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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

Thirty-eighth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 422nd MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 9 October 1987, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. ROBERTSON (Australia)

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Any other business

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been set up in third countries for refugees from countries of first asylum, especially in Egypt and Syria but also in Tunisia and Morocco.

79. UNHCR was endeavouring to give practical effect to the ongoing debate on refugees and development by designing projects which would contribute to the development of receiving countries. In Iran and Pakistan, special emphasis was being placed on development projects that strengthened the existing infrastructure of regions with large refugee populations, and countered the ecological damage caused by their presence. It was in that spirit that UNHCR had successfully co-operated with the World Bank in Pakistan, where the second phase of the project, comprising 91 subprojects, had begun on 1 October 1987. There were also plans to collaborate with IFAD on similar lines in Iran.

80. In order to cope with changing and complex situations and in the interests of budgetary restraint, it had been necessary to adjust and revise programmes periodically, as reflected in document A/AC.96/693 (Part V)/Add.1, which concerned Pakistan and Iran. For the same reasons, a new temporary regional office for the Middle East had been set up in Bahrain, a suboffice was to be set up in Lahore in Pakistan, and UNHCR would be represented at Sana'a and in Baghdad; and it was hoped that the Iranian authorities would agree to the establishment of a suboffice at Birjand. In the interests of the refugees themselves and of better resource management, UNHCR attached primary importance to training in project management, not only among its own staff but also among its operational partners. It fully appreciated the growing need for effective co-ordination in the provision of international assistance by Governments, NGOs and other specialized agencies. In fact, a draft agreement for co-operation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference had been finalized and should soon be signed, and fruitful co-operation had been under way for a number of years with the Islamic Development Bank. Efforts were also being made to institutionalize UNHCR's relations with the League of Arab States. The Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations had made its first financial contribution to UNHCR, and contacts with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization had been initiated with a view to carrying out joint educational programmes for refugees in the Arab region. Efforts were also being made to develop co-operation with regional NGOs, including the national Red Crescent societies. In Pakistan, for instance, 27 NGOs were implementing UNHCR-financed projects.

81. Regarding the 20 new international and local posts that had been created, four were in Yemen, to supervise the country's new emergency programme; six in Iran, in view of the scale of the programme to be administered; one in Bahrain, in connection with the division of regional representation for the Middle East between Lebanon and Bahrain; and nine in Pakistan.

82. In conclusion, he wished to appeal to all delegations concerned to assist UNHCR in providing asylum to all persons in need, to give refugees a better chance of resettlement in third countries and to grant UNHCR unrestricted access to all refugees. Countries that had not yet acceded to the relevant international instruments were invited to consider doing so and to contribute to the formulation of the draft regional convention on the status of refugees, as proposed by the secretariat of the League of Arab States.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

two communities. Some comments made by the observer for Cyprus might convey the impression, contrary to the facts, that the question of displaced persons in Cyprus had existed only over the past 10 years. In order to avoid politicizing the debates of the Executive Committee to the detriment of the cause of the refugees, his delegation would not engage in a discussion that lay outside UNHCR's mandate.

6. Mr. NASERI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his country and UNHCR had been co-operating since 1983, in which year UNHCR had given the Islamic Republic of Iran a contribution of \$7.5 million with an assurance that the amount would increase substantially in the future. Yet, after five years of co-operation, the amount had only doubled. The present sums allocated to Afghan and Iraqi refugees amounted to only a few dollars per year per refugee and were very low in comparison with the average amounts of assistance for refugees elsewhere in the world. The Islamic Republic of Iran needed increased multilateral or bilateral aid from the international community.

7. A considerable portion of the contribution that the Iranian Government was receiving for the refugees was being spent on health services, to which the Government was also allocating a substantial sum from its own resources. Progress still had to be made in that respect, more particularly in regard to the vaccination and nutrition of refugee children and income-generating projects for refugee women. UNHCR and IFAD were undertaking joint studies for the implementation of a range development project which would require substantial funding. It should be emphasized that emergency aid should reach refugees at the time they really needed it.

8. The discrepancy between estimated and actual expenditure lay in the fact that infrastructure projects could not be implemented in a single budgetary year. For example, since it was impossible to implement a rural settlement project under a rigid timetable, the budgetary procedures should be sufficiently flexible to allow unused amounts to be carried forward to the following year.

9. Mr. AMUNATEGUI (Head, Regional Bureau for South-West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East) said that it was always hazardous to make comparisons between different programmes. In the case of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the fact that the Government was pursuing an exemplary policy of integrating the Afghan refugees into the local population meant that it did not incur so much expense in, for example, maintaining refugees in camps. The contribution paid to the Islamic Republic of Iran had increased regularly every year and UNHCR, together with other United Nations bodies such as WFP, WHO and IFAD, would continue to provide the country with assistance.

10. Admittedly, rural settlement projects had to be spread over several years, but the fact remained that each annual phase had to be completed by the end of the year.

11. As to the problem of vaccinations, a study was being conducted, in co-operation with WHO, to determine the needs of refugee children in that regard.

12. Mr. NAFFAH (Lebanon) said that several countries, including Lebanon, had seen the emergence of a new category of refugees, who were not covered by the relevant texts but nonetheless posed an urgent and tragic humanitarian problem. They were persons who had been forced to abandon their homes to seek

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

REVIEW OF UNHCR PROGRAMMES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS IN 1986/87 AND ADOPTION OF PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1988 (agenda item 7) (continued)
(A/AC.96/693, parts I-V)

SOUTH-WEST ASIA, MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA (part V, and Corr.1 and Add.1).

1. Mr. EL GHALI BENHIMA (Morocco), referring to the programmes concerning Algeria, said that, for the reasons it had explained the previous day, his delegation had the most explicit reservations regarding the activities scheduled for 1988 for the refugees in the Tindouf region, and he requested that those reservations be recorded in the report.
2. Mr. YIANGOU (Observer for Cyprus) said he wished to assure the Head of the Regional Bureau for South-West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East of the support and co-operation of the Cypriot Government, since it valued highly the humanitarian role of UNHCR, which was particularly important in a world permeated by confrontation, tension, conflicts and violence. Accordingly, he fully endorsed the High Commissioner's remarks to the effect that the success of efforts under way in several regions of the world to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes would help UNHCR to achieve its humanitarian goals. The Cypriot Government, which, had always responded to appeals by UNHCR by making contributions, albeit modest at times, to its programmes, and would continue to do so and would offer its traditional hospitality to refugees from friendly neighbouring countries.
3. With regard to UNHCR activities in Cyprus, there were still about 200,000 refugees and displaced persons, in other words, a third of the total population, as a result of the tragic events of 1974. As indicated in the report, UNHCR assistance covered a number of sectors in which problems remained, in spite of the Government's efforts. His Government would continue to need the international assistance provided through UNHCR in order to meet its responsibilities and improve the conditions in which those refugees were living, until a durable solution was found.
4. In that respect, he also endorsed another remark by the High Commissioner, to the effect that voluntary repatriation was a vital solution. It was, in fact, the most durable of all solutions, provided the Governments concerned displayed the political will. That was true, in particular, of refugees and displaced persons who were living in the free areas in their own country and were prevented by the occupation forces from regaining possession of their homes and property, which were sometimes only a short distance away. Any political solution to the problem of Cyprus must provide for the voluntary and dignified return of the refugees and displaced persons, under conditions of safety, since no other durable solution was conceivable. As had been said during the general debate, it was difficult to visualize how that solution could be achieved until the occupation forces and the 65,000 foreign settlers withdrew from the part of the territory they were occupying.
5. Mr. AKINCI (Turkey) expressed his confidence that UNHCR, as Co-ordinator of the United Nations Humanitarian Programme of Assistance for Cyprus, would ensure equitable allocation and distribution of that assistance between the

refugee in other parts of their own country and were facing the same humanitarian problems and needed the same care as the refugees within the meaning of the 1951 Convention. The latest round-table organized by UNHCR had looked into that question and he hoped that the Executive Committee, in turn, would give it favourable consideration.

13. Paragraphs 5.5.1 to 5.5.7 of document A/AC.96/693 (Part V) described the programmes undertaken to help the refugees within UNHCR's sphere of competence in Lebanon, for it should be remembered that the Palestinian refugees, who had been living in Lebanon for 40 years, came under other international bodies. As stated in the document, no significant reduction in programmes could be envisaged for 1987 and 1988. His delegation hoped that UNHCR would provide Lebanon with even more effective and generous assistance of its General Programmes, and particularly its Special Programmes. Such assistance could be co-ordinated with that of other international organizations. Protection and assistance activities were of vital importance to Lebanon, where 25 per cent of the inhabitants had become refugees in their own country because of the war, which had also had disastrous effects on all sectors of the economy, for example, a major decline in income and investment rates of growth, the destruction of material and human resources, higher budget deficits and a fall in State revenue, a rise in consumer prices and a sharp decline in purchasing power among all sections of the population.

14. Mr. AMUNATEGUI (Head, Regional Bureau for South-West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East) said that UNHCR had been operating in Lebanon without a break since 1976 and, since that date, had provided with more than \$10 million in assistance to displaced persons. It was regrettable that UNHCR had not been invited to participate in the inter-agency mission that had recently visited the country.

15. Mr. AL KHADI (Observer for Iraq) said he wished to affirm Iraq's wish to co-operate with UNHCR in achieving its noble objectives.

16. With regard to the programme for Western Asia, paragraph 5.7.8 of document A/AC.96/693 (part V) stated that, in response to a request from the Government of Iraq, UNHCR had taken steps to study the resettlement of 250 Iranian refugees. That figure was far from the actual number of Iranian refugees in Iraq, which was about 50,000. In view of the fact that Iraq had agreed to apply the Fourth Geneva Convention to those refugees, they were under the protection of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Aware as it was of the difficulties facing UNHCR, Iraq did not intend to request aid for those refugees and would continue to bear the costs involved, which had so far amounted to the equivalent of \$1 million. The solutions proposed by the Iraqi Government for those refugees could be examined by UNHCR in co-ordination with ICRC.

17. Mr. NASERI (Islamic Republic of Iran), recalling the concern expressed by a large number of delegations during the debate in the Sub-Committee of the Whole on International Protection and in the general debate, said it was to be hoped that the so-called "Iranian refugees" would not be used by the Iraqi régime for military purposes and for acts of subversion.

18. Mr. Al KHADI (Observer for Iraq) said that he had no intention of allowing the debate on the question of refugees to be politicized. By way of reply to the representative of Iran, he would challenge him to provide the slightest evidence in support of his allegations by the end of the session.

19. Mr. BAISSA (Observer for Democratic Yemen) said that his country viewed UNHCR's noble humanitarian task as being largely temporary in nature, for refugees should some day be able to return to live in their countries in complete safety. With regard to the displaced persons in Democratic Yemen, it should first of all be realized that they could not be classed as refugees, since they had the same identity cards as other residents and many of them moved on either side of the frontier between the two Yemens. Since January 1986, the Government had taken many steps to cope with the problems and ensure the return of persons who had been displaced for various reasons. First, it had proclaimed a general amnesty, which was still operative and under which anyone who so wished could return to the country, as indeed many had already done. Second, it had released all prisoners, with the exception of persons who were responsible for or had participated in sanguinary events and had to be placed on public trial, in the presence of national and international organizations. Third, the Government was offering the following guarantees to any person wishing to return: security, employment, accommodation, protection of rights and a normal life. Fourth, it intended to redouble its efforts, in co-operation with its northern neighbour, to overcome all the obstacles and devise solutions so that all Yemenis could live in dignity.

20. Mr. ALSHAMI (Observer for Yemen) briefly described the measures taken to help persons who had sought refuge in Yemen. His country was regarded as one of the least developed and, geographically, formed part of the Sahel, which meant that, over the past 20 years it had suffered serious droughts, a situation that had been aggravated by earthquakes. The most recent earthquake, in 1983, had left thousands of dead and had destroyed entire towns. The Government was still endeavouring to resettle and find employment for the persons who had been displaced as a result of the disaster.

21. Yemen was trying to mobilize its material and human resources at all levels, not only to cope with natural disasters, but also to overcome its structural problems and assure a life of dignity for the population. In spite of its difficulties, it was a host to refugees offering them the services its means allowed. Accordingly, it expected the international community to participate in that effort.

22. Yemen had acceded to the 1951 Convention, and subsequently the 1967 Protocol, at the beginning of the 1980s and was co-operating with UNHCR in order to help displaced persons who sought refuge on its territory and to find a permanent solution to the problem. He nonetheless hoped that such co-operation would increase, both quantitatively and qualitatively, so that the problem of the presence of the refugees could be solved once and for all. To that end, his Government was willing to establish all the necessary contacts so that the displaced persons could return to their country in complete safety as soon as possible. Lastly, he wished to thank UNHCR for the useful assistance that it was giving to his country, even though that assistance did not fully meet its needs.

23. Mr. AMUNATEGUI (Head, Regional Bureau for South-West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East) responding to the observers for Democratic Yemen and Yemen, said that UNHCR would be happy to assist in the repatriation of displaced persons wishing to return to their country, in agreement with the Governments concerned.

- (b) ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT (A/AC.96/692 and Add.1, 696 and Corr.1-2 and Add.1-2, 698 and 701)

35. The CHAIRMAN, speaking as Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters, introduced the Sub-Committee's report (A/AC.96/701), which gave an account of the discussions in the Sub-Committee and contained in paragraph 75 the text of the Guidelines relevant to the Issues of Management, Programme Support and Administration on the agenda of the thirty-eighth session of the Executive Committee, which had been adopted by consensus. He hoped that the report and the text of the guidelines could also be adopted by consensus in the Executive Committee, but any delegation wishing to express a separate opinion or make additional comments in the Executive Committee was entitled to do so.

36. Mr. DEWEY (Deputy High Commissioner) said that he would like simply to recapitulate for the Executive Committee the factors to be taken into account in considering the question.

37. The reforms carried out since 1986 had been required in order to solve the problems identified by the auditors, the Executive Committee and UNHCR staff.

38. The purpose of restructuring the Office was to achieve more efficient execution of integrated protection and assistance programmes in the field, with the support of competent and well trained staff at headquarters. The work done on staff policy was intended to ensure clear job descriptions and definitions of responsibility, improved operational procedures, an equitable and objective personnel evaluation system, substantially improved training methods and better living and working conditions in the field. The High Commissioner and those working with him were fully aware that the guiding principle of UNHCR action was, more than ever, that of teamwork, under the stimulus of sound management. They were also conscious of the need for continuing dialogue with the staff and their representatives, who were partners in a joint enterprise. The aim was to return the number of posts approved as at 1 January 1986 by the first quarter in 1990. The examination of individual posts would continue and should make it possible to reduce the staffing level still further in relation to that for 1986.

39. Important steps were being taken to rationalize and keep a check on travel costs and the High Commissioner would shortly be issuing a directive with the intention of cutting travel of secondary importance to a minimum, in the light of UNHCR's operational needs.

40. Lastly, he would draw attention to the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and to that of the Board of Auditors, which had commended the reorganization of UNHCR management. ACABQ had recommended that the Executive Committee should approve UNHCR's financial targets, including programme support and administration costs (revised figures for 1987 and initial requirements for 1988). Since those figures had been further revised downwards during the present session, the Executive Committee should have no difficulty in approving them.

41. Members would be able to note that UNHCR management paid heed to the Committee's views and was counting on the Committee's understanding and support in performing its difficult task.

24. Mr. JAMAL (United Republic of Tanzania), referring to the programme concerning his country, as described in document A/AC.96/693 (part I), drew UNHCR's attention to the extremely critical situation in the southern part of Tanzania as a result of the influx of refugees from Mozambique fleeing from South Africa's military attacks. The United Republic of Tanzania was in need of urgent assistance, for those refugees, who were totally destitute, already numbered more than 80,000.

25. The CHAIRMAN said that the Executive Committee had concluded its consideration of the report for 1986/87, as well as the proposed programmes and budget for 1988, as contained in documents A/AC.96/693, parts I-V. He invited the Executive Committee to adopt the proposed programmes and budget.

26. The proposed programmes and budget for 1988 were adopted.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL QUESTIONS (agenda item 8)

(a) STATUS OF CONTRIBUTIONS AND OVERALL FINANCIAL NEEDS FOR 1987 AND 1988
(A/AC.96/695, EC/SC.2/1987/CRP.3 and CRP.4)

27. Mr. ADAMS (Head, Fund Raising Services), presenting the status of contributions and overall financial needs for 1987 and 1988, began by thanking donors for their generous support. Although there had been serious financial problems a year earlier, the situation was now much better. At the Pledging Conference held in New York in November 1986, the pledges for 1987 had amounted to about \$136.7 million, compared with \$85.6 million in the previous year, something that had enabled UNHCR to move ahead immediately in signing the relevant agreements with its executing agents. Moreover, the principal donors had announced their pledges much earlier than in the past and had transferred the funds in good time. The list of contributions as at 28 September 1987, contained in annex II to document EC/SC.2/1987/CRP.3, showed that, with one or two exceptions, most of the principal donors had already attained, and one or two had even exceeded, a level of contribution equal to that at the end of the previous financial year. Accordingly, the status of contributions for 1987 reflected a generally sound situation.

28. Details of the Voluntary Funds were provided in annex I to document EC/SC.2/1987/CRP.3. In that connection, he would point out that the revised budget for General Programmes amounted to \$348.9 million, in respect of which UNHCR could count on income of \$241.4 million. It also had access to an unallocated balance of \$56.3 million which could be assigned to the programmes.

29. With regard to Special Programmes, UNHCR wished to thank the States that had pledged their contributions at the beginning of the session. Almost all the needs in respect of those programmes had been covered, which denoted a much healthier financial situation than that in recent years. It was important for contributions to be pledged during the coming weeks so as to cover the 1987 shortfall and meet the urgent needs of refugees. The Pledging Conference for the 1988 programmes would be held in New York on 19 November 1987 and UNHCR would be extremely grateful if Governments informed it of the amount of the contributions they intended to place at its disposal, at an early date, for the 1988 programme.

30. In 1986, donors had earmarked a significant proportion of their contributions for specific purposes under the General Programmes. In 1987, 74 per cent of all cash contributions to UNHCR had also been subject to

conditions in regard to their use, which left UNHCR little scope to meet specific needs in the field. It would be preferable for donors to allow more leeway under the General Programmes, all of which had, moreover, been approved by the Executive Committee.

31. In response to the wishes expressed at the latest session of the Executive Committee, UNHCR had taken measures to broaden the range of donor support and had made strong representations to Member States which had either made no regular contribution or none at all to programmes in recent years. In addition, it had received the first donation from AGFUND. The appeals for funds from the public were being continued in co-operation with non-governmental organizations, but since the situation in Africa was fortunately no longer viewed as an emergency it was no longer possible to rely on the wave of sympathy for refugees that could be aroused by the media. However, there was one exception in that respect, namely the remarkable effort being made by non-governmental organizations in the Netherlands, where the appeals for funds for refugees had surpassed the results of previous years. UNHCR had also launched a major campaign in Spanish commercial circles and was planning to establish a support committee for UNHCR programmes in the United States. Lastly, in view of the High Commissioner's interest in income-generating projects for refugees obliged to live in camps for long periods, UNHCR was studying the possibility of obtaining co-financing for that type of project and the first attempts in that respect had been very encouraging.

32. The note on UNHCR reporting to donors (EC/SC.2/1987/CRP.4) had a two-fold purpose. Firstly, the aim was to improve the information supplied to donors on operations and evaluate the success of UNHCR achievements at the end of the year. The second point was to solve the serious problem facing the secretariat because some donors required a special report on the use of each amount given to UNHCR. The backlog in the preparation of such reports for the years prior to 1986 had now been cleared and it was to be hoped that the proposed new reporting system would make it possible to provide all donors with the type of information required.

33. Mr. CHAVARRIA (Nicaragua) announced a Nicaraguan contribution of \$US 10,000. It was the most his country could afford in view of the current crisis, which had been further aggravated by external aggression and the imposition of the economic and trade embargo. Nicaragua none the less wished to contribute to UNHCR's laudable work and expressed its thanks to countries that were contributing to the General Programmes, more particularly those relating to Central America.

34. Mrs. RUESTA DE FURTER (Venezuela) said that the Venezuelan contribution which had never varied during the past five years in United States dollar terms, had risen over the same period from 80,000 to 2 million bolivars. In spite of the scale of the devaluation, Venezuela would continue to support UNHCR programmes and hoped that countries whose currency had been revalued in relation to the dollar would maintain their dollar contribution at the same level.

42. Mr. van LEEUWEN (Chairman of the Staff Council) said that, in spite of the difficulties in past months, UNHCR staff, in the field and at Headquarters, were totally dedicated to their humanitarian mission, which was to provide international protection for 10 million refugees throughout the world and seek solutions to the many problems with which they were faced. If the staff were to be able to continue to serve the cause of refugees effectively, a cause which permitted neither failure nor even qualified success, a healthy situation in UNHCR at all levels was indispensable.

43. In its humanitarian endeavours on behalf of refugees, UNHCR might in its way contribute to the noble and difficult mission of keeping the peace. The Nobel Peace Prize, which had been awarded to UNHCR on two occasions, had been a source of encouragement to the staff, although the changes which had occurred since 1986, together with personnel policies and issues, had led to low morale and a loss of confidence. The staff were fully prepared to support such changes as seemed likely to enhance their performance for refugees, while preserving the unique identity of UNHCR within the United Nations system, for example, technical improvements in programme management, better conditions of service in the field, as well as the very recent establishment of a Training Service. Nevertheless, the staff were convinced that any change would have to be based upon recognition of the often hard-won achievements of the past, and that the surest road to progress was the participation of the staff and their elected representatives in the elaboration of plans for the Office. Unquestionably, the staff were always committed to contributing with enthusiasm to changes needed to enhance UNHCR performance for refugees.

44. UNHCR staff in the field deserved particular recognition in view of the often very difficult conditions under which they had to work. The Staff Council accordingly urged members of the Executive Committee to lend full support to efforts to improve conditions of service, in all forums in which the subject was raised. Again, it was important to pay special tribute to staff members who had lost their lives in the performance of their duties and to remember also their bereaved families.

45. Apart from the important progress made by the Executive Committee in the area of international protection of refugees, the Staff Council had been greatly encouraged by the positive reaction of a very large number of delegations to the messages addressed to them. Encouraged, too, by the statements by the High Commissioner and the Deputy High Commissioner, the staff hoped to work together to improve the situation and to report on the progress made at the Committee's next session. There was no place for discord and division in UNHCR and only by dialogue would it be possible to achieve the ideals that should guide it, for the sake of those throughout the world who depended on UNHCR.

46. The CHAIRMAN, replying to Mr. van Leeuwen, said he believed he was expressing the feelings of the whole of the Executive Committee in paying tribute to staff members who had lost their lives in the field and in expressing his sympathy with the bereaved relatives, and at the same time assuring the staff of the Office, through the Chairman of the Staff Council, of the Executive Committee's full confidence.

47. As to the report of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters (A/AC.96/701), attention should be drawn to the need for a number of very minor technical amendments to the text of the Guidelines relevant to the

55. He endorsed the Chairman's comments concerning the draft conclusions contained in document A/AC.96/701 and expressed support for the guidelines, which, he hoped, would lay the foundations for a constructive exchange of ideas between the High Commissioner and the Executive Committee on a number of crucial management issues.

56. With regard to the reorganization of UNHCR, there was an urgent need to establish priorities more strictly and to enhance efficiency at all levels. Accordingly, he was gratified to note the High Commissioner's commitment to eliminating the temporary bulge in staffing by 1990 and, if possible, to reduce staffing levels even further in the light of an intensive evaluation of programmes. His delegation would be closely examining the periodic reports that would doubtless be submitted on the progress made in that respect.

57. His delegation noted with satisfaction the proposed reduction in the 1988 financial target for the General Programmes as a whole, in view of the planned economies in travel costs and the first group of posts to be discontinued in accordance with the recommendations of the Group of 18. It also welcomed the fact that a more flexible approach had been adopted to determine the Programme Reserve for 1988, which had been reduced to a more realistic amount in view of the improvements the High Commissioner was expecting to make in forecasting as a result of the new Financial Management Information System. That approach should be kept under review in order to ensure that UNHCR could continue to prepare its programmes with the requisite degree of flexibility.

58. The Chairman of the Staff Council had drawn attention to several important and disturbing questions. However, it was fortunate that both the High Commissioner and the Staff Council had adopted a constructive approach to the process of change and reform in a manner consistent with the urgent needs of refugees throughout the world.

59. The Canadian Government had recently concluded an agreement with UNHCR for the provision of the services of assistants. A payment of 250,000 Canadian dollars had already been made and the first Canadian assistants would be taking up their duties during the first half of 1988.

60. Mr. van SCHAIK (Netherlands) said that the main problem facing the Committee at the present session was the increase in support costs, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of the overall budget. Staffing increases could not be convincingly explained by a corresponding increase in the UNHCR workload. With regard to the improved performance that should result therefrom, he hoped that more detailed information on that question would be provided at the informal session in January 1988, so that the Committee would be better able to judge whether there was a need to allocate additional funds.

61. The Committee lacked objective parameters to measure the development in the total UNHCR workload over the years. Without such tools, it was very difficult to pass final judgement on the required support costs, the need to increase or reduce the staffing level, and the scope for redeployment. He urged UNHCR to continue to give serious thought to that question and expressed the hope that, in future, the High Commissioner would endeavour to present a credible and objective analysis of the workload when additional manpower and financial resources were requested.

durable solutions. He supported the steps taken to improve working conditions in the field and, in that respect, thought that the Revolving Fund should continue to be used to finance staff housing, but only at genuine hardship posts.

70. It was encouraging that UNHCR's financial position was healthy. He announced that the Australian Government would be contributing \$A 4.7 million to the General Programmes in 1988, an increase of 0.7 million over 1987. Australia would also be paying \$A 0.9 million toward the care that was to be provided for refugees in Papua New Guinea. Its contributions to the Special Programmes would be determined in the light of identified needs in specific situations.

71. With regard to the streamlining of documentation, he fully supported the UNHCR proposals to reduce the volume and improve the quality of documentation. He urged the secretariat to continue the commendable efforts that it was making in that connection, particularly in regard to the preparation of analytical reports. His country hoped that the secretariat would make every effort to ensure that documents, and particularly the overview document, were distributed to the members of the Committee in good time so that they could study the various facets of UNHCR's activities and raise the quality of the discussion. His country also welcomed the idea of abandoning the system of individual reports to donors, which would be replaced by general analytical reports on the programmes to be sent to all donor countries. For its part, his delegation would be satisfied with the new series of reports on UNHCR country programmes circulated by the Fund Raising Services. At a time when resources were limited, it was unreasonable that the Fund Raising Services should devote something like 50 per cent of its resources for the preparation of reports for donors and, as a consequence, should have a staffing establishment that rivalled that of some regional bureaux.

72. Mr. STUB (Norway) said that his Government had followed with interest and generally supported the major administrative and organizational changes in UNHCR over the past 20 months. The manner in which those changes had taken place had been subject to some criticism - his delegation itself had questioned staffing levels, among other matters. However, the criticism had been made in a constructive spirit and out of a concern to make UNHCR an efficient tool for providing protection of and assistance to refugees.

73. Many suggestions made at the present session appeared to have been duly noted and he was confident that the assurances given by the High Commissioner and the Deputy High Commissioner would be reflected in concrete measures. He welcomed the High Commissioner's reference to the staff's dedication and underlined the importance of a continuous dialogue between staff and management. His delegation was satisfied with the proposal to apply a revised formula for calculation of the Programme Reserve and accepted the conclusions proposed by the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters, which it deemed satisfactory.

74. Mr. TICHY (Austria) thanked the Deputy High Commissioner and the Chairman of the Staff Council for their useful contribution to the discussion of administration and management issues.

62. One policy issue was the importance of setting priorities. It was not enough to judge new requirements solely on their intrinsic merit; they must also be weighed up in relation to overall priorities. However, the documents submitted so far did not spell out those priorities. Again, it was important to ensure careful management of human resources, particularly in an organization that depended so much on the quality of the input by its staff. The High Commissioner was undoubtedly fully aware of that problem.

63. As to administrative and financial matters, he noted with satisfaction that the Committee had reached a consensus on the revised schedule A contained in document A/AC.96/696/Add.2. Even though the targets set were not fully satisfactory, the proposed reductions clearly indicated the direction in which UNHCR would be working.

64. With regard to the application of the recommendation of the Group of 18 to UNHCR staff and some budgeted posts, it must be acknowledged that the High Commissioner would need time to carry out his reform and make the requisite reductions, which should affect 46 posts. Fortunately, targets had been set and there was a prospect of still further streamlining.

65. He expressed the hope that the restructuring of UNHCR would make it possible to clarify some outstanding issues, such as the definition of the P and L categories, core and non-core activities and operational and non-operational activities. He also hoped that the High Commissioner would strive to respect the guidelines adopted by the Committee and other orientations formulated at the present session. All the parties concerned should be informed and consulted. Lastly, he assured the High Commissioner of his country's close co-operation to that end.

66. Mr. INGEVICS (Australia) said he endorsed the report of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters and hoped that the conclusions contained in paragraph 75 of the report would help the High Commissioner to continue the requisite management reforms.

67. His delegation supported the targets that had been set in regard to the reorganization of UNHCR. The introduction of modern management and information systems, such as the FMIS, would make it possible to obtain more accurate and timely information, thereby facilitating management control and decision-making. A long-term staff training strategy was also being formulated. Those measures to improve management, in conjunction with efforts to strengthen UNHCR's ability to respond to emergency situations and enhance its evaluation activities, should go a long way to making the organization more efficient and cost-effective.

68. However, the budgetary stringency prevailing within the United Nations and among Governments must be taken fully into account during the implementation of those reforms, which should in particular be consistent with the recommendations of the Group of 18 and carried out in consultation with the staff of UNHCR.

69. His delegation welcomed the fact that UNHCR had modified its financial proposals for 1988 by reducing the financial target for the General Programmes and by deciding to discontinue a number of posts by the end of 1987. The UNHCR budget should, above all, give priority to refugee assistance and

Issues of Management, Programme Support and Administration on the agenda of the thirty-eight session of the Executive Committee, reproduced in paragraph 75 of the report. It was his understanding that several delegations had accepted the changes. In the third subparagraph of paragraph 2 of the "Guidelines", the word "services" should be replaced by "contracts", and the word "requirement" should be placed in the plural and preceded by the word "applicable". He also believed that it would be necessary to replace, in the title and in the second preambular paragraph the word "guidelines" by the word "conclusions", which was the term normally used in the Committee's documents. The consultations which had been held gave reason to suppose that there would be no objection to the latter amendment.

48. Mr. KAMIYAMA (Japan) said that the field was the real theatre of UNHCR operations and the Office should therefore apply more vigorously the principles of delegation of authority to those working in the field and the rotation of staff between Headquarters and the field. The restructuring of UNHCR should also help to strengthen field activities.

49. In addition to the scheme for reducing the temporary bulge in staffing by early 1990, UNHCR should continue to review and streamline its staff structure with a view to strengthening field operations and ensuring a more effective response to emergency situations.

50. It was his hope that UNHCR would bear in mind the realistic recommendations contained in the report of the Board of Auditors (A/AC.96/692) and continue to provide effective assistance for refugees without increasing its staff.

51. It was gratifying to see that the percentage of women on the UNHCR staff had increased from 16.9 per cent to 20.0 per cent and that 93 countries were currently represented in the secretariat. He would none the less draw the attention of the High Commissioner to the fact that some countries, including Japan, were still underrepresented at the Office.

52. With regard to the reorganization by the High Commissioner, it should be remembered that the recommendations of the Group of 18 applied without exceptions and that humanitarian organs, such as UNHCR, also had to take into account the severe financial constraints with which the United Nations had to cope. Furthermore, the approval of all the States members of the Executive Committee should be obtained before engaging in important operations such as the reorganization of UNHCR, and due consideration should be given to the opinion of the staff. Accordingly, a close dialogue between UNHCR and the Member States was important. He noted that the High Commissioner had undertaken to return to the pre-1986 staffing levels and to make further management economies.

53. Lastly, he joined in the consensus on the guidelines proposed by the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters, although he was not entirely satisfied with the text.

54. Mr. BOLDUC (Canada), noting that the financial situation of UNHCR programmes had improved in 1987, welcomed the efforts to increase the number of countries providing financial support for the purpose of achieving an equitable sharing of the burden and greater international solidarity.

75. He endorsed the report of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters. Drawing attention to the conclusions proposed for adoption by the Executive Committee, he stressed that their goal was to help the High Commissioner design solutions to settle specific issues on the Committee's agenda at its thirty-eighth session; in no case should they lead to the Committee taking over some of the High Commissioner's responsibilities. The role of the Committee was to supervise UNHCR activities; and not to intervene in the implementation of assistance programmes or in the current affairs of UNHCR.

76. Mr. DUPONT (Argentina) recalled the numerous concerns regarding UNHCR's administrative and financial situation which his delegation had expressed in the course of the general debate. He therefore welcomed the fact that the UNHCR administration shared those concerns and had taken measures and made commitments, summarized in the Conclusions relevant to the Issues of Management, Programme Support and Administration on the Agenda of the thirty-eighth session of the Executive Committee (A/AC.96/701). In particular, his delegation noted with satisfaction the High Commissioner's commitment to return staffing levels as at 1 January 1986 while ensuring that the essential needs of refugees would not suffer and thus respecting the recommendations of the Group of 18 to set up a system for consultation with staff representatives which would lead to the optimum restructuring of the Office, reduce travel costs and cut down consultancy services.

77. He was convinced that continuation of the dialogue begun between the administration and the members of the Committee was the most effective means of working for refugees. Like all developing countries that had experienced the tragedy of victims of political persecution, Argentina would give its full support to that humanitarian task.

78. Mr. STAUR (Denmark) expressed his country's wholehearted support for the draft Conclusions relevant to the Issues of Management, Programme Support and Administration on the Agenda of the thirty-eighth session of the Executive Committee, submitted by the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters, which should guide the High Commissioner in reorganizing the secretariat. At the same time, his delegation was anxious to see UNHCR's humanitarian mandate preserved and expected that the commitment to return to pre-1986 staffing levels by the first quarter of 1990 would not be detrimental to flexibility on the part of UNHCR in the event of any significant increase in the number of refugees in the world. In such circumstances, Denmark would do its utmost to ensure that UNHCR had the staffing resources necessary to respond quickly and effectively.

79. Lastly, his delegation accepted the new formula for calculation of the Programme Reserve on a trial basis, but did not view it as a major achievement.

80. Mr. ANDRES (Switzerland) stressed that the arrangements made to rationalize the administrative and financial management of UNHCR met the concerns of the States members of the Executive Committee, which none the less expected that the measures designed to meet the needs of refugees more effectively would also be in keeping with the requirements of the recommendations of the Group of 18, so as to remedy the financial crisis of the United Nations. The Committee had engaged in a frank and far-reaching debate in which it had been rightly pointed out that the austerity measures were not to hinder the flexibility necessary to meet new urgent needs in the field.

maintained over a long period, and the possibility of any such consolidation had consequences that were sufficiently serious for all members of the Committee to give it some thought. It might well be asked, for example, whether a staff level of 323 social workers, supervised by 19 social and education officers, was sufficient, in view of the large number of refugees throughout the world.

87. Her delegation supported the efforts being made to ensure a more equitable geographical distribution of posts, but regretted that there were not more women in decision-making posts.

88. Lastly, her delegation assured UNHCR of its full support in the continuation of UNHCR's difficult mission.

89. Mr. BENEDETTI (Italy) said that his delegation welcomed the direction that the High Commissioner was preparing to take towards certain important issues, more especially staff levels, within the framework of the targets for 1988, and would closely follow the implementation of the proposed plan of action. It was essential to maintain an open and constructive dialogue between UNHCR and the Permanent Missions at Geneva in order to ensure the continuity of the member countries' efforts on behalf of refugees throughout the world.

90. His delegation was also convinced that the favourable response by delegations to the comments by the representative of the UNHCR Staff Council would have a positive effect on future UNHCR staff policy and on staff morale, which was an essential factor in any organization, but especially in a body like UNHCR, which was concerned with humanitarian assistance.

91. Mr. ADAMS (Head, Fund Raising Services), said that, on behalf of UNHCR, he wished to thank Australia, Nicaragua and the United Kingdom for their pledges.

92. Mr. DEWEY (Deputy High Commissioner) said that, on behalf of the High Commissioner, he took note of the support given by the members of the Executive Committee to the conclusions of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters, which should serve as the framework for the UNHCR programme of work in the coming year but which, as one delegation had observed, should not be formulated every year. It only remained for the High Commissioner to honour the commitments he had entered into during the session, and it was to be hoped that UNHCR would be able to count on co-operation from all members in solving the problems with which it was faced.

93. The CHAIRMAN invited members to decide on the report of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters (A/AC.96/701) and in particular on the conclusions contained in paragraph 75. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee adopted the report, as amended.

94. It was so decided.

95. The CHAIRMAN invited members to decide on the summary of proposals requiring formal approval (A/AC.96/696, Schedule A, p. 61).

96. Mr. DEWEY (Deputy High Commissioner) explained that the financial targets indicated in paragraphs 252 and 255 of document A/AC.96/696 had been changed and that the final revised amounts appeared in document A/AC.96/696/Add.2. It

should be noted that for 1988, in the light of the review of needs under the Programme Reserve (\$9,161,700) and the reduction in travel costs (\$400,000), the revised financial target for the General Programmes, which had been \$387,114,000, was now \$377,552,300.

97. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved the High Commissioner's recommendations concerning the revised allocations for 1987 and the revised target objective for the General Programmes for 1988, as indicated in document A/AC.96/696 and Add.1 and 2.

98. It was so decided.

99. Mr. NAKAMURA (Japan) said that it was not realistic to increase the financial target for 1988 by nearly 10 per cent over that of 1987. The increase was mainly due to the implementation of reorganization plans which his country could not fully support. In a spirit of co-operation, however, it would join in the consensus concerning those proposals and hoped that in the years ahead, UNHCR would uphold its commitment to economize.

CONSIDERATION OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE THIRTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (agenda item 9) (A/AC.96/702)

100. Mr. MTANGO (United Republic of Tanzania) pointed out that it had been agreed that agenda items 6 (a), 6 (b) and 6 (c), concerning the review of current UNHCR activities would continue to be examined separately. He would like to see that fact mentioned in the summary record.

101. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee adopted the draft agenda for its thirty-ninth session (A/AC.96/702).

102. It was so decided.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS (agenda item 10) (A/AC.96/XXXVIII/CRP.1 and CRP.2)

103. Mr. VIEIRA DE MELLO (Secretary of the Committee) said that the question of the need for summary records, which was the subject of agenda item 10 (c), had already been considered in the Committee on many occasions, in keeping with the request made by the General Assembly in resolution 41/177 D. The Note submitted by the High Commissioner (A/AC.96/XXXVIII/CRP.1) reflected the views expressed by members in that regard, and he suggested that the Committee should take a position on the question in the form of a decision similar to the one adopted by the UNDP Governing Council in that respect, for inclusion in the report.

104. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved the suggestion of the Secretary of the Committee.

105. It was so decided.

106. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had not had time for a thorough study of the important question of how to give effect to Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/89, which was a matter relating to agenda item 10 (b). He therefore wished to submit the following text of a draft decision for consideration by members: "The Executive Committee decided to

81. The dialogue that had just begun, which also took account of the hopes and concerns of UNCHR's staff and the role of the non-governmental organizations, had led to the adoption of conclusions concerning management, programme support and administration (A/AC.96/701), prepared with due consideration for the concerns of all; those guidelines set out the measures applicable over the short and the medium term and reflected the wishes of the members of the Committee regarding the long-term approach. Far from being a yoke, they would help the High Commissioner in his work on behalf of refugees.

82. Lastly, he reaffirmed Switzerland's support for the thorough reform undertaken by the High Commissioner and his attachment to the mission assigned to him and all his collaborators, whose awareness, generosity and ideals enabled UNHCR fully to carry out its task in serving refugees.

83. Miss TEXIER (France) said that her delegation accepted the draft Conclusions relevant to the Issues of Management, Programme Support and Administration (A/AC.96/701), which showed how difficult it was for UNHCR to rationalize its management and administration yet still take into account the recommendations for economy measures made by the Group of 18. The reforms and austerity policy envisaged by the High Commissioner were all the more indispensable in that, owing to developments in refugee situations throughout the world, UNHCR now had a mandate to implement self-reliance programmes and search for durable solutions that were more in keeping with the needs and interests of refugees and would ultimately avoid perpetuating emergency assistance programmes.

84. Despite the numerous reforms in recent years in the various sectors of UNHCR activities, weaknesses had been found in working methods and operation, as indicated in the report by the Board of Auditors (A/AC.96/692 and Addenda). The proposed plan of action had the advantage of systematizing the modernization effort by encouraging the integration of the various aspects of the organization's task, which would give UNHCR the necessary tools for fulfilling the ever-more complex mandates assigned to it and lead to a lower failure rate and, therefore, better use of financial resources.

85. It was appropriate for the Executive Committee's Conclusions to be limited to administrative and financial issues, for in regard to the High Commissioner's other functions (protection, modalities of action, programme design and implementation), UNHCR answered to no authority other than the United Nations General Assembly and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It was his autonomy that made the High Commissioner the guarantor of the specificity and neutrality of the action to help refugees.

86. Mrs. RUESTA DE FURTER (Venezuela) said that refugees had a particular need for social services and she noted with some concern from paragraph 7 of the Note on the Review of UNHCR Staffing Levels (EC/SC.2/1987/CRP.1) that substantial reductions had proved possible through reorganization, in particular through the "projected consolidation of Social Services". She wondered whether that meant that social services would be provided only during the emergency phase or in urgent cases and whether it was planned to remove Social Services from the UNHCR organizational chart. The consequences of such a measure were of great concern to her delegation, which believed that social services should form an integral part of UNHCR assistance. The High Commissioner certainly had the right to organize his services as he saw fit, but the reforms that would be adopted at the present session should be

to intermediate care and maintenance, and a third to refugee aid and liaison with development agencies, which members would agree were important priorities.

115. The draft medium-term plan was being submitted to the Committee for comments, and any changes it wished to make would be duly taken into account in the revised draft, which would be submitted to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

116. Mr. STAUR (Denmark), supported by the Australian and Chinese delegations, said he doubted whether the Committee could approve or adopt a document on such important questions as the setting of priorities in the UNHCR programme when the document had only been distributed to him two days earlier and he had not had the time to study it. He would like to know whether delegations would have the opportunity to make written comments on the document after the session and whether those comments would be taken into consideration by the secretariat.

117. Mr. DRERUP (Head, Financial and Administrative Service) said that he was not in a position to reply to that question. According to a note from the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, any possible comments on the draft medium-term plan should be made in the Executive Committee. In any event, he did not believe the document required thorough study, for the programmes described in it did not deviate either from UNHCR projections or current policy.

118. Mr. VIEIRA DE MELLO (Secretary of the Committee) explained that document A/AC.96/XXXVIII/CRP.2 was not being submitted to the Executive Committee for adoption or approval, but solely for consideration and comments. Comments would be attached to the draft medium-term plan when it was submitted for consideration by the Programme Planning and Budgeting Board, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), in April and May 1988, before being submitted to the Economic and Social Council and then to the General Assembly. The Executive Committee had the document before it at the request of the Secretary-General and not at the initiative of UNHCR and he suggested that delegations which had comments to make or changes to propose should address them informally in writing to the secretariat, within the next two weeks.

119. Mr. van den BERG (Netherlands) said that his delegation could not accept such a procedure and suggested that it should be clearly and officially stated in writing that the Committee had not had time to consider the document and to comment on it.

120. Mr. CHARRY SAMPER (Colombia) said he believed the two proposals were complementary. As the representative of the Netherlands had suggested, it should be stated in writing that the Committee had not had time to study the document, but delegations wishing to do so could and should send their comments to the secretariat in the days ahead.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.

establish a Working Group of the Executive Committee to consider ways and means of improving the possibilities for observer delegations to participate in its work and requested the Working Group to make proposals to be considered at the thirty-ninth session of the Executive Committee". If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved the draft decision.

107. It was so decided.

108. The CHAIRMAN invited members to decide on a second draft decision, concerning the Committee's submission to the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council, pursuant to Council decision 1987/112.

109. Ms. PEARCE (Australia) said that several changes had been made in the text of the draft decision. For example, paragraph 17 had been replaced by a new text which had been adopted by consensus and circulated among all the members. It was also proposed to insert after the third sentence of paragraph 7, following the words "plenary meetings of the Committee" a new sentence reading "Several delegations continue to express concern that the Spanish language is not one of the two languages used in drafting summary records". The brackets in paragraph 20 had been deleted, and it was proposed to add the following sentence at the end of paragraph 22: "In this context, the Committee welcomes the recent strengthening of co-operation between WFP and UNHCR in the field of food aid". Lastly, she suggested that the brackets in the last sentence of paragraph 24 should be deleted and that the text should be followed by the draft decision the Committee had just adopted by consensus.

110. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee adopted the draft decision as amended.

111. It was so decided.

112. The CHAIRMAN invited members to decide on the Note by the Secretary-General concerning the draft medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995, issued as document A/AC.96/XXXVIII/CRP.2.

113. Mr. DRERUP (Head, Financial and Administrative Service), introducing the draft medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995 (A/AC.96/XXXVIII/CRP.2), said that the document was designed to provide the conceptual framework within which priorities should be determined and United Nations programmes developed and implemented. The draft medium-term plan was divided into 10 sub-programmes, three of them relating to protection and seven to assistance activities. It contained no figures or budgetary estimates, for it would be too ambitious at the present stage to anticipate refugee situations in the 1990s. The High Commissioner had limited himself to indicating the general outline of UNHCR activities.

114. The draft medium-term plan did not imply any expansion of the activities carried out so far or any deviation from the protection and assistance policies explained to the Committee. Its structure was the same as in previous years. As already stated, protection activities were divided into three sub-programmes. Assistance activities were contained in seven sub-programmes instead of four, since the secretariat had found it necessary to devote a separate sub-programme to emergency preparedness response, another