had permitted the UNHCR representative to pass on to the persons in the Tindouf camps and other camps of the region the appeals made by the Government of Morocco for their voluntary repatriation. The settlement of those persons close to the Moroccan frontier - as was immediately apparent from a glance at the map - was designed to keep the situation tense; in any case, the UNHCR representative had stated that the zone was "arid and unsuitable for large-scale cultivation", and that ruled out any self-sufficiency activity.

90. The High Commissioner should take steps to find out unequivocally and at first hand the wishes of the Sahrawis living in the camps in question. Those who genuinely came from Western Sahara should have the repatriation proposals of the Moroccan Government brought to their attention. They should also be given the opportunity of opting for the durable solutions recommended in the UNHCR mandate. To enable that to be done, the head of the UNHCR delegation in Algeria should be given access at all times and without prior authorization to the camps in the Tindouf region.

91. Mr. BURUSAPATANA (Thailand) said that there was two ways of resolving the refugee problem in South-East Asia, namely, resettlement in third countries and voluntary repatriation. As things stood, the more feasible solution was resettlement, but UNHCR should continue its efforts for voluntary repatriation, in view of the burden upon the host countries. The refugee problem in Thailand, in particular, was still very serious and the whole international community must continue to support the efforts being made to resolve it. His delegation also believed that the High Commissioner should reverse his previous decision and restore a post of regional co-ordinator for South-East Asia.

92. Mr. HEGNER (Switzerland) said that two-fifths of the resources available for the General Programmes were being used for the promotion of durable solutions; that ratio would probably rise even further in the years to come. One of the key problems in that field was planning. It was necessary, in particular - as many delegations had stated in connection with the preceding item - to combine development aid with assistance to refugees. It would thus be desirable for UNHCR to co-operate closely with the World Bank and UNDP. Moreover, the Executive Committee should be kept regularly informed of the effects of UNHCR programmes on the actual life of the refugees. To that end, reports on assistance activities should give accurate figures for the total numbers of refugees in each country, the numbers of those not yet resettled and the numbers of those who, having been resettled, were no longer receiving UNHCR assistance. The amounts expended in each country for durable solutions in relation to the total number of refugees could be shown in tabular form, covering a period of two or three years.

93. The Executive Committee should also be given more information on the delicate transition from UNHCR assistance to the stage when refugees assumed responsibility for their own lives and became genuinely self-sufficient. Switzerland was particularly interested in that aspect, having been one of the first countries to participate actively in the UNHCR programme initiated with the World Bank in Pakistan. It was also supporting the refugee repatriation programme in the Ethiopian province of Hararghe.

94. It was very important for the programmes to be drawn up in co-operation with representatives of the refugees and of the executing agencies, who should also be asked to participate in the internal appraisals of the programmes, to be carried out for example every second year. He would also like to see the information on durable solutions, which was currently dispersed among several different documents, submitted as a coherent whole the following year.

95. Mr. HORIMURA (Japan) said he wished to emphasize the importance of durable solutions for the Indo-Chinese refugees. If those refugees remained in the camps, their problems would only become worse. UNHCR should thus continue its efforts in favour of durable solutions, particularly by strengthening and revitalizing its representation on the ground in South-East Asia. He agreed with the representatives of Australia and Thailand that the establishment of a senior regional co-ordinator post would help toward the achievement of durable solutions, especially voluntary repatriation.

96. Mrs. KSENTINI (Algeria) said she was grateful to the High Commissioner for having recalled that durable solutions were the ultimate aim of any assistance programme. The approach he had adopted in his note (A/AC.96/663) seemed to be fully in keeping with his duties and his terms of reference.

97. Voluntary repatriation was the most desirable of the durable solutions, but it was also the most difficult to implement, since it was directly dependent on the root causes of refugee situations. Her Government was particularly attached to that solution in that, in 1962, Algerian refugees had been the beneficiaries of the first operation of that type carried out by UNHCR. It was currently doing its utmost to facilitate UNHCR's task with regard to the Sahrawi refugees who were on Algerian territory.

98. The situation of those refugees was set out in very objective terms in the document (A/AC.96/663) and that should provide a satisfactory response to the concerns of all. The Sahrawi refugee camps had been visited on several occasions by the UNHCR representative in Algeria. It had to be pointed out, however, that the voluntary repatriation of the Sahrawis would involve their return to the Western Sahara, based on guarantees which could be given only by those having sovereign authority over that territory. It was, however, for the Sahrawis themselves to determine that authority. That came back to a debate which was continuing in other United Nations forums, but had no place in the Executive Committee, whose function was humanitarian.

99. Mr. GROTH (Sweden) said he regretted that the search for durable solutions had been set back during the past year by the emergency in Africa and by financial constraints. Nevertheless, UNHCR should again concentrate its efforts on durable solutions in 1986. By far the most desirable form of durable solution was certainly voluntary repatriation, and a number of major voluntary repatriation operations had been carried out in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Western Europe over the past 15 years. The process was on occasion made more complicated by over-elaborate bureaucratic procedures in the countries of origin.

100. Local integration in the country of first asylum might be regarded as the second best durable solution, a solution which required the co-operation of the Government concerned and the support of the international community. Many developing countries had exhibited an exemplary generosity in that regard, but increased efforts were still needed in certain countries toward integrating the refugees into the local population. UNHCR had an important part to play in helping refugees to become self-sufficient through agricultural and non-agricultural activities. The need for refugee participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of UNHCR programmes was, in principle, acceptable to all - but was not always encouraged in practice.

101. Mr. CHARRY SAMPER (Colombia) introduced, on behalf of the 10 countries of the Contadora Group, a draft conclusion relating to the "Cartagena Declaration on Refugees".

102. The CHAIRMAN said that the Executive Committee had taken careful note of the draft conclusion submitted by the representative of Colombia, which would be published in document A/AC.96/XXXVI/CRP.4.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

99. M. GROTH (Suède) déplore que pendant l'année écoulée les efforts faits dans le sens de solutions durables aient été limités par la situation d'urgence en Afrique et par des contraintes budgétaires. Le HCR n'en devrait pas moins mettre à nouveau l'accent sur les solutions durables en 1986. Parmi ces solutions, la plus souhaitable est certainement le rapatriement librement consenti; un certain nombre d'opérations importantes ont pu être réalisées en ce sens au cours des quinze dernières années, en Asie, en Afrique, en Amérique latine et en Europe occidentale. Il va sans dire que le HCR a la responsabilité de veiller à ce que le rapatriement se fasse dans des conditions satisfaisantes. Il est parfois compliqué notamment par les procédures bureaucratiques trop lourdes des pays d'origine.

100. L'intégration dans les pays de premier asile est peut être la deuxième solution durable par ordre de préférence. Cette solution présuppose la coopération du gouvernement concerné et le soutien de la communauté internationale. A cet égard il faut souligner que beaucoup de pays en développement font preuve d'une générosité exemplaire. En revanche, dans certains pays il faudrait des efforts accrus pour intégrer les réfugiés à la population locale. Pour sa part, le HCR a un rôle important à jouer en contribuant à rendre les réfugiés autosuffisants au moyen d'activités agricoles et autres. La participation des réfugiés à la planification, à l'exécution et à l'évaluation des programmes du HCR est en principe acceptée par tous - mais elle n'est pas toujours favorisée dans la pratique.

101. M. CHARRY SAMPER (Colombie) introduit au nom des dix pays du groupe de Contadora un projet de conclusion concernant la "Déclaration de Carthagène sur les réfugiés".

101. Le PRESIDENT assure le représentant de la Colombie que le Comité exécutif a pris bonne note du projet qu'il a présenté et qui sera publié dans le document A/AC.96/XXXVI/CRP.4.

La séance est levée à 18 h 5.