



General Assembly

Seventy-second session

Official Records

Distr.: General
21 November 2017

Original: English

Third Committee

Summary record of the 24th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 20 October 2017, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Gunnarsson (Iceland)
later: Ms. Kaszás (Vice-Chair) (Hungary)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 72: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*) (A/72/40 and A/C.3/72/9)

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (*continued*) (A/72/127, A/72/128,

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(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*)

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1. **Ms. Janina** (Chair, Committee on Enforced Disappearances), introducing the report of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances (A/72/56), said that the Committee had concluded its thirteenth session in September 2017. Smooth transitions and continuity were crucial to consolidating the independence and competence of the Committee, which had only been in existence for six years. The Committee was encouraged by the positive outcome of the first Conference of the States Parties to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, which had taken place in December 2016 in Geneva. Currently, 57 States were parties to the Convention and 97 States were signatories.

2. As of October 2017, a total of 33 urgent actions had been closed. Two urgent actions in which the victim had been located remained open because the interim measures granted to his or her relatives or representatives were ongoing.

3. During the period covered by the report, the Committee had received four individual complaints submitted under article 31 of the Convention that referred to events that had taken place in States not parties to the Convention and therefore could not be

registered. Only 23 of 57 States parties had accepted the competence of the Committee to receive individual communications under Article 31 of the Convention. That number, less than half of the States parties, was a sign of reluctance to recognize the competence of the Committee and hindered its ability to operate as foreseen in the Convention. She called on States parties to reconsider that position and allow the Committee to be fully operational.

4. The Committee on Enforced Disappearances remained engaged in strengthening the treaty bodies and hoped that General Assembly resolution 68/268 would continue to serve as the basis for funding of the treaty body system. Resources were currently overstretched, and any failure to implement the formula for future resource allocation set out in that resolution would have adverse effects on the entire system.

5. **Ms. Al Nussairy** (Iraq) said that her country had undertaken a number of measures to implement the Convention, including allowing the country's Independent High Commission for Human Rights to file complaints related to enforced disappearances with the public prosecutor. In addition, Iraq had created a national committee to follow up on complaints of enforced disappearances and had set up relevant units under the Ministries of Defence, the Interior and Justice as well as at hospitals and prisons and detention centres.

6. Iraqi institutions had brought transparency to their dealings with the Committee on Enforced Disappearances when responding to queries about individuals who had purportedly disappeared. However, the search for those who had been abducted or killed by members of terrorist organizations required international coordination and technical assistance, especially given the significant increase in massacres committed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Iraq therefore appealed to the international community for greater assistance.

7. **Mr. Forax** (Observer for the European Union) said that his delegation commended the Committee for its collaboration with the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances in promoting implementation of the Convention, and it wished also to underline the intermediary role that regional organizations could play in supporting it. He asked for examples of measures that could expedite the examination of reports from States, and for an explanation of the procedures for urgent actions. He also requested her views on how to achieve the goal of doubling ratifications of the Convention within five years.

8. **Mr. Mizuno** (Japan) said that his country had submitted its initial report to the Committee and would

have an examination the following year. Enforced disappearance was a serious crime and the international community must strengthen measures to address it wherever it occurred. Japan had encouraged other Member States to ratify the Convention through its universal periodic review recommendations. He asked what the Committee could do to encourage ratification of the Convention.

9. **Ms. Charrier** (France) said that the Committee was to be commended for conducting systematic reviews of States parties to the Convention and engaging in constructive dialogue with States. The Committee was implementing procedures for the consideration of late country reports, and any States that had not submitted a report within two years of ratification should do so. She asked the Special Rapporteur to share possible means of strengthening monitoring mechanisms while preserving flexibility.

10. **Mr. Ríos Sánchez** (Mexico) said that Mexico was firmly committed to combating enforced disappearance and his Government had taken important steps to strengthen its legal and institutional framework in that area. On 12 October 2017, the Congress of the Union had approved the general draft law on enforced disappearance and disappearance perpetrated by individuals and it had been referred to the President for signature. Civil society organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts had all participated in drafting the new law. Account had also been taken of the recommendations of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances and the opinions of government institutions, in particular those responsible for implementing the new law. In addition, the standardized protocol for searching for missing persons and investigating the crime of enforced disappearance had entered into force in 2015. He asked what were the most common misconceptions of Member States regarding the Convention and how progress could be made towards its universalization.

11. **Mr. García Moritán** (Argentina) said that his country welcomed the campaign for universal ratification of the Convention. In 2017, Argentina, along with France and Morocco, would present a new draft resolution in support of the Convention; he hoped that all delegations would contribute to the process.

12. **Mr. Morales López** (Colombia) said that action must be taken to eradicate the crime of enforced disappearance. The armed conflict in Colombia of the past 50 years had affected thousands of people and

Colombia had implemented several measures as a result: enforced disappearance had been expressly prohibited in the Constitution of 1991; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance had been ratified in 2011; and a national commission to search for missing persons had been set up in 2007. A law had also been adopted that honoured the victims of enforced disappearance and set forth measures to find and identify them. Although there had been many cases in Colombia, the number reported had fallen considerably in just over a decade thanks to Government action. Colombia would nevertheless be redoubling its prevention efforts.

13. Following the signing of the peace agreement in 2016, a special unit had been created to search for and return the remains of those who had disappeared during the internal armed conflict. The unit covered the whole country and would be operational for at least a decade. Colombia had initiated its transition to a stable and lasting peace, which it hoped would be irreversible with the support of the international community.

14. **Ms. Janina** (Chair, Committee on Enforced Disappearances) said that responses to requests for urgent action were crucial for locating missing individuals. The mechanism was set out in article 30 of the Convention, and there was no need for States parties to approve particular requests. However, with respect to individual complaints, which were provided for in article 31 of the Convention, States parties had the prerogative to recognize the competence of the Committee.

15. The Committee web page explained the conditions under which a relative, legal counsel or any person with a legitimate interest could ask the Committee to intervene. After taking up a request for urgent action, the Committee coordinated with States parties in the search for the individual. Some cases were resolved when the individual was found to have died; nevertheless that information brought relief to the victim's family. An information campaign was needed to raise awareness in all countries of the existence of the urgent action mechanism and how it helped victims.

16. With respect to questions about country reports, she said that the Committee had engaged in constructive dialogue with States on their implementation of the Convention. States did not experience "reporting fatigue" with respect to their obligations under the Convention because periodic reports from States parties were not required. The Committee did not seek to impose burdens on States, but rather to ensure that the Convention was implemented within its narrow scope. The reporting cycle concluded within six years or, in

cases where serious concerns were raised, within three years.

17. Among the challenges faced by the Committee was an erroneous perception that the Convention had a regional character. The phenomenon of enforced disappearance was not linked to one region only but existed all over the world. No State should be resistant to ratifying the Convention, even those States that were considered pillars of democracy, human rights and rule of law.

18. **Mr. Duhaime** (Chair, Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances) said that the practice of enforced disappearance occurred for diverse reasons, including repression of political dissent and combatting organized crime and terrorism. In the context of terrorism specifically, the world had witnessed a significant increase in “short-term” disappearances that placed individuals outside the protection of the law for a limited amount of time. While in many cases the victim reappeared after some time, such individuals were often tortured, and were sometimes extrajudicially killed.

19. Governments and the international community had not paid adequate attention to the link between enforced disappearance and migration. Due to the transnational nature of migration, States tended to ignore the issue and blame other States or non-State actors. Disappearances of migrants carried out by non-State actors with the involvement of State authorities clearly fell under the category of enforced disappearances; situations where migrants disappeared as a result of measures taken by States on land or at sea to deter migrants might not be enforced disappearances, but might nevertheless trigger the State’s responsibility in the context of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. Given the transnational nature of the problem, States should cooperate among themselves and with relevant international organizations.

20. Threats, intimidation and reprisals against the family members of victims, witnesses and human rights defenders were of major concern. In September 2017, for example, Ibrahim Metwally, a lawyer and father of a disappeared person, had been arrested en route to Geneva where he had been expected to meet with the Working Group and attend a session of the Human Rights Council. States must take measures to prevent such acts and protect those who worked on the issue of enforced disappearances.

21. Country visits were vital to a proper assessment of the prevalence of enforced disappearances globally and to the formulation of recommendations. Through its country visits, the Working Group was able to highlight

country practices, help States implement the Declaration and contact the families of victims. All States that had received requests for visits should respond favourably, and, once a visit had taken place, conduct follow-up activities.

22. *Ms. Kaszás (Hungary), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

23. **Mr. Ariturk** (United States of America) said that his delegation noted with concern the significant increase in the number of cases of enforced disappearance during the reporting period. Moreover, the Syrian Network for Human Rights had estimated that Syrian army and militia groups reporting to the Syrian Government were responsible for tens of thousands of enforced disappearances. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic had documented mass arrests and enforced disappearances in State-controlled detention centres. The United States condemned the regime’s abuses against prisoners and called for the release of arbitrarily detained persons and the admission of international monitors.

24. His delegation also called attention to enforced disappearances in China. Residential detention was widely used to hold political dissidents, human rights activists and religious minorities. The United States was concerned by reports of large numbers of Uighurs detained at State-run political education centres with no access to family or legal counsel.

25. The mandate of the Working Group was to help the families of disappeared persons ascertain the fate of their relatives. However, the practice of enforced disappearance affected not only families, but entire communities. He asked how the Working Group aimed to meet the broader needs of communities affected by forced disappearances.

26. **Mr. García Moritán** (Argentina) said that the coordination between the Working Group and the Committee on Enforced Disappearances was essential for combating enforced disappearances. Argentina shared the concern about reprisals against witnesses of enforced disappearances and the family members of victims. He asked whether the Working Group had investigated the possibility of coordinating with other human rights mechanisms and special mandate holders to address reprisals against relatives of victims, and what States could do to prevent such reprisals.

27. **Mr. Forax** (Observer for the European Union) said that the European Union condemned reprisals against those who reported crimes and violations of human rights. He asked what the new trends in enforced disappearances were and for information on the

relationship between the Working Group and regional groups.

28. **Mr. Mizuno** (Japan) said that his country would continue to work closely with the Working Group to solve cases of enforced disappearances. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea had abducted Japanese citizens, including a 13-year-old girl, from Japanese soil, and most of the victims had not yet returned to their home country. The abduction of Japanese citizens by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was a grave violation of fundamental human rights and therefore concerned the international community. Japan demanded the immediate return of all victims of abduction.

29. **Ms. Charrier** (France) said that the increase in the number of urgent action requests concerning short-term enforced disappearances was a worrying development. France welcomed the attention drawn to the direct link between enforced disappearance and migration. She asked what measures States could take to address that contemporary challenge.

30. **Ms. Hwang** Hyuni (Republic of Korea) said that her Government had hosted the 111th session of the Working Group in Seoul and had continued to make financial contributions, demonstrating its firm commitment to close cooperation with the Working Group. It welcomed the efforts of the Working Group to resolve the numerous cases of enforced disappearance pertaining to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and invited its continued attention to those cases. She asked how civil society contributed to the work of the Working Group and what was most needed to strengthen its cooperation with civil society.

31. **Mr. Yao** Shaojun (China) said that all countries needed to take measures to prevent, combat and punish the crime of enforced disappearances. It was, however, imperative to address such matters in accordance with the laws of the countries concerned. The Constitution and laws of China explicitly provided for the physical freedom of its citizens and forbade the illegal restriction of physical freedom by any organization, institution or individual.

32. His Government was committed to cooperating with special procedures, including the Working Group, and had provided timely replies to its communications. It hoped that the Working Group would strictly abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Code of Conduct for Special Procedures Mandate-holders of the Human Rights Council in conducting its work, closely follow its mandate, perform its duties in an objective and impartial way, use true and reliable information, respect the judicial sovereignty of

countries and engage in constructive dialogue and cooperation with national Governments.

33. The accusation made in the statement by the delegation of the United States was totally unfounded and China would never accept it.

34. **Mr. Ri** Song Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his country had done everything it could to find a complete and fundamental solution to the Japanese abduction issue, in compliance with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-Japan Pyongyang Declaration of 2002. Japan was requested to stop abusing that issue for political rather than human rights purposes and should take sincere steps to officially acknowledge and apologise for its past crimes against humanity and provide due compensation.

35. The allegations made by the South Korean delegation were groundless and were categorically refuted. His Government had made it clear time and again in writing to the United Nations and the Human Rights Council that it had nothing to do with enforced disappearance. Before talking about enforced disappearance, South Korea was strongly requested to apologise to the world for its grave human rights violation and crime, namely, the abduction of 12 female citizens from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in April 2016 in broad daylight, and to return them immediately to their homeland, where their parents and families were waiting anxiously for them.

36. **Mr. Duhaime** (Chair, Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances) said that, on the issue of reprisals, the Working Group had been in close contact with the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and was involved in an ongoing discussion with other special procedures at the annual meeting of special procedures and the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures. The Working Group was trying to expand its actions and work with other stakeholders, such as treaty bodies and other entities within the United Nations, to fight reprisals. Reprisals needed to be condemned not only within the United Nations but also by Member States, which should unequivocally condemn reprisals against people who used mechanisms in accordance with international law.

37. The Working Group had always stressed the importance of addressing the larger impact of enforced disappearances on families and communities, in particular through the obligation of States to ensure reparation for enforced disappearances. Reparation often encompassed memory-related initiatives, such as monuments and museums, to foster collective recognition of the violations suffered by the disappeared and their families and the modification of the history

curriculum to ensure that the rights of people were recognized.

38. With respect to new trends, an increase had been noted in the number of enforced disappearances in the context of State action to combat organized crime and terrorism. The Working Group had always reiterated that there was no justification whatsoever for enforced disappearance, not even to meet such challenging objectives.

39. The Working Group was in constant contact with regional bodies to share expertise. In the preparation of its report on migration and enforced disappearances, it had called on regional bodies to contribute in written form or during a consultation. Each year, one of the three sessions of the Working Group took place outside Geneva, and its forthcoming session would be held in Brussels, presenting an opportunity for the European Union to be in closer contact with the Group and share its expertise.

40. In relation to enforced disappearances and migration, States must take into consideration the transnational nature of the crime of enforced disappearances in that context, in particular the fact that it was difficult for family members to intervene in the investigation and reparation processes. He invited States to take bilateral or multilateral measures to facilitate the initiatives of family members to seek the truth and justice. The transnational nature of the crime also required transnational cooperation in terms of investigation and prevention, and he invited States to take bilateral and international cooperative measures in that regard.

41. With regard to the contribution of civil society, the Working Group existed because of the constant efforts of organizations of families of the disappeared, even in the face of great risks, including reprisals. The Working Group invited civil society to provide information not only on individual cases but also on trends of disappearances to enable it to formulate broader recommendations in accordance with its mandate and the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and push for the international community to pay constant attention to that crime.

42. **Ms. Jimenez-Damary** (Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons), introducing her report (A/72/202), said that, at the end of 2016, an estimated 40.3 million people were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence. In that year, 24.2 million new displacements had been caused by disasters, and it was estimated that millions worldwide had been internally displaced by other causes, such as national development projects. As

the United Nations was rightly focusing much-needed attention on the plight of refugees and migrants, it should not neglect internally displaced persons, who were frequently among the most vulnerable and marginalized. Internal displacement must remain a priority not only for affected States but also the international community.

43. In August 2017, she had conducted an official country visit to El Salvador at the invitation of the Government. The problem of Salvadorians forced to leave their homes as a result of gang-related violence was more significant and widespread than generally accepted, and, while it was estimated that thousands fled their homes every year, comprehensive data was needed to understand the full picture of displacement. She encouraged the Government to acknowledge the full extent of internal displacement and to intensify its efforts to assist and protect internally displaced persons.

44. She thanked the Government of Guatemala for its invitation to conduct an official visit in 2019, and looked forward to receiving positive responses to her requests to visit other States, including Bangladesh, Colombia, Haiti, Libya, Malawi, Mexico, Nepal, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

45. The twentieth anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement was a unique opportunity to forge a stronger commitment to more strategic and concrete action towards the goal of reducing new and protracted internal displacement. She encouraged in particular activities at the national level and the practical commitments of States affected by internal displacement. She proposed the establishment of an international day for internally displaced persons, similar to the international days for refugees and migrants.

46. **Ms. Mortaji** (Morocco) said that humanitarian action for internally displaced persons should be guided by the values of solidarity and respect for international law and international humanitarian law. Her delegation shared the Special Rapporteur's view that reliable data and statistics were an essential element of protection and a prerequisite for the development of policies and programmes to support internally displaced persons. She asked what measures could be taken to improve the collection of data and establish a database on internally displaced persons and how more links could be created between humanitarian action and development with a view to preventing displacement.

47. **Mr. Odisho** (Iraq) said that many people had been displaced as a result of the occupation by ISIL of certain regions of Iraq, and the issue could be managed only through international cooperation. With the help of the

United Nations system and other international organizations, the Iraqi Government had managed to resettle some displaced persons elsewhere in the country, despite enormous economic and security challenges. The Government had taken measures to alleviate the suffering of displaced persons. It had established a committee to provide aid to displaced persons and had built camps, provided financial assistance, replaced lost personal documents and had helped children resume their education in their new locations. The Ministry of Health had provided displaced persons with vaccines, medical treatment and clean drinking water.

48. **Mr. Ariturk** (United States of America) said that, given that communities were made up of individuals with differing interests, the United States was concerned that certain voices, in particular those of women, young people, racial, religious and ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities, might not be heard in crisis situations. He asked how communities of internally displaced persons could ensure that the interests of all were accounted for when collaborating with State-led and international agencies addressing displacement.

49. **Ms. Kipiani** (Georgia) said that her delegation had welcomed the follow-up visit to Georgia by the previous Special Rapporteur. Given that there were no human rights monitoring mechanisms inside the occupied territories of Georgia, it was deplorable that the Special Rapporteur had been prevented from entering the regions by the occupying regime. All possible measures should be taken to ensure free and unhindered access for international actors to the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions.

50. Despite the numerous Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on Georgia reiterating the fundamental right of return, hundreds of thousands of persons remained forcefully displaced, and the ongoing developments created additional impediments to the return of internally displaced persons and refugees. There was no sign of tangible progress in the Geneva international discussions, in which the occupying Power continued to disregard the applicability of internationally recognized principles.

51. Her Government made every effort to ensure decent conditions for the displaced population, including by pursuing durable housing projects for internally displaced persons. The existing livelihood action plan had been renewed for the period from 2018 to 2019 to ensure that internally displaced persons gained financial independence from the State.

52. **Mr. Rasuli** (Afghanistan) said that his Government was committed to protecting the rights of

internally displaced persons and returnees and to providing effective mechanisms for addressing their specific needs. Despite the significant progress made, Afghanistan was still one of the leading countries of origin for refugees and internally displaced persons, owing to decades of political instability. He asked what actions could be taken to address the root causes of internal displacement and protect the human rights of internally displaced persons in conflict situations.

53. **Mr. Forax** (Observer for the European Union) said that the European Union agreed that participation should become the new norm in internal displacement responses. He asked how the observance of the twentieth anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement could contribute to a United Nations system-wide approach to better address the situation of internally displaced persons. The European Union shared the view that the best way of dealing with displacement was to prevent it before it happened. In that regard, he would appreciate additional information on the suggested participatory planning for future displacement in terms of consultation and participation in advance of displacement.

54. **Mr. Mahidi** (Austria) said that recovery efforts could be successful only when the needs of the displaced communities were met, which could be achieved only through the participation of the communities themselves in the decision-making process. He asked for examples of best practices and obstacles to overcome in the development and implementation of participation measures and activities and what steps the United Nations could take to strengthen its work on internal displacement.

55. **Mr. Cerutti** (Switzerland) said that his country welcomed the proposal of the Special Rapporteur to apply the new way of working to internal displacement and called on States to integrate internally displaced persons into their development plans to ensure that their needs and those of host communities were taken into account. He asked what was needed to implement the new way of working in the area of internally displaced persons and how the international community could contribute to that endeavour.

56. **Mr. Mikayilli** (Azerbaijan) said that although internally displaced persons outnumbered refugees, the issue had not received adequate attention from the international community. His delegation agreed that the root causes of the phenomenon needed to be addressed and believed that the specific references to internally displaced persons in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants would advance the issue

globally. He asked the Special Rapporteur to share her opinion on how the issue of internally displaced persons could be incorporated into the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and the global compact on refugees.

57. **Mr. Lyngroth** (Norway) said that internal displacement was a challenge for the realization of the collective goals of the international community, and efforts must be stepped up to prevent and reduce internal displacement. He asked what the key priorities should be to ensure that internally displaced persons were not left behind and that their human rights were respected.

58. Norway favoured strong and concrete action for the protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons, and it was essential that the issue received high-level attention at the United Nations and in Member States. The forthcoming twentieth anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement offered an excellent opportunity to raise awareness and take steps to improve planning and response.

59. **Ms. Asgedom** (Ethiopia) said that the full participation of all communities potentially affected by internal displacement in decision-making and the humanitarian response was essential. Local communities should also be involved in designing and implementing development projects that affected them from the outset, as that could help prevent internal displacement. At the same time, States and other actors must put internally displaced persons and their needs at the centre of their efforts to provide humanitarian assistance, meet protection needs and find a sustainable solution to displacement. Given that each State bore the primary responsibility for the welfare and protection of internally displaced persons in its territory, Governments should also play a leading role in participation initiatives to ensure they remained in place until durable solutions could be found.

60. **Ms. Earle** (United Kingdom) said that the 2018 anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Displacement offered an opportunity to give much-needed international attention to the plight of the internally displaced. The vast majority were in situations of protracted displacement and too often were left on their own, having disappeared unrecorded in urban areas. The obstacles to a more effective response were considerable and States were often overwhelmed by displacement. Sustainable solutions required coordination between humanitarian and development agencies and the United Kingdom was working to improve the situation in several ways. It would continue to denounce violations of international humanitarian law; it would link its core humanitarian funding of United Nations agencies to

improved coordination on internally displaced persons; and it would continue to support the Grand Bargain on humanitarian financing for more effective needs assessment. It also strove to make the humanitarian-development nexus a reality, through planning for a protracted situation at the outset of displacement and addressing the long-term needs of affected populations. Internally displaced persons should not have to wait until a crisis was resolved before they could begin to rebuild their lives. She wondered what more could be done to encourage States to integrate the needs of internally displaced persons into longer-term planning.

61. **Mr. Qassem Agha** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the large numbers of internally displaced persons, most of them women and children, had been the result of the activities of terrorist groups such as ISIL. His delegation had hoped that the Special Rapporteur would devote a section of the report to international terrorism, which was supported by a number of Member States whose identities were well-known to all. Furthermore, his delegation had hoped that the Special Rapporteur would address the systematic killing of Yemeni children by the Saudi-led “International Coalition” and the displacement of millions of Yemenis, as well as the blockade imposed by Israel on the Palestinian people. The Syrian Government was the only entity working with the United Nations to assist internally displaced persons and find solutions to the problem of terrorism.

62. **Ms. Jimenez-Damary** (Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons) said that it was important to raise awareness of the neglected causes of displacement in order to diagnose each situation and develop an appropriate strategy. For that reason among others, she had asked to visit countries such as the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

63. Regarding the thematic issues, the humanitarian-development nexus must be emphasized when promoting the human rights of internally displaced persons, with a view to reducing internal displacement and protecting life. She had a particular interest in statistics, since it would be impossible to make an assessment or formulate concrete recommendations without sufficient or accurate data. Some organizations were already addressing the issue of statistics, but it was important for the United Nations system to comprehensively assess how data and statistics could be used to produce an evidence-based analysis of internal displacement. The World Statistics Congress, under the auspices of the United Nations, had set up a working group on statistics on internally displaced persons to ensure that appropriate mechanisms were created. National statistical offices, however, must also be engaged in that endeavour. Continuing data collection

was also needed to ensure that internal displacement issues were integrated into each of the Sustainable Development Goals. Nevertheless, national development agencies needed to ensure that the situation of internally displaced persons was included in development programmes, since that work should not be left solely to humanitarian organizations.

64. Another of her priorities was translating the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons into action. She was the only special procedures mandate holder who was also a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which was paying particular attention to the situation of internally displaced persons in all the countries it worked in. Building networks for the participation of internally displaced persons was another concrete manifestation of her recommendations. Although many committees had been established at the local level and were very active in areas such as camp management, they were often not involved in taking decisions on recovery and enduring solutions. The Guiding Principles were a way of guaranteeing that the human rights of internally displaced persons would be protected, since they dealt with preventing internal displacement in accordance with human rights and international humanitarian law as well as with protecting the lives and dignity of internally displaced persons and finding durable solutions.

65. The establishment of a system-wide approach within the United Nations must be discussed at the international level, as the current ad hoc and patchy approach could not continue. Since there was no agency dedicated to internally displaced persons, it was vital to strengthen cooperation among international organizations and to ensure that States that were committed to upholding the human rights of internally displaced persons could work with the countries actually hosting them.

66. In April 2017 she had attended the first Conference of States Parties to the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) and had been very impressed by the fact that many of the States that had ratified the Kampala Convention had shared the plans and strategies they had adopted. The Kampala Convention was a very good example of a regional treaty able to make a difference at the national level. It would result in more regional cooperation and sharing of best practices and lessons learned.

67. The “New Way of Working” boiled down to the fact that the humanitarian-development nexus had to be reinforced by the fulfilment of human rights obligations

by States. The responsibility for protecting internally displaced persons lay with Governments, and that protection needed to be enhanced. In terms of good governance, national and local authorities must give priority to their human rights. The voices of internally displaced persons must be heard and national mechanisms must be set up. Her predecessor had recommended the creation of national focal points, which had been effective in many countries, but such focal points could also be regional or local, as engagement at all levels of governance was important. Internally displaced persons were the responsibility of sovereign States, but the international community could provide assistance and policy support.

68. Much remained to be done and she looked forward to giving the issues the necessary attention, not only at the international but also at the national level, in the countries where internally displaced persons were actually located. It was important for human rights to remain on the agenda and the necessary conditions to be provided for internally displaced persons to participate in those processes.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.