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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

Thirty-third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 351st MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 18 October 1982, at 9.45 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. EWERLÖF

(Sweden)

CONTENTS

UNHCR assistance activities (continued)

Status of contributions and over-all financial requirements for 1982
and 1983

Consideration of the provisional agenda of the thirty-fourth session of
the Executive Committee

Any other business

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

UNHCR ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES (agenda item 6) (continued) (A/AC.96/606 and Corr.1 and 3, 607, 610 and Corr.1)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to resume consideration of the report on UNHCR assistance activities in 1981-1982 (A/AC.96/606 and Corr.1 and 3).

Section II - Americas and Europe

B. Europe

2. Mr. KRIZEK (Austria) said that 1981 had been a particularly difficult year for Austria as a country of first-asylum, the number of persons requesting asylum having increased substantially. More than 34,500 persons had applied for asylum, some 29,000 of them Poles. The flow of refugees to Austria had dropped sharply at the end of 1981 because of martial law in Poland. Nevertheless, in the period January-September 1982 an additional 5,000 persons from several East European countries had requested asylum. Most of the asylum-seekers in Austria wished to find a new home in a third country. In addition to the asylum-seekers, who were under the care of the Ministry of the Interior, there were several thousand Poles who had remained in Austria without having requested asylum or taken a decision about their future. In that connection, he stressed his country's strict adherence to the principle of non-refoulement.

3. The great influx of refugees in 1981 and the fact that resettlement was scarcely keeping pace had prompted his Government to bring that difficult situation, with the help of the High Commissioner and the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM), to the attention of various countries and to ask them to increase resettlement opportunities for refugees in Austria. Furthermore, Austria's Minister of the Interior had recently visited Australia, Canada and the United States and held fruitful discussions with the competent authorities to see what steps could be taken to speed up resettlement in other countries of refugees currently in Austria. In that connection, he mentioned the close co-operation which existed between immigration authorities, UNHCR, ICM, and voluntary agencies, and the competent Austrian departments.

4. Other countries, including Switzerland, the Netherlands, the Federal Republic of Germany, Norway, New Zealand, Denmark, Luxembourg and Iceland, had also responded positively to Austria's appeals. The international community must not forget the so-called handicapped cases, who were also hoping to find a chance of emigration. In that regard, the support of UNHCR was of immense value.

5. As at 1 October 1982, the Ministry of the Interior had been responsible for 12,554 asylum-seekers, including 8,172 Poles. Since the capacity of the refugee camps had been exhausted, the Government had had to arrange for board and lodging for some 10,000 asylum-seekers in scattered inns and small hotels in Austria. Polish refugees wishing to leave Austria for other countries were becoming increasingly frustrated since they had to wait long periods before they could be resettled. Further help through international solidarity was therefore required to solve the refugee problems in his country.

6. Referring to local settlement, he said that since the beginning of 1982, the Board of the Austrian United Nations Refugee Fund, of which the UNHCR branch office in Vienna formed a part, had taken up 977 cases; of that number 739 cases representing 1,449 persons had been solved in a positive fashion. The Fund was functioning well and provided invaluable assistance to refugees.

7. In a spirit of international solidarity, his country supported the activities of UNHCR in all parts of the world. During the past few years, Austria had offered several thousand non-European refugees from Africa, Asia and Latin America a durable solution.

8. The refugee situation had imposed a considerable financial burden on the Austrian authorities, whose expenditure on refugees and asylum-seekers had increased from \$13.5 million in 1980 and \$30 million in 1981 to an expected \$90 million in 1982. He was therefore not in a position to announce for 1983 a higher contribution to UNHCR's general programmes than for 1982.

9. Section II-B was approved.

10. Mr. HASELMAN (Head, Regional Bureau for the Americas and Europe) thanked the representative of Austria for his statement. UNHCR was well aware of the difficult situation of the 12,500 asylum-seekers who were having to wait long periods before resettlement in a third country. He assured the representative of Austria that the excellent co-operation between UNHCR and the Austrian authorities would continue.

Section III - East and South Asia and Oceania

11. Section III was approved.

12. Mr. HOMANN-HERIBERG (Director, Administration and Management Division), noting that paragraph 939 of the report under consideration described UNHCR's representation in Australia, said that in August 1982, i.e. after the preparation of the report, the High Commissioner had been requested by the Government of Australia to consider the possible transfer of UNHCR representation from Sydney to Canberra. The High Commissioner was sympathetic to that suggestion and agreed that an office in Canberra would be nearer the source of Australian policy concerning refugee questions. However, in view of the existing tripartite arrangement between the United Nations Office of Public Information and UNICEF, there were still problems to be resolved regarding the timing of the transfer and the actual establishment of the office in Canberra. It had therefore not been possible for the High Commissioner to make a specific proposal to the Committee at present, but he would do so at a later stage.

Section IV - Middle East and South-West Asia

Cyprus

13. Mr. POUYOUCOS (Cyprus) said it was clear from the report under consideration (A/AC.96/606) that millions of people had been rescued and protected and innumerable lives saved. All members were dedicated to the noble cause of alleviating the suffering of refugees, who were worthy of every possible assistance because they were innocent victims of present-day vicissitudes and injustices. His Government valued UNHCR activities immensely and, although it had a huge refugee problem to cope

with, it never missed an opportunity to respond positively to appeals by the High Commissioner. In that connection, he referred to paragraphs 955 and 956 of the report, which described the assistance his Government provided, *inter alia*, to refugees from South Africa and Namibia. In co-operation with UNHCR, it was continuing to render every possible assistance to refugees from Lebanon.

14. The sensible manner in which the High Commissioner and his staff had been dealing with displaced persons in Cyprus was a guarantee that all problems connected with assistance to Cyprus would find their proper solution. It must be pointed out, however, that the tragic events of 1974 and the fact that a high proportion of the population had been displaced and that the essential infrastructure and necessary capital had had to be replaced constituted a heavy burden which the State could not bear on its own, and external assistance was therefore necessary. His Government accordingly appealed to all donor States to continue channelling foreign aid to Cyprus through UNHCR, so that it could meet anticipated humanitarian needs for 1983. In that connection, the requirements of the refugees and displaced persons in Cyprus continued to be urgent, especially in the fields of housing and health.

15. In conclusion, he expressed his Government's gratitude to UNHCR and all donor Governments for the assistance they had already given and for their readiness to provide further assistance in the coming year.

Iran

16. Mr. ZAHIRNIA (Iran) said he was pleased to note that the High Commissioner and the Committee were finally taking specific measures to tackle the enormous problem of the 1.5 million Afghan refugees in Iran. His delegation considered that the proposals made by the High Commissioner in documents A/AC.96/606 and Corr.3 constituted a positive step and hoped that UNHCR would be able to expand its assistance. The Iranian Government stood ready to bear up to two thirds of the cost of the assistance projects proposed to the Committee for Iran, provided that the entire refugee case-load in Iran could be included in the assistance programme.

17. His Government had no intention of allowing the Afghan and Iraqi refugees currently in Iran to settle there permanently. It had made provision for temporary settlement on the understanding that as soon as conditions in Afghanistan and Iraq permitted, the refugees would return to their countries of origin. It accordingly considered that one of the essential elements in the settlement of the refugee situation was voluntary repatriation.

18. Referring to the statement by the observer for Iraq that the Iraqi refugees were Iranians, he said that for a country to deprive a person of his nationality was an inhuman act, which must be condemned.

Pakistan

19. Mr. BABAR (Observer for Pakistan) said that his country had been exclusively responsible for providing assistance to Afghan refugees from May 1978 to the end of November 1979 and continued to contribute 50 per cent of the total cost of the programme. In fact, its direct contributions to the programme, including the cost of inland transport of all relief assistance items and committed expenditure on the maintenance allowance of \$5 per person, exceeded the package of relief assistance provided by UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP) together. He expressed his Government's gratitude to the donors of some 450 heavy-duty trucks for the transport of food and relief assistance from the provincial capitals to the

refugee villages. However, they did not solve the problem of transport from the port of Karachi to the provincial capitals of Baluchistan and North-Western Frontier Province, and the operational costs of the vehicles would have to be borne by his Government. His delegation had raised the problem of the cost of inland transport at various levels because it felt that the burden should be borne by the international community and was disappointed to note that that item had not been included in the proposed budget allocations for 1983.

20. The presence of refugees and their animals in the border areas had caused considerable damage to vegetation, water resources and roads. It seemed only reasonable that the refugees should be given an opportunity to participate in the work of repairing the damage, which would take years of effort and considerable investment, and that their presence should be used in projects to rehabilitate or create new durable economic assets in the areas where they lived. Those were the objectives of the pilot project identified by the World Bank on the initiative of the High Commissioner. It was to include schemes covering four sectors - road construction or improvement, irrigation, reafforestation and range-land improvement, of which the first two were priority sectors in his Government's development plans for the two provinces in question. He hoped that Governments concerned with Afghan refugees and the development of Pakistan would support the project bilaterally or through UNHCR.

21. In view of the uncertain situation of the Afghan refugees, the best way to ensure regular and adequate assistance was to meet their immediate needs and to increase the existing resources of the host country. It was impossible to describe the effect on his country of the arrival of the refugees, but he hoped that visitors to the refugee camps had returned with a better understanding of who those refugees were and what they needed. For the time being, food commodities were donated or procured by WFP, while supplementary food items such as sugar and tea were provided or procured with UNHCR funds. However, there were severe delays in replenishing food commodities issued by the Government from its own stocks, particularly wheat, and the current gap between issues of wheat to refugees and wheat donations received had grown alarmingly and resulted in an increased financial burden on Pakistan. Some of the commodities could now be provided locally. For example, wheat requirements could be met by Pakistan at the international market price, which would be beneficial to all parties. With regard to the government issues of wheat not yet paid for, the best solution would be to provide funds to the Government to cover the costs at the international market rate. In the future, food commodity delivery schedules should be arranged to meet the requirements of refugees on a planned basis. If, for any reason, over-issues were made, they could be paid for on a quarterly basis. His delegation suggested that a legitimate cushioning effect should not be denied to host countries in a position to provide relief items indigenously.

22. Co-ordination between UNHCR and his Government had been institutionalized at all levels, and the estimates for the 1983 programme had been prepared by representatives of UNHCR in the provinces and extensively discussed and adopted at a meeting of representatives of the federal Government, provincial governments and UNHCR. In the proposals referred to UNHCR headquarters, the total cost of the 1983 programme was estimated at \$122.8 million. He was therefore somewhat concerned to see that the figure had been unilaterally reduced to \$78.5 million, which included an amount of \$1.03 million earmarked for the administration of UNHCR offices in Pakistan. The reduction of 36 per cent would distort the implementation of the programme and further complicate the refugee's problems.

23. There were now 2.8 million registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan, in addition to many more who were still unregistered; by the end of 1982 it was expected that over 3 million would be registered. However, the 1983 estimates had been based on a figure of 2.3 million, even though, at the joint meeting for the formulation of the 1983 estimates, there had already been 2.7 million registered refugees. The number of beneficiaries had already exceeded 2.4 million and, with improved administrative capability, the entire registered population could be effectively reached for the distribution of assistance during 1983. His delegation believed that the 1983 estimates should provide for the entire registered population as agreed in principle when the budget estimates had been formulated in May 1982. The reduction had adversely affected the allocations for shelter, clothing and shoes, as well as the supply of kerosene oil. In areas of extreme climate, tents must be replaced and the supply of building materials to refugees for the construction of mud huts on a self-help basis would be adversely affected. His Government had requested only one pair of shoes and clothes for each person on an annual basis, which was the barest minimum requirement and could not be further reduced. The situation with regard to the supply of kerosene oil required serious attention. The forest resources in the affected areas were fast disappearing, and those who had seen the destruction of the forests would understand why his Government felt that the entire requirements for kerosene oil in 1983 should be restored, as initially agreed at the meeting with UNHCR representatives on 19 May 1982. The current allocation for kerosene oil covered only 25 per cent of the total requirement. Any donations received in that sector would of course be duly subtracted from the total funds required. He emphasized the need to reconsider and restore the original proposals agreed upon at the joint meeting of representatives of his Government and UNHCR in Islamabad in May 1982.

24. In conclusion, he wished to stress that, despite the inherent uncertainties of the situation, Pakistan's programmes were formulated through the conventional planning process and with a great sense of accountability. The representative of the Federal Republic of Germany had referred to the educational needs of Afghan refugee children. His delegation agreed that the present coverage of primary education was insufficient; however, he was proud to report that 60,000 children had been enrolled in the past year and a half. It was intended to open over 200 schools during the coming year and to double the existing school population. Pakistan's relationship with the Afghan refugees was that of a host with guests. It would continue to shoulder the responsibility as long as they remained on its soil. It appreciated that the Afghan refugees fully understood the ethics of that delicate relationship and only hoped that the sensitivity of the situation continued to be understood by all those who wished to see the Afghan refugees return to their country with dignity and honour.

25. Mr. INAN (Turkey) suggested that the Committee should express its appreciation to the Government of Pakistan for the efforts it had made in bearing such an unprecedented burden of refugees.

26. The CHAIRMAN observed that several delegations had made similar comments during the general debate and they would be reflected in the report.

27. Mr. ARNAOUT (Head, Regional Bureau for the Middle East and South-West Asia) said that the secretariat would give detailed consideration to the problem raised by the representative of Iran concerning the group of persons of Iraqi origin and would soon be sending a fact-finding mission to clarify the situation.

28. The secretariat would discuss matters of concern to Pakistan in detail with representatives of that country, but he could briefly answer some of the points raised. With regard to inland transport costs, UNHCR had endeavoured to make the international community aware of the problem, and he wished to take the opportunity of asking donors to assist in solving it. On the subject of agencies which might be willing to participate in projects in the same way as the World Bank had done, he informed the Committee that ILO would soon be sending a mission to Pakistan. With regard to the problem of sugar supplies, he said that sugar could be purchased in Pakistan only at prices equivalent to the international market price. As to kerosene oil, UNHCR had agreed to cover about 25 per cent (\$8 million) of the total estimated needs (\$30 million). The Government obviously expected further donations to cover the remaining amount and it was to be hoped that the international community would make further contributions for that purpose.

29. Mr. ZOLLNER (Director, Assistance Division) wished to make it clear that the joint UNHCR/Pakistan/World Bank project was to be implemented by the World Bank at a cost of \$20 million to be financed directly by donor countries. The UNHCR assistance programme would finance the World Bank's costs up to \$600,000. The project was designed to find durable solutions for the employment of some of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

30. Section IV was approved.

Section V - Over-all allocations

31. Mr. ZOLLNER (Director, Assistance Division) drew the Committee's attention to document A/AC.96/607, which contained a report by the High Commissioner on the resettlement of refugees.

32. It was hardly surprising that, following the unprecedented efforts made by the international community to resettle hundreds of thousands of Indo-Chinese refugees and thousands of refugees from other parts of the world, resettlement countries should state that their capacity for absorbing refugees was not unlimited. Obviously economic and social considerations in the receiving country were factors to be reckoned with and it would be of no use to resettle refugees in a country where there was no realistic possibility of their finding a job or becoming integrated. However, it would be even worse for refugees if domestic economic and social considerations were allowed to dictate the limits of compassion. In the long run, refugees' contributions to their new communities had been universally recognized as invaluable assets offsetting the initial dislocation caused by their arrival. However, there was a most disturbing tendency to apply increasingly restrictive criteria in selecting refugees for resettlement. That trend was particularly noticeable in five areas: determining the refugee status of candidates for resettlement; limiting admissions to refugees with existing ties in resettlement countries; reluctance to consider certain nationality groups for resettlement; excluding refugees with mental, physical or social disabilities; and reluctance to consider emergency cases.

33. The application of increasingly restrictive eligibility criteria by resettlement countries was best discussed in the context of international protection. Suffice it to say that in regions where, as a result of mass influxes, no individual determination by the country of first asylum had been possible and resettlement was the only solution available, individual determination by resettlement countries would not provide a solution to the over-all problem.

34. Limitation of admissions to refugees with ties in a resettlement country created a favoured class of refugees. In some instances, the requisite ties were defined so narrowly that many thousands of refugees with relatives established in a resettlement country were left behind, because that country considered the relationship too distant to make the refugee eligible for admission. Resettling such refugees elsewhere, where they had no links whatever, would make their integration even more difficult.

35. With regard to the reluctance of resettlement countries to consider certain nationality groups for resettlement, he recognized that successful resettlement required an enormous effort by the receiving country and that countries obviously wished to concentrate their efforts on refugee groups with which they were already familiar. UNHCR's concern was that that policy should not be detrimental to equally needy refugees who were not included in such acceptable classes. In that context, he drew attention to specific groups of refugees requiring particular attention, and especially to paragraph 26 of document A/AC.96/607.

36. Referring to the exclusion of disabled refugees from resettlement, he paid tribute to the efforts made by a number of countries in the context of the International Year of Disabled Persons. However, the problem could not be solved by a one-time effort and there must be continuous recognition of the special needs of disabled refugees.

37. From time to time, there were cases of refugees who required immediate resettlement for reasons of physical safety. They were life-and-death cases in which the refugee must be resettled in a matter of days. There were very few countries to which UNHCR could turn in emergencies and he wished to thank them for their prompt and sympathetic response. However, that burden must be shared and he appealed to a larger number of resettlement countries to establish channels and machinery for handling requests for emergency resettlement.

38. UNHCR had welcomed the possibility of discussing the composition of resettlement programmes with Governments. Such a periodic exchange of views was of benefit to both the Governments of resettlement countries and UNHCR, which was in a unique position to evaluate needs. He hoped that such exchanges would become a regular feature of UNHCR's resettlement work so that the limited places available were offered to those in greatest need.

39. Mr. LANG (Federal Republic of Germany) said that his Government was prepared to contribute further to international burden-sharing in the task of resettlement. In 1975, it had established a humanitarian assistance programme to receive refugees from Indo-China, and by 1982 over 25,000 of them had been received or obtained resettlement guarantees. They included an appropriate percentage of children, and elderly, sick and disabled persons. Health, age and professional criteria had not been applied in their selection. The main element in the programme had been the principle of family reunification, and his Government had recently asked local governments to increase the resettlement quota by another 4,000 places so that family reunification could continue.

40. In his country there were 200,000 persons who had applied for asylum. In addition, over 50,000 persons of German origin from East and South-East Europe with a legal claim to German citizenship were to be resettled there. Moreover many

people from Eastern Europe had taken temporary refuge in his country, among them over 100,000 Polish nationals. Thus it was extremely difficult for his country to extend its quotas in favour of other groups of refugees. However, it was continuing its efforts and would study the possibility of contributions to the Disembarkation and Resettlement Offers (DISERO) scheme and was prepared to consider new proposals, such as Disembarkation, Resettlement and Funding Offers (DISERFO).

41. Mr. MOLLOY (Canada) said that, although resettlement ranked in priority after repatriation and local integration, it was nonetheless a vital element in the international system for dealing with refugees. In Canada, it was the most widely supported form of assistance, with both the governmental and non-governmental sectors directly involved. From 1979 to 1981 some 75,000 Indo-Chinese had been resettled in Canada, about half of them having been privately sponsored. In the same period, his Government had spent approximately \$178 million to meet the resettlement needs of the Indo-Chinese thus accepted.

42. In the case of the Indo-Chinese, as in the case of Eastern Europeans who had sought asylum in Western Europe, resettlement was a crucial factor, since neither voluntary repatriation nor local integration was normally viable, and it was an integral part of the protection and assistance functions assumed by the international community.

43. Although in most cases of mass influx local solutions could be applied, there were often groups who, for various reasons, could not be provided with acceptable durable solutions and for whom serious protection problems could arise. In such cases resettlement could be seen as part of the High Commissioner's protection function.

44. Canada had become increasingly involved in cases where resettlement for the purpose of protection could play a role. For example, the intake of refugees from Africa should show an increase for 1982; a number of refugees in the Horn of Africa had been assisted; and several hundred Salvadorians, for whom resettlement outside the region was necessary, had been identified, a large group in Belize having received special attention. In the future Canada intended to become increasingly involved in such areas, where its resettlement capacity could help to solve the problems of individuals.

45. Understandably, after the height of the Indo-Chinese programme, the private sponsorship programme had shown a decline. Nonetheless, almost one quarter of the refugees admitted in 1982 had been sponsored by private groups. Since studies indicated that many of those who had sponsored refugees in the past would do so again if the Government would bear more of the cost, it was a question of evolving a new formula for sharing the resettlement burden.

46. Canada would continue to provide for refugee resettlement but it must achieve a balance between its domestic concerns and its long-established resettlement tradition. Projections for 1982 indicated a slight decline by comparison with 1981 but resettlement would still be significant. An announcement was to be made in November 1982 concerning the resettlement goal for 1983, which would take account of existing resettlement needs and Canada's capacity to meet them.

47. His Government trusted that its co-operation with UNHCR at the policy level would be translated into increasingly close working relationships in the field wherever resettlement presented itself as a viable solution or as necessary for the protection of individuals.

48. Referring to the remarks made by the Director of the Assistance Division, he said that, given the number of refugees absorbed by the traditional resettlement countries in recent years, it was not surprising that there had been some problems. For instance, Canada used to be able to absorb and budget for a refugee intake on the basis of assistance for three months; owing to the prevailing economic climate, however, it now had to do so for nine months. In other words, for the same amount of money, only one third of the original number of refugees could be settled; alternatively, if the same intake were to be maintained, it would be necessary to budget for three times the amount. His country was certainly not the only one in that predicament.

49. Eligibility for resettlement was one area in which there had not been enough study and discussion by UNHCR of the development of international standards. He therefore trusted that the Protection Division would give some thought to that matter in the light of the problems perceived.

50. Lastly, he noted that, in some cases, the report before the Committee indicated that a given country bore the resettlement costs. He would appreciate it if similar recognition could be given to his own country which, in the space of three years, had spent over \$178 million on one group of refugees alone.

51. Mr. OYAKE (Japan) said that since 1975 his country had accorded temporary refuge to nearly 6,400 Vietnamese "boat people". Most of them had left for third countries, mainly the United States, but some had settled in Japan. Recently, however, there had been a significant drop in departures for third countries, reflecting the restrictive trend in admission about which concern had been expressed. Simultaneously, there had been an increase in the number of arrivals in Japan. As a result of those two combined factors, the number of Vietnamese in Japan now stood for the first time, at more than 2,000.

52. Japan was unique in that it played three different roles in regard to the Vietnamese "boat people", first, it acted as a coastal State for first asylum, granting temporary refuge without imposing any condition in principle; secondly, as a maritime State, its ships often rescued "boat people" in distress at sea; and, thirdly, it permitted those "boat people" so wishing to settle locally in Japan.

53. If the current state of affairs persisted, there was bound to be a significant increase in Japan's "case-load". The existing capacity for first asylum cases was limited to around 1,800 but plans were under way to establish a new centre with a capacity of approximately 1,000.

54. While his country wished to maintain its present generous policy of first asylum, the ultimate solution would have to be sought in the eradication of the root causes of such exoduses. He would therefore reiterate his Government's appeal that the Vietnamese Government should make further efforts to curb the exodus of its people.

55. Mr. DEVLIN (Canada) expressed appreciation for the High Commissioner's response to the many suggestions made for the improvement of the management capacity of the assistance programme. While the benefits of such improvements had been rapidly felt in certain areas, such as flow of information, other improvements which affected programme delivery understandably took more time to take effect and would require further adjustments. Such improvements should serve to stimulate the participation of members of the Committee.

56. It was important to be aware of the importance of the decisions taken when approving activities for the benefit of millions of refugees. Every effort should be made to meet the challenge - effective implementation of the programme. That meant not only that adequate funds should be contributed but also that all the countries involved should take the necessary measures to ensure that real progress was made towards UNHCR's goal of durable solutions.

57. While the assistance report before the Committee was a considerable improvement on its predecessors, some chapters could lay greater emphasis on the results achieved in the year under review and on those expected in the coming year. Where special chapters were devoted to programmes originally contained in regional presentations, they should contain all the relevant information on past, present and future programming and, where possible, should be accompanied by an indication of the expected completion date of a given programme or programme component. Furthermore, some of the changes in procedures due to the implementation of the Project Management System, which were dealt with in the introduction, could be referred to in the main chapters, particularly in the case of the planning and evaluation phases.

58. His delegation had been authorized to announce that Canada was to grant further assistance to UNHCR amounting to \$Can 12 million, broken down as follows: Afghan refugees in Pakistan, \$5 million; returnees in Ethiopia, \$2 million; Salvadorian, Nicaraguan and Guatemalan refugees in Central America, \$2 million; and refugees in the Sudan, Somalia and Thailand, \$1 million, respectively.

59. Mr. JENNY (Observer, Intergovernmental Committee for Migration) said that his organization (ICM) had been co-operating with UNHCR in its resettlement activities for over 30 years, and its wide-ranging assistance covered preparation of documentation, extensive medical services, care of refugees in transit, arrival notification to receiving Governments and agencies, and transport arrangements. As statistics showed, there had been a downward trend in resettlement movements, from 283,691 and 201,312 in 1980 and 1981, respectively, to a projected figure of around 150,000 in 1982. That decrease was due to reduced intakes of refugees, especially Indo-Chinese, by the traditional receiving countries.

60. ICM was fully aware of the difficulties faced by most countries of first asylum, in particular the developing countries, and therefore trusted that the international community would pursue its endeavour to alleviate the burden on them. For its part, ICM continued to make resettlement possibilities available to those refugees who could not be integrated into the country of first asylum or repatriated.

61. In addition to people who left their countries of origin out of a justified fear of persecution, there were millions of others who left in search of a better life. The movement of such large numbers was causing growing concern, particularly at a time of economic crisis when increased costs in social services imposed a heavy burden on national budgets. It was therefore essential to seek, through concerted action, means of coping in a humane and orderly manner with such large movements; ICM was ready to make a contribution to such action.

62. Although the Committee's discussions had demonstrated the difficulties still being experienced by a growing number of refugees, progress was being made in some areas, in which connection he noted in particular the positive developments in the

programmes of migration from Viet Nam. The meeting on the Programme of Orderly Departure recently convened by the High Commissioner had made a significant contribution to a further improvement of procedures and bilateral co-ordination. ICM, which has assisted in family reunification movements from Viet Nam since 1976 and had handled all arrangements for transit accommodation and transport since 1978, welcomed the fact that more Governments had initiated orderly migration programmes from Viet Nam and would continue to make its services available to them. Substantial progress was also being made with assistance to physically and mentally disabled refugees in South-East Asia who, in the opinion of ICM, should receive special attention with a view to their resettlement. In co-operation with UNHCR, ICM had appointed two staff members who specialized in dealing with such refugees and were now operating in South-East Asia.

63. ICM shared the Committee's concern at the plight of refugees throughout the world. It endeavoured to the best of its ability to alleviate their suffering and trusted that Governments would continue to make available the necessary means, including resettlement opportunities.

64. Mr. FELDMANN (Chief, Resettlement Section), replying to the observations by the delegation of Canada, expressed the appreciation of UNHCR for what had been done by resettlement countries; it was hoped that Governments would continue to be as generous as possible.

STATUS OF CONTRIBUTIONS AND OVER-ALL FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR 1982 AND 1983
(agenda item 8) (A/AC.96/605)

65. Mr. VOLFING (Director, External Affairs Division) said that the specific questions relating to that agenda item had been dealt with in detail in the report of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters (A/AC.96/612), which the Committee had before it. Since his "Periodic letter" of 28 September, several Governments had announced further contributions for which the Office was very grateful.

66. The revised requirement for the general programmes was \$360 million. Taking into account all new contributions, including that announced by the Government of Canada, the total income available from all sources for 1982 was \$341 million, leaving a shortfall of \$19 million under the general programmes alone. He hoped that the further resources needed to guarantee the full financing of the 1982 programmes would become available in the form of special contributions.

67. Turning to the requirements for 1983, the general programmes would require \$372 million, of which \$150 million would be needed for commitment in January 1983 in order to begin implementation of the general programmes in a balanced manner and on a world-wide basis. Owing to an unusual availability of funds in January 1982, the 1982 general programmes had begun without undue restriction, but that situation was not likely to repeat itself. He urged all Governments to make substantial, firm and where possible non-earmarked pledges to UNHCR's 1983 general programmes at the Pledging Conference in New York on 19 November.

68. UNHCR had demonstrated that its planning and costing of refugee assistance took into account both increases and reductions in needs, which remained considerable and subject to fluctuation. It was aware of current economic constraints, but the refugees depended on the continuing goodwill of donors to meet needs as and when they occurred.

69. Mrs. RAIVIO (Finland) said that because of the budgetary deficit her Government was making an additional contribution to the 1982 general programmes of Fmk 3 million.

70. Mr. VOLFING (Director, External Affairs Division), replying to a request for clarification by the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, said that the report on the status of contributions to UNHCR voluntary funds and the over-all financial requirements for 1982 and 1983 as at 30 June 1982 (A/AC.96/605) was being submitted to the Committee for adoption, with the exception of the section entitled "1983 requirements".

71. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the report contained in document A/AC.96/605.

72. It was so decided.

CONSIDERATION OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (agenda item 9) (A/AC.96/615)

73. Mr. INAN (Turkey) proposed that item 5 of the draft provisional agenda (A/AC.96/615) should be shortened to "Action taken on decisions by the Executive Committee". By deleting the words "at its thirty-third session", the Committee would be able to take action on decisions adopted at earlier sessions.

74. Mr. GRIFFITHS (Australia) said that many of the statements made in the Committee had reflected fatigue and resignation with regard to the magnitude of refugee problems. The purpose of a recurring agenda item entitled "Durable solutions" (item 10 of the draft provisional agenda) accordingly aimed at increasing members' awareness of the solutions pursued, the vigour with which they were pursued and the formulas which had met with some success in a complicated area where successes were few.

75. He requested the High Commissioner to report in detail on measures which had been successful so that the Committee could deliberate on possibilities of applying them elsewhere. Other Committee members had fertile ideas on that question and should be enabled to share them. His delegation offered to prepare a working paper under the item in order to present its thoughts in an orderly way and make tangible proposals on how the item could be conducted.

76. Mr. ZAHIRNIA (Iran) said that his delegation appreciated the Australian initiative, but the Office must consider local integration - one durable solution - on a case-by-case basis; any other approach could be dangerous.

77. Mr. DEVLIN (Canada) supported the proposals made concerning the draft provisional agenda.

78. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved the draft provisional agenda and the amendment to item 5, proposed by the delegation of Turkey.

79. It was so decided.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS (agenda item 10)

80. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to a letter from the Permanent Delegation of Morocco on behalf of the Arab Group in Geneva concerning the inclusion of Arabic among the official languages of the Committee.

81. Mr. SKALLI (Morocco), speaking on behalf of all the members of the League of Arab States, stressed the importance which they attached to refugee problems. They accordingly followed and/or participated in the work of the Committee, in which they were helped by the Arabic interpretation provided at meetings. They would be further helped by the translation of the Committee's documents into Arabic.

82. He referred to General Assembly resolution 35/219 A, which provided for the inclusion of Arabic among the official and working languages of the subsidiary organs of the General Assembly no later than January 1982, and Economic and Social Council decision 1982/147, which provided for the inclusion of Arabic among its official languages as from January 1983. In the light of those actions, and since the Committee was a subsidiary organ of the Assembly and the Council, his delegation requested the translation of all Committee documents into Arabic. It accordingly proposed that rule 28 of the rules of procedure of the Committee should be amended to read "Arabic, English and French shall be working languages of the Committee"; that would be in accordance with rule 44 of the rules of procedure and would give Arabic its proper status.

83. Mr. IDRIS (Sudan) supported the proposal by the delegation of Morocco and considered that the above-mentioned resolution and decision provided a sound legal basis for introducing Arabic.

84. Mr. VARGAS (Nicaragua) proposed that Spanish, which was already a working language of the United Nations, should be included as a working language of the Committee.

85. Mr. DAVEREDE (Argentina) expressed support for the proposal by the delegation of Morocco and suggested that the wider use of languages would contribute to the greater participation of all members in the work of the Committee.

86. The inclusion of Spanish as an official language was a long-standing aspiration of the Latin American Group, although it had never insisted on that course in the past so as to save money for the cause of refugees. Since another group had taken the initiative, however, it was logical to include other languages.

87. Mrs. RUESTA DE FURTER (Venezuela) expressed sympathy for the proposal by the delegation of Morocco and supported the proposal by the delegation of Nicaragua.

88. The CHAIRMAN said that, although the proposals were based on sound reasoning, there were inevitably logistical and budgetary implications which UNHCR would have to examine and report on to the Committee. He suggested that the Committee should submit the question to UNHCR in the following terms:

"The Executive Committee,

"Taking note of the letter dated 15 October 1982 signed by His Excellency Mr. Ali Skalli, Permanent Representative of Morocco, on behalf of the Arab Group in Geneva suggesting the inclusion of Arabic as a working language of the Executive Committee, and the suggestion made by the representative of Nicaragua also to include Spanish as a working language of the Executive Committee,

"Requests UNHCR to consider, in co-operation with the United Nations, the related logistical and budgetary implications and to report thereon to the Executive Committee at its thirty-fourth session".

89. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.