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Chair: Mr. Braun (Luxembourg)
later: Mr. Yaremenko (Vice-Chair)..... (Ukraine)
later: Mr. Braun (Luxembourg)

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

Agenda item 68: Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (continued) (A/74/18)

(a) Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (continued) (A/74/253)

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Agenda item 69: Right of peoples to self-determination (continued) (A/74/244 and A/74/309)

1. **Ms. Inanç Örnekol** (Turkey) said that her country's Constitution was founded on the principle of equality of all before the law. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination had become an integral part of national legislation. Legislative and administrative measures were also being taken in the areas of education and law enforcement to combat discrimination. Concerted efforts at the national, regional and international levels were needed to combat intolerance, and Turkey was a party to all the relevant international instruments. The disturbing rise in racism, xenophobia and hate speech was a cause of deep concern. Members of religious or ethnic groups were increasingly subjected to hostile acts, people were being stigmatized on the basis of race, colour, descent and national or ethnic origin and the use of racist propaganda in politics was becoming more commonplace. Members of the Turkish community living in Europe had suffered directly from such trends.

2. The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations initiative, spearheaded by Turkey and Spain, had recently launched an action plan to prevent attacks against and guarantee the sanctity of religious sites. Another valuable tool was the Istanbul Process for Combating Intolerance, Discrimination and Incitement to Hatred and/or Violence on the Basis of Religion or Belief. Turkey was proud to have led the negotiation process of General Assembly resolution 73/285 on combating terrorism and other acts of violence based on religion or belief, which called for strengthened international efforts to foster a global dialogue on the promotion of a culture of tolerance and peace at all levels and had been adopted as a global response to the terrorist attack in Christchurch, New Zealand.

3. *Mr. Yaremenko, Vice-Chair (Ukraine), took the Chair.*

4. **Ms. Vasquez Muñoz** (Mexico) said that the proliferation of hate speech around the world, which stigmatized and dehumanized groups and communities based on their race, ethnicity, language, religion, national origin or immigration status, was a matter of deep concern. Those expressions of hatred fuelled xenophobic sentiments that could push potential perpetrators to carry out violent acts against minorities, as had occurred in Christchurch, New Zealand, and Pittsburgh and El Paso, United States of America. Hate crimes could affect anyone and threatened the lives and physical integrity of those affected, the community at large, democratic values and social stability, and could jeopardize peace, sustainable development and the effective enjoyment of human rights by all. Also of concern was the proliferation of radical websites that adopted and propagated racist ideologies; such websites needed to come under greater scrutiny.

5. Her Government had ratified the Inter-American Convention against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance and had acceded to the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance. Mexico reaffirmed its commitment to the eradication of racism and all forms of discrimination and intolerance in the region. The international community must make a global effort to improve resilience and increase cooperation in order to continue to build peaceful, inclusive, tolerant and just societies and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

6. **Mr. Mozaffarpour** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that denying some the opportunity to exercise their inalienable right to decide their destiny was contrary to the Charter of the United Nations. Despite the clear injunctions of international law and morality, millions of people continued to live under alien domination and foreign occupation. The world was still haunted by historical injustices, such as enslavement and colonialism, and intergenerational poverty, which was a vestige of colonialism. There was a systematic link between those injustices and underdevelopment around the world.

7. Multilateralism had put an end to colonialism. Reverting back to unilateralism would therefore have dire repercussions for the international community and humanity at large. The rise in unilateral coercive measures deprived targeted nations of their inalienable rights and created a self-reinforcing cycle of conflict in which States rejected multilateralism and employed economic terrorism through unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in pursuit of political gains. As set out in the latest report of the Special Rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures

(A/HRC/39/54), discrimination on the basis of the country of residence or nationality of the targeted populations violated, inter alia, article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and articles 1 and 2 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Unless unilateral coercive measures were assertively countered, millions of people around the world would continue to suffer violations of their inalienable rights, including their right to self-determination.

8. The systematic and deeply ingrained racism practiced and propagated against Palestinians was a matter of deep concern. The international community had failed to respond adequately to the so-called “Jewish Nation-State Law” that had been passed in 2018 and which negated the rights of millions of people in the occupied territories. That inaction had led to a new surge of racial discrimination and to a threat of further occupation and annexation of Palestinian lands. Over the span of one year, hundreds of Palestinians had been brutally murdered, shot and maimed in Gaza border protests amid the deafening silence of the international community.

9. **Ms. Tripathi** (India) said that, as a country that had been under colonial rule for nearly two centuries, India was painfully aware of the detrimental impact of racism and racial discrimination on society. The scourge of slavery had taken millions of Indians overseas as indentured labourers of the colonial powers. To safeguard against the recurrence of such abhorrent practices, the Constitution of India upheld the principle of equality and expressly prohibited discrimination on account of race. Decolonization and the fight against racism and racial discrimination had been cornerstones of Indian foreign policy since independence.

10. India had always been at the forefront at the United Nations in supporting the right to self-determination of peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories and Trust Territories. The United Nations had established that the principle of self-determination was a vehicle for decolonization, not a justification for secession or undermining the territorial integrity of any Member State. Substantial progress had been achieved in implementing that agenda, although some situations continued to be unresolved. In that context, India strongly supported the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

11. Given that racial discrimination increasingly co-existed with other forms of human rights violations and abuses, all efforts must be guided towards creating measures to enhance the effective implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World

Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. Social media had emerged as a platform for amplifying racial hatred and discriminatory ideas. States must intensify efforts to prevent and combat dissemination of racial hatred and other intolerances, taking into consideration the balance between safeguarding freedom of expression and combating advocacy of hatred. In that context, it was critical to establish partnerships with the private sector and civil society. Educational measures should also be taken to enhance national and international awareness of the legacies of racial discrimination rooted in slavery and colonialism, and the power of information and communications technology should be harnessed to foster the values of global citizenship. Online education in civics and history were potent tools that remain underutilized.

12. **Mr. Da Costa Freitas** (Timor-Leste) said that his Government believed that respecting and advancing human rights in all spheres of life was crucial and it was in the collective interest to work together towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that context, all countries should respect the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and non-interference; promote understanding and cooperation to implement national and international human rights laws and refrain from resorting to violence and confrontation in resolving their disputes; and observe the rule of law and the values and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

13. **Ms. Bassene** (Senegal) said that, as the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Senegal wished to draw the attention of the international community to the situation in the Palestinian territories. The multiple human rights violations and abuses committed against the Palestinian people had contributed to the denial of Palestinian self-determination, as indicated by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 in his report (A/74/507). A peaceful solution to the conflict should be sought to meet the security aspirations of Israel and the legitimate aspirations of Palestinians to fully enjoy their inalienable rights, including the right to live in freedom, justice and dignity, and to create a sovereign State, on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

14. The discriminatory speeches and policies of some States were contributing to an increase in acts of intolerance against people of African descent, indigenous peoples, linguistic, ethnic and religious minorities, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Senegal believed that an open, permanent and respectful

intercultural dialogue could help to combat xenophobia in all its forms and manifestations. Governments must implement policies and measures aimed at promoting inclusive dialogue and respect for cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity. In that regard, a number of programmes had been set up aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination and intolerance, in the spirit of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. Member States were encouraged to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and to implement the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

15. **Mr. Rahman** (Bangladesh) said that his country maintained a zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization, and its flagship General Assembly resolution on a culture of peace was testimony to its commitment to the principle of inclusion and peaceful coexistence. Human beings around the world continued to suffer from racism, discrimination, xenophobia and exclusion, including the Rohingya in Myanmar, who had endured decades of systematic deprivation and discrimination, as confirmed by the independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar.

16. Having identified hate speech as a root cause of violence in Rakhine State, the fact-finding mission had called on the Government of Myanmar to develop and implement, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, including the Rohingya, a public communications strategy to counter hate speech and false narratives and foster an environment in which the human rights of all were respected. The Advisory Commission on Rakhine State had called on the Government of Myanmar to combat all forms of hate speech, especially when directed at ethnic or religious minorities, and to prosecute those responsible. The Commission had further asked religious leaders to play an active role in ending hate speech and racial or religious discrimination. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance had called for the adoption of legal or constitutional provisions to prohibit incitement to racial, religious and national hatred and the propagation of extreme ideologies. The Government of Myanmar should take the necessary action in that regard.

17. The Secretary General had said that he had never seen a community so discriminated against as the Rohingya, and he had termed the atrocities committed in Myanmar as ethnic cleansing. Unless those

responsible were brought to justice and racial discrimination ceased, such atrocities would continue in Myanmar.

18. **Ms. Shoman Khot** (Jordan) said that terrorists and extremists exploited poverty, unemployment, social injustice, poor educational systems and discrimination, and they used technology and social media to ignite intolerance, racism, hate speech and xenophobia. United efforts would be required at the national, regional and international levels to address those issues and build resilient, sustainable and peaceful communities.

19. Committed to the fight against racism, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination and intolerance, Jordan was a driver of peace and security in the Middle East. In that regard, the country was in a position to spearhead international efforts to unite the world in mutual respect and understanding, including through the Aqaba Process, a global platform aimed at consolidating global efforts to counter terrorism.

20. The right to self-determination was one of the most fundamental principles of human rights and no excuse could be invoked to deprive people of that right, as confirmed by the jurisprudence of international courts. The Palestinian cause was the central issue in the Middle East, and Jordan strongly supported the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to establish a sovereign State with East Jerusalem as its capital, based on a two-State solution. Her delegation called on the international community to support an end to the Israeli occupation and halt the unilateral actions of Israel that were impeding negotiations on fundamental issues, including the illegal building of settlements, the killing of innocent civilians and confiscation of land, all of which violated international law.

21. **Ms. Rodríguez Abascal** (Cuba) said that racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia, including in the form of hate speech, continued to occur in many regions and countries. Of particular concern was the xenophobic and racist rhetoric of the current Administration of the United States of America, whose actions had favoured the emergence of expressions of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia that had led to the death of migrants, including those killed during the attack that had taken place in El Paso, Texas. Racial hatred and aggressions must be fought and eliminated, and effective measures must be taken to address their root causes and aggravating circumstances. Cuba was committed to fighting racism beyond its borders through the voluntary and altruistic cooperation of its aid workers.

22. Although the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations included the right to self-determination, that goal had yet to be met. The constant wars of aggression, interference in the internal affairs of States, overthrows of sovereign Governments, so-called “soft coups” and the re-colonization of territories were a cause for alarm. Cuba had not forgotten terrorists such as Luis Posada Carriles, the mastermind behind the mid-air explosion of a Cubana de Aviación aircraft in October 1976 that had resulted in the death of 73 people. Carriles had never been held accountable for that or his other horrendous crimes and had been protected by the United States until his death.

23. The people of Cuba, who had been forced to face the negative effects of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States for almost 60 years, had paid a high price for defending their right to self-determination. Cuba would continue to support peoples suffering under foreign rule in their just struggle for self-determination.

24. **Mr. Knyazyan** (Armenia) said that selective approaches to the principles of international law and attempts to create an arbitrary hierarchy in order to impede the realization of the right to self-determination were unacceptable and should be rejected by the international community. Attempts to reject the social and economic rights of people, to isolate them and deprive them of their means of subsistence were particularly alarming. Efforts to criminalize entire peoples for their legitimate aspirations to freely determine their political status and dispose of their natural wealth and resources should be viewed as a violation of their human rights, in particular the right to self-determination.

25. The international community should pay special attention to situations in which exercising the right to self-determination was vital for ensuring people’s physical security. Efficient early warning mechanisms were essential for addressing intolerance, discrimination and identity based hate crimes against the legitimate aspirations of peoples to exercise their inalienable right to choose their own destiny against foreign oppression and coercion. The people of Nagorno Karabakh had exercised their right to self-determination in full conformity with international norms. Despite the attempts made to suppress their right to self-determination, they had made progress in strengthening democratic state institutions, protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms and ensuring the rule of law. Ensuring their right to self-determination was a basic requirement for the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

26. **Ms. Mijić** (Croatia) said that increased migration, terrorist threats and the rise in anti-Semitism and the trend of populist parties that were gaining ground by exploiting anxiety over economic uncertainties were a matter of deep concern. It was important to advocate for zero tolerance of racism and xenophobia and to prevent racism and other forms of intolerance by strengthening internal cohesion and resisting extreme ideology through political, social and economic means.

27. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination was the most relevant human rights instrument for addressing contemporary forms of racism, including in relation to criminalizing racist and xenophobic acts. In that context, her Government had developed an anti-discrimination legal framework, and the Constitution of Croatia stipulated that any call for or incitement to war and any form of intolerance was prohibited and punishable by law. A working group for monitoring hate crime incidents had also been established.

28. Promoting multiculturalism and intercultural, tolerance-oriented dialogue both within and outside the country was a high priority for Croatia and would be a focus during its presidency of the Council of the European Union during the first half of 2020.

29. **Ms. Senewiratne** (Sri Lanka) said that the deliberate triggering of discrimination, hostility and violence through hate speech threatened democratic values, social stability and peace, and challenged the world order. It was important to identify the causes behind the increasing misuse of social media and other Internet platforms to spread messages of hatred and intolerance.

30. The heinous terrorist attack committed in Sri Lanka on 21 April 2019 by members of a home-grown organization inspired by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant had been a clear challenge to the country’s pluralistic society. However, despite the terrorists’ attempts to destroy the country’s social fabric, its rich experience of being a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious country had enabled Sri Lanka to demonstrate the role that religion and culture, when practiced in their pure forms, could play in promoting understanding, harmony and trust.

31. Terrorism could not and should not be associated with any religion or belief. The horrific acts committed worldwide were a reminder that radicalization, extremism and terrorism posed a serious threat to international peace and security. States needed to work together to fight those global menaces. In that context, her Government welcomed the United Nations Strategy

and Plan of Action on Hate Speech. It was essential to adopt a comprehensive approach that encompassed ongoing security-based counter-terrorism measures and systematic preventive remedies that addressed the drivers of violent extremism. Education had a central role to play in creating new values and addressing discrimination. Community-based preventive mechanisms were also vital for promoting mutual understanding, tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity.

32. **Mr. Sarufa** (Papua New Guinea) said that the third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism would come to a conclusion in 2020 without having made much headway. The 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories, 6 of which were located in the “Blue Pacific” region, remained under the yoke of colonialism, which went against the spirit of international instruments, including the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Papua New Guinea offered its undivided support to the Non-Self-Governing Territories and called on Member States to continue to remain vigilant and be a beacon of hope for self-determination. Stronger political commitment and will were required to eradicate the indignity of colonialism and its vestiges.

33. As a member of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, his Government was working with the administering powers of Non-Self-Governing Territories to address the plight of peoples seeking self-determination. In that context, the importance of peaceful dialogue and inclusivity could not be overstated, as demonstrated during the referendum held in New Caledonia in November 2018, when over 81 percent of eligible voters had peacefully exercised their right to self-determination. The referendum had favoured the status quo by a small margin but represented increased support for self-determination. In the run-up to the referendum to be held in New Caledonia in 2020, the relevant authorities should enhance electoral transparency, fairness, credibility and integrity. His Government reaffirmed its commitment and support for the self-determination of New Caledonia, as well as of the other 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories on a case-by-case basis.

34. **Mr. Anyanah** (Ghana) said that the ongoing and resurgent scourges of racism and related intolerance in many regions of the world, which often targeted migrants, refugees and people of African descent, was a cause for concern. Support by Member States for the International Decade for People of African Descent, the

Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the global compact on refugees would serve as an impetus to the realization of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

35. Ghana welcomed the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech and its focus on education, as well as the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites, which provided a global framework to guide national efforts in preventing attacks against holy sites and worshippers. On the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, Member States were encouraged to continue to adhere to its provisions regarding the elimination of racism and related intolerance.

36. Institutions in Ghana, including the Ministry of Gender and the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice, had been at the forefront of efforts to address intolerance, create awareness and promote peaceful and inclusive societies. A national media commission and communications authority had also been set up to regulate the media space, with a view to protecting against intolerance, including hate speech. The country had also expanded its “Justice for All” initiative aimed at decongesting prisons, enhancing the administration of justice and addressing discrimination against prisoners.

37. **Mr. Moraru** (Republic of Moldova) said that, if applied in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and relevant human rights instruments, the right to self-determination could be an important tool for the promotion and protection of human rights and for conflict prevention. However, it should not be abused to encourage secession and undermine pluralistic and democratic States. The Republic of Moldova did not recognize the right to secession outside the context of decolonization and shared the view that self-determination was a concept that was no longer helpful in resolving the problems of multi-ethnic societies.

38. The international community had consistently affirmed that the right to self-determination did not extend to component parts or groups within independent sovereign States. Promoting misconceptions on the scope of self-determination could only encourage separatism and geopolitical designs. It was necessary to exercise caution in regard to so-called “community-based self-determination claims”, especially when such claims were used to justify unilateral declarations of independence or illegal referendums on secession. States should also refrain from labelling certain protracted conflicts as “self-determination conflicts”, especially when the respective conflict areas were

controlled by anti-constitutional entities that were supported from abroad.

39. Attempts made at the United Nations and elsewhere to reinvent some of the basic principles of the Charter, such as self-determination, and to apply them selectively for political or geopolitical ends were unacceptable. It was deplorable that certain individuals and organizations with ulterior motives openly advocated, particularly at the Human Rights Council, secession from sovereign States under the pretext of protecting human rights. Member States and the Human Rights Council should oppose and condemn such acts, including the delivery of statements at the Human Rights Council by representatives of the International Council of Russian Compatriots to promote the secession of the Transnistrian region from the Republic of Moldova.

40. **Ms. Horbachova** (Ukraine) said that existing legislation on racism and xenophobia must be enforced, and there should be a focus on actions that could make a difference on the ground. Ukraine strongly believed that the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and other human rights instruments offered a powerful and effective international framework for the common fight to eliminate those phenomena.

41. Since the beginning of the occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation, the occupation authorities had mounted a broad-based campaign against ethnic Ukrainians and the Crimean Tatar community, which faced continuing harassment, abuse and repression. The Government of Ukraine had filed an application with the International Court of Justice to initiate proceedings against the Russian Federation for its violations of the Convention. Russia should abide by its obligations in accordance with the order issued by the International Court of Justice in April 2017.

42. The massive campaign of propaganda and incitement to hatred against Ukraine and Ukrainians, carried out by Russian State-owned media and public figures, was a matter of great concern that significantly contributed to ethnic hostility. The Russian Government had endorsed far-right movements and approved their participation in the ongoing aggression against Ukraine as part of its hybrid warfare strategy.

43. The vulnerability and marginalization of the Roma community required special attention in many countries. A national strategy for the protection of the Roma ethnic minority and their integration into Ukrainian society was designed to address the problem of statelessness, among other issues. Her Government was working with

international institutions to establish a complementary policy framework aimed at overcoming discrimination and promoting the full inclusion of the Roma community.

44. **Mr. Iteboje** (Nigeria) said that acts of racism and xenophobia were a deliberate attempt to reject the common humanity of all peoples and remained an affront to the Charter of the United Nations. By challenging the most basic principles of the Organization, such vices posed an imminent threat to international efforts to further human rights and fundamental freedoms and realize the core objectives of maintaining global peace, security and stability.

45. Any doctrine of racial superiority was scientifically false, morally repugnant and socially unjust. The principled stance of Nigeria to stand firmly against racial discrimination explained the huge human and financial sacrifices made by the country in fighting colonialism, apartheid, minority rule and other forms of human domination over fellow humans, especially in Africa. Despite the discriminatory and xenophobic attacks committed against Nigerians, his Government had prioritized dialogue over confrontation and diplomacy over sanctions to resolve such incidents.

46. The international community should examine the progress made towards achieving the objectives set out in the solemn proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent. Many Africans and their descendants were confronted with new forms of domination, while effective self-determination remained. A mirage More needed to be done to ensure recognition, justice and development for people of African descent. He called on the international community to join forces in fighting discrimination against Africans and people of African descent, and especially migrants, whose vulnerabilities were reminiscent of the past horrors of slavery and the slave trade.

47. **Ms. Xu Daizhu** (China), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that her delegation deplored the baseless accusations and vilifications made by the delegation of the United States against China. The antiterrorism and deradicalization measures adopted by China were no different from the measures taken in the United States and in Europe and were not targeted at any one country or religion or based on racial discrimination. The previous day, 54 countries had made a joint speech and more than 30 countries in their national statements had given a positive evaluation of the human rights achievements of China, supporting its counter-terrorism and deradicalization measures and opposing politicization of human rights issues and interference in the domestic affairs of other countries

under the pretext of defending human rights. If the United States really cared about human rights, it would focus on resolving the ubiquitous problem of racism in its own country.

48. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had noted that there had long been cases of incitement to racial discrimination and hate speech in the United States. In addition, senior United States officials had publicly promoted nationalist and populist rhetoric; minority groups had been denied the right to vote; and the number of hate crimes and cases of racial discrimination was at a record high. Unfortunately, the delegation of the United States had not specified the measures taken by its Government to eliminate racial discrimination in that country. Her delegation solemnly urged the United States to stop deliberately seeking confrontation at the United Nations and to return to a path of dialogue and cooperation.

49. *Mr. Braun (Luxembourg) resumed the Chair.*

Agenda item 61: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions (A/74/12 and A/74/12/Add.1 and A/74/322)

50. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that the strength and credibility of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) owed much to the dedicated work of Sadako Ogata, a former High Commissioner who had passed away on 22 October 2019. He expressed condolences to her family and to the people and Government of Japan.

51. Ensuring the safety of displaced people and finding solutions for refugees had been among the earliest priorities of the United Nations and remained of the utmost relevance. Some 71 million people were displaced globally owing to conflict, violence and persecution, and the number continued to rise. Tackling the challenge of forced displacement and its complex root causes called for bigger, broader ambition. Such a vision had shaped the development of the global compact on refugees, which followed a comprehensive approach that preserved the humanitarian imperative but incorporated peacebuilding, development action and private sector investment. The first-ever Global Refugee Forum, to be held in Geneva in December 2019, would showcase achievements and generate fresh commitments to further progress.

52. The past year had underscored the urgency and relevance of the compact. While much of the discussion on forced displacement remained focused on arrivals in

the global North, the most profound consequences were still in poorer and middle-income host countries, such as the 14 nations in Latin America and the Caribbean that were hosting almost 4.5 million Venezuelans. The International Solidarity Conference on the Venezuelan Refugee and Migrant Crisis, held in Brussels on 28 and 29 October 2019, had served as a first step towards mobilizing more substantial resources. In that region and elsewhere, the interface between humanitarian and development action – one of the key tenets of the compact – was vital.

53. Responses to mixed flows of refugees and migrants continued to present very complex challenges and generate divisive political debates. Legitimate anxieties about jobs, security and identity were being exploited for political gain, pushing people who were themselves excluded from the benefits of globalization against refugees and migrants. Measures taken or invoked to reduce flows, such as externalization of asylum processing and policies of deterrence, eroded refugee protection, while addressing neither the root causes of mixed flows, nor the challenges of integration. Saving lives and safeguarding the dignity and rights of all those on the move must remain the central issue, together with access to international protection for those with valid claims. Public confidence in the institution of asylum must be reinforced through fast and fair procedures, good migration management to prevent the abuse of asylum systems as substitutes for migration channels and investments in integration for those with a right to stay.

54. Long-standing and recurring displacement crises, such as in Afghanistan and Somalia, regrettably persisted in the absence of political solutions. After eight years of conflict, the Syrian Arab Republic remained the largest displacement crisis globally, and the recent escalation of conflict in the north-eastern part of the country, which had led to the displacement of tens of thousands, including more than 12,000 refugees in northern Iraq, was of great concern. The parties must adhere to international humanitarian law, including by providing unfettered access for aid agencies to reach people in need. In the context of prolonged crises, the compact's emphasis on inclusion, resilience and development action was critical.

55. On the question of how to advance voluntary repatriation and other solutions, especially in the absence of political settlements and a definitive end to hostilities, UNHCR pursued ongoing dialogue with refugees on the complex factors that influenced their decisions and perspectives on their future. The return of refugees to countries such as the Syrian Arab Republic, Burundi and Myanmar was the best solution, but it had

to be voluntary, safe and dignified and must not be driven by politics. It was up to refugees to decide when to exercise their right to return, to their areas of origin or choice, and efforts must be made to avoid subsequent internal displacement of returning refugees. UNHCR remained available to facilitate dialogue and solutions through tripartite approaches.

56. Positive developments in the Sudan, South Sudan and Ethiopia towards peace had the potential to pave the way for solutions for millions of refugees and internally displaced people. UNHCR was already working with Governments and partners on preparedness efforts and on the inclusion of displaced persons in peace processes. Resettlement was another solution that saved lives and offered stability to refugees. UNHCR would work with Governments and other partners to leverage its new three-year strategy to intensify resettlement efforts and expand private sector and community involvement.

57. UNHCR was stepping up engagement with the 41 million internally displaced people around the world, and its new policy on internal displacement reflected its firm and revitalized commitment. Priority operations in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and the Lake Chad basin remained among the most politically and operationally complex operations. UNHCR was also responding with more resources to the call of the Government of Ethiopia for support to address recent large-scale internal displacement in the country. UNHCR welcomed the decision of the Secretary-General to establish the High-level Panel on Internal Displacement and would support its work.

58. Climate-related factors were a growing driver of displacement. The term “climate refugee” was not based in international law and did not reflect the more complicated ways in which climate interacted with human mobility. UNHCR was increasing its efforts to highlight the protection gaps resulting from cross-border displacement in the context of climate change. UNHCR would continue to work with partners to help Governments to deliver an operational response to disaster-related displacement, guided by protection considerations. It would focus more on reducing the environmental impact of refugee crises through renewable energy options, reforestation activities and access to clean fuels and technology for cooking, including through a new energy strategy. Recognizing that its own operational footprint had an environmental impact, UNHCR was taking action accordingly.

59. UNHCR would work with States and other partners to accelerate efforts in relation to the situation of stateless persons, building on the high-level segment

held as part of the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees of 2019, which had resulted in some 347 pledges from 95 States, international and regional entities and civil society organizations.

60. The funds available in 2019 were estimated at \$4.82 billion, although the gap between requirements and available resources had not decreased. It was anticipated that private sector income would increase by 11 per cent compared with the 2018 figure, to \$470 million. UNHCR would continue to strive to diversify its funding base and was also striving to match donor generosity with constant improvements in the management of the organization. Its reform process was aimed at ensuring an agile and effective UNHCR, with empowered field operations that could respond to local dynamics and opportunities. Its regionalization and decentralization initiative was helping to give greater authority and flexibility to country offices. Over the coming months, it would carry out the last phase of structural changes, adjusting its headquarters set-up in line with the new delegation of authority. UNHCR was working to improve evidence-based planning and increase efficiency, in line with its Grand Bargain commitments and as an active participant in broader United Nations reforms. The new UNHCR-World Bank joint data centre and the UNHCR data transformation strategy would inform and drive those efforts.

61. UNHCR continued to embed a strong risk management culture across the organization and to strengthen systems and tools for preventing and responding to misconduct, including sexual misconduct. He was personally committed to eradicating sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and had recently succeeded the Executive Director of the United Nations Children’s Fund as a champion of that issue in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

62. **The Chair**, on behalf of all the members of the Committee, expressed condolences to UNHCR and the Government and people of Japan for the passing of Ms. Ogata.

63. **Ms. Lee** (Canada) said that her Government greatly appreciated its partnership with UNHCR in refugee resettlement and strongly supported the global compact on refugees. Canada had been inspired by recent initiatives demonstrating leadership in refugee protection, including the initiative of the African Union to address forced displacement under its 2019 theme, African Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa. Given the importance of the guiding principles of humanity and international

solidarity in advancing improved responsibility-sharing, she asked how UNHCR was reaching out to non-traditional actors to enhance the comprehensive nature of refugee responses.

64. **Mr. Gallagher** (Ireland) said that, during the visit of the High Commissioner to Ireland in July 2019, his Government had reaffirmed its support for the tireless work of the Office. At a time of a worrying decline in solidarity with refugees and their host communities, as well as a deeply disturbing rise in anti-refugee and anti-migrant rhetoric, Ireland would continue to reject negative narratives and stand with refugees and other displaced persons. Given the key role played by development policies in providing durable solutions to situations of forced displacement, Ireland strongly endorsed the global compact on refugees and was ready to play its part in the implementation. The Global Refugee Form would be an opportunity to advance strengthened cooperation and solidarity with refugees and host countries. He asked how States could best support UNHCR in the implementation of its policy on engagement in situations of internal displacement.

65. **Mr. Fernández-Zincke** (Observer for the European Union) said that more information on the ongoing decentralization and transformation process at UNHCR would be welcome. He asked how agencies with different mandates could cooperate for an effective and efficient response to internal displacement.

66. **Ms. Salim** (Afghanistan) said that her country was grateful for the support and assistance provided by UNHCR over the years. The year 2019 marked the fortieth anniversary of the beginning of large-scale Afghan refugee movements around the world, especially to neighbouring countries. Creating an environment for the voluntary and safe return of Afghan refugees and their reintegration into society was at the core of her Government's efforts. She asked how UNHCR could protect refugees from violence by non-State actors, which were often key stakeholders in conflicts that created refugee crises. She also asked how UNHCR and other agencies could support States in addressing the root causes of forced displacement, such as violence committed by non-State groups. Noting that UNHCR already monitored the repatriation of refugees, she asked whether it could also measure what made situations more conducive to supporting voluntary repatriation, while working closely with other United Nations agencies.

67. **Mr. Christodoulidis** (Greece) said that, as a country that was still affected by the ongoing migratory and refugee crisis, Greece continued to do its utmost to protect people seeking asylum in Europe. National

efforts were focused on the effective management of migratory and refugee flows, with an emphasis on the protection of the human rights and dignity of refugees and asylum seekers. Given that children had made up about half of the refugee population in 2018, his Government focused primarily on support for children, including those who were unaccompanied and separated, with the aim of reuniting them with their families. The empowerment and protection of the human rights of refugee women and girls were priorities, as reflected in the national action plan on women and peace and security. The new national action plan on preventing and combating trafficking in persons and protecting the victims adopted a comprehensive and victim-centred approach in relation to the security and protection of the human rights of refugee women and girls.

68. **Ms. Zappia** (Italy) said that, in the light of the increasing number of forcibly displaced persons in the world, a holistic and multilevel engagement by the international community based on the principles of partnership, solidarity and shared responsibility was needed. Her Government had established a working group on statelessness composed of civil society organizations, which had put forward recommendations on addressing the issue to the Government and Parliament. She asked what specific results and follow-up were expected or desired from the Global Refugee Forum. She also asked what strategies should be adopted to improve coordination between UNHCR and other agencies, in particular on the ground.

69. **Mr. De La Mora Salcedo** (Mexico) said that the global compact on refugees had created an impetus for the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Mexico shared the concerns with regard to anti-migrant and anti-refugee statements, hate speech, xenophobia, intolerance and white supremacy. It would be interesting to learn more about the effect such harmful narratives had on the work of the High Commissioner. He asked how the Office assessed the strategy of the Secretary-General for combating hate speech.

70. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, to make the principles of solidarity and equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing a reality, a whole-of-globe rather than a whole-of-society approach should be promoted. In the absence of such an approach, more than 80 per cent of refugees in the world continued to be hosted by a few developing countries, including the Islamic Republic of Iran. For various reasons, including the unlawful unilateral coercive measures imposed by the Government of the United States, his country faced serious difficulties in

responding favourably to the needs of refugees. Such unlawful measures infringed on the capacity of the Government to provide essential support in the fields of education, health and employment. It would be unfair and unreasonable to expect his country to single-handedly bear the burden of such illegal acts. His delegation would be interested to learn of the consequences of the unilateral coercive measures on the humanitarian interventions and response of the UNHCR country office in the Islamic Republic of Iran. He asked how unilateral coercive measures affected the global response to the issue of refugees and what remedial steps had been taken by UNHCR to counter the impact of such measures.

71. **Ms. Bouchikhi** (Morocco) asked what measures had been taken by UNHCR to register the inhabitants of refugee camps in cases in which it had not been granted access. Her delegation supported the call for donors to strengthen their support through flexible funding and early contributions. At the same time, the High Commissioner should redouble efforts to ensure that humanitarian assistance reached refugees.

72. **Ms. Niculae** (Romania) said that, as an emerging donor and a country to which refugees were relocated, Romania remained committed to protecting and supporting refugees. Her Government had responded favourably to requests from the Governments of Italy and the Republic of Moldova regarding the relocation of persons in need of international protection. The quota set for 2020–2021 was double that of previous years. Following requests from UNHCR, the Ministry of Internal Affairs had expressed its willingness to receive refugees in need of relocation depending on the places available at the Emergency Transit Centre in Timisoara. The first institution of its kind in the world, the Centre was an important tool of international protection policy that demonstrated the commitment of her Government to finding solutions for refugees and sharing the burden with host countries.

73. **Mr. Hong Jin Um** (Republic of Korea) said that, given the chronic funding gaps, UNHCR should continue its efforts to expand its donor base and secure more flexible funding, and his Government remained committed to supporting the Office in that regard. The Government was focusing on tackling sexual and gender-based violence through its Action with Women and Peace initiative and would like to strengthen its partnership with UNHCR to further the cause by providing focused humanitarian assistance to victims and raising awareness of the issue. Against the backdrop of increased attacks against civilians and humanitarian workers, it was imperative for Member States to be steadfast in supporting UNHCR, and the adoption of the

resolution on UNHCR by consensus was more important than ever.

74. **Mr. Ahsan** (Bangladesh) said that his country was hosting more than 1.1 million forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals, 744,000 of whom had arrived after 25 August 2017. The Government of Myanmar should allow unfettered access to United Nations entities to provide assistance, including through quick impact projects for the refugees and other displaced persons inside northern Rakhine. As mandated in the memorandum of understanding between the Government of Myanmar, UNHCR and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which had been extended for one more year, it was imperative to expedite efforts inside Myanmar to create conditions conducive to return. His Government expressed its gratitude to UNHCR for assisting in the preparation of the biometric database of inhabitants of the camps, which would help to streamline the repatriation process when it began. The role of the Office would be critical in implementing the 2019 joint response plan for the Rohingya humanitarian crisis.

75. **Mr. Arriola Ramírez** (Paraguay) said that, as a State party to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, Paraguay would work to ensure the correct and full implementation of that Convention and to prevent it from being used to protect individuals who were responsible for serious crimes. His Government therefore firmly condemned the granting of individual refugee status to Juan Arrom, Anuncio Martí and Victor Colmán, who had been on trial since 2003 for the crime of kidnapping, which was codified in Paraguayan law through constitutional mandate. The granting of refugee status in that case was a clear obstruction of justice. Those Paraguayan citizens were not political prisoners nor was there any reason to assume that their human rights were in jeopardy. The decision to grant them refugee status should be reconsidered.

76. **Ms. Tscherrig** (Switzerland) said that her Government was working closely with UNHCR to organize the Global Refugee Forum to be held in Geneva in December 2019. One of the main aims of the global refugee forums was to evaluate progress towards the achievement of the objectives of the global compact on refugees. The success of the compact would be judged by its effective implementation and its impact on refugees and host countries. During the first Forum, the focus would be on securing formal contributions and commitments from States and stakeholders. She asked how important the aspect of implementation of the compact would be at the first Forum and how the Forum would contribute to the establishment of databases for the indicators of the compact.

77. **Ms. Al Sulaiti** (Qatar) said that her Government continued to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced persons through government institutions and civil society organizations in cooperation with United Nations specialized agencies such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and UNHCR. Qatar provided multi-year and unearmarked support for United Nations agencies amounting to \$500 million. In 2019 and 2020, it had provided UNHCR with \$16 million dollars, which would contribute to building a better future for refugees and forcibly displaced persons around the world.

78. **Mr. Sahraoui** (Algeria) said that his delegation would be interested to learn of the economic and social impacts of the presence of high numbers of refugees on countries, especially developing countries. UNHCR had visited the Sahrawi refugee camps in 2017 and had estimated their number at more than 100,000, but a different number was provided in the report of the High Commissioner. Furthermore, the World Food Programme had increased its estimates and resources for refugees in Algeria. Clarification of that issue would be welcome. He asked how UNHCR could bridge the funding gap.

79. **Mr. Skoknic Tapia** (Chile) said that his country expressed its appreciation for the visit of the High Commissioner to Chile in August 2019, which was the first visit by a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to the country. Chile had adopted the global compact on refugees and hoped that the first Global Refugee Forum would enable progress towards fulfilment of its provisions. In response to the more than 4.4 million Venezuelans who had left their country in recent years, the Latin American and Caribbean region had sought to establish, in solidarity and within its capacities, public policies to assist and take in the people in need. His Government expressed its gratitude to UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for leading efforts under the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela, in which Chile actively participated. The collaboration with the Office to appoint the Head of the UNHCR office in Chile and the work undertaken to establish a suitable institutional platform for cooperation between UNHCR and the Government were also welcome.

80. **Ms. Eimert** (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), said that UNHCR could continue to count on the Nordic States, not least when it came to unearmarked funding. The Nordic countries were firmly committed to the implementation of the global compact on refugees and looked forward to contributing

substantially to the Global Refugee Forum. The Nordic countries supported the ongoing regionalization of the bureaux in the light of the Grand Bargain and the United Nations development reform and as part and parcel of the successful implementation of the compact. The establishment by the Secretary-General of the High-level Panel on Internal Displacement was also of crucial importance. She asked how UNHCR would engage with the Panel.

81. **Ms. Nemroff** (United States of America) said that, as the largest single country donor of humanitarian assistance worldwide, the United States supported the work of UNHCR for durable solutions for the millions of refugees, stateless persons, internally displaced persons and other vulnerable persons around the world. However, the growing number of crises and the increasing scale of needs were beyond the capacity of any single donor to address. All Member States and other stakeholders should equitably share the burden of addressing global humanitarian needs and be responsive to appeals from UNHCR. Member States should also facilitate effective aid delivery, including addressing the safety and security needs of humanitarian workers, ensuring that access to populations in need was not unduly hindered and establishing conditions for the safe, dignified and voluntary return of refugees and other displaced persons. The United States looked forward to the first Global Refugee Forum and was committed to working with other Governments, the United Nations, the private sector and civil society organizations to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of the humanitarian system.

82. **Mr. Furumoto** (Japan) said that his delegation expressed its sympathy for the loss of the former High Commissioner and its appreciation to the High Commissioner, the Chair and members of the Committee for their condolences.

83. Japan had been promoting the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and would promote that approach at the Global Refugee Forum. Humanitarian assistance was more effective when efforts aimed at recovery, building resilience and addressing root causes were implemented simultaneously. The participation of UNHCR in the seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development had been welcome. The side event held in connection with the 2019 African Union theme, African Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons, had helped to highlight the importance of preventing forced displacement and the private sector's role in addressing displacement. With regard to the displacement in South-East Asia, his delegation commended Bangladesh for continuing to host displaced persons from Rakhine State. The parties

concerned should prepare the groundwork for safe, voluntary and dignified repatriation in collaboration with the United Nations.

84. The implementation of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus varied depending on the situation on the ground. He asked how Member States could better support the nexus approach at the country level.

85. **Mr. Zavala Porras** (Costa Rica) said that all countries had the responsibility to protect individuals who had been forced to leave their countries, and international cooperation had a key role to play in that area. His country had cooperated with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on issues related to statelessness and had adopted a decree on the issue, under which in 2018 his Government had for the first time given Costa Rican nationality to a stateless person.

86. The High Commissioner had underlined the challenges related to interregional migration and the impact of climate change on international migration. It was estimated that the number of individuals affected by climate change as a result of the rise in ocean levels would increase threefold by 2050.

87. **Mr. Al Khalil** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his Government had taken steps to facilitate the safe, dignified and voluntary return of refugees through the adoption of legislation. It was ready to offer its assistance to UNHCR to meet the needs of Syrian displaced persons and refugees returning to the country. It had presented clear and practical ideas in that regard but had received no positive response from the Office. UNHCR should review its position that conditions conducive to the safe return of Syrian citizens did not exist because the situation had improved greatly in most governorates. UNHCR should break its silence on the violations of the rights of Syrians in certain countries – countries that were primarily responsible for the crisis, promoting terrorism, aggression and occupation of the Syrian Arab Republic.

88. **Mr. Suárez Moreno** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the challenges faced by his country were a result of the coercive unilateral measures imposed by the Government of the United States, including on countries that traded with Venezuela. Those measures, which had worsened the already difficult situation in his country, were aimed at creating conditions that would lead to a regime change, as promoted by the current United States Administration. Threats of military action and a naval blockade had been made to force the exit of President Maduro, and more than \$30 billion worth of Venezuelan assets in foreign

banks had been confiscated by the United States. It was essential for such measures to be revoked so that his country could overcome the challenges it faced.

89. Those who spoke of the danger posed by Venezuelan migrants for the region, an idea that had recently been voiced by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, should take into account the devastating effects of their words on vulnerable people who could become victims of criminal acts. Fomenting fear against migrants led to increased xenophobia and violence, as had occurred in the United States and other parts of the world. Migration issues should not be exploited for political purposes.

90. **Mr. Moussa** (Egypt) said that, as the current Chair of the African Union, Egypt had hosted regional events to promote the 2019 African Union theme, African Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons, including the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development expert workshop on forced displacement in Africa in August 2019. Egypt had a long-standing tradition of admitting refugees and currently hosted refugees from 58 countries. Such persons did not need to register as refugees in Egypt; they largely received access to public services on an equal footing with Egyptian citizens; and they were guaranteed freedom of movement and were not confined to camps. As a result, only 250,000 refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt were registered with UNHCR. However, there were many more in refugee-like situations who were not officially registered but could not avail themselves of the protection of their countries of origin. More equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing – the core principle of the global compact on refugees – was needed. Egypt was a strong supporter of the Global Refugee Forum and had been the first country to announce itself as a sponsor of one of the Forum's thematic areas.

91. **Ms. Xu Daizhu** (China) said that only when the root causes of the refugee issue, such as war, conflict, poverty and underdevelopment, were addressed could an effective solution be found. China supported UNHCR and other multilateral mechanisms working to resolve refugee issues. Refugee protection efforts must uphold the principles of objectivity and neutrality, and the global compact on refugees must be implemented on the basis of respect for the sovereignty of all States.

92. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that his mandate and the mandate of his Office had been, was and would remain humanitarian and non-political. While aware that it was operating in a very politicized context, UNHCR strove to carry out its work in an apolitical dimension and to take a professional approach to all aspects of its work,

including when it was called upon to determine refugee status or to advise Governments in that respect. He rejected categorically any accusation that UNHCR politicized the determination of refugee status. Politics should be left aside in considering matters of concern to UNHCR. The focus should be on assistance to and protection of refugees and other vulnerable persons and, above all, on finding solutions to their plight. He urged Member States to reach consensus on the omnibus resolution on UNHCR because consensus would considerably strengthen its mandate in the interests of all.

93. In all regions around the world, refugees, migrants, minorities and foreigners had been stigmatized by hostile language, which was used purely for political ends. UNHCR was participating fully in the internal United Nations debate on hate speech and in the development of a strategy to address it.

94. UNHCR was committed to stepping up its involvement at both the policy and the operational levels in situations of climate displacement. He had appointed a special adviser on climate displacement, and a small team was being established within UNHCR to address that issue.

95. To help internally displaced persons, resources to address humanitarian needs and political solutions were required. UNHCR had worked closely in the humanitarian cluster system led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and had responsibilities in protection, camp management and shelter issues. UNHCR would be one of the organizations supporting the secretariat that would work with the High-level Panel on Internal Displacement to find new solutions to that issue.

96. To enhance the chances for voluntary repatriation, any obstacles must be lifted, and countries of origin bore the primary responsibility in that regard. UNHCR was working with the Government of Myanmar and UNDP in a tripartite fashion to create favourable conditions in areas of return. While development in those areas was important, other issues needed to be tackled, such as freedom of movement and a pathway to citizenship, which were less material but equally important in building confidence among refugees to return.

97. Together with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, UNHCR had focused on removing obstacles to return and welcomed the progress that had been made. He did not recognize his organization as one that was silent on the right of return. The right of return existed for all refugees, as did the right not to return when it was believed that obstacles remained. Removing obstacles to enhance the possibility of return was the most important type of work carried out by UNHCR, especially in the very complex Syrian context. UNHCR continued to be

open to suggestions on how to make progress in that respect in the Syrian Arab Republic.

98. The collection of data on refugees for the purposes of providing fair assistance, mobilizing adequate resources and ensuring protection was especially important in situations in which there might eventually be a possibility of repatriation. The main responsibility for collecting data usually lay with host countries. Such data should be shared with UNHCR to enable it to plan better responses. The issue of data had been particularly complex with regard to the Sahrawi refugees in Algeria, and UNHCR would continue to work on that issue with the aims of improving the type of assistance provided to Sahrawi refugees and providing a correct picture of their situation to enable donors to provide adequate resources.

99. Sexual and gender-based violence was at the centre of the protection concerns of UNHCR in terms of both responding to the plight of victims and protecting women to enable them to become agents rather than victims, and find opportunities for integration or return to their home countries.

100. The global compact on refugees, the comprehensive refugee framework and the Global Refugee Forum offered opportunities to expand partnerships in response to refugee situations with development actors, businesses and non-traditional donors. The compact offered practical solutions to improve burden- and responsibility-sharing. He hoped that solutions for better burden-sharing would be showcased and pledges and commitments clearly laid out at the Forum. The question of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus would be central in that respect. Follow-up had been built into the Forum process, and UNHCR was developing indicators to measure progress towards the goals of the compact.

101. Despite economic pressures, the Islamic Republic of Iran had continued to be an exemplary host country. However, more resources should go towards ensuring the inclusion of refugees in education, health services and the job market, irrespective of any political considerations.

102. Staff security and security in general, including the insecurity caused by non-State actors, continued to be big challenges. The recent killing of three IOM staff members in South Sudan was a sad example of the continued targeting of humanitarian workers and was unacceptable. The regional bureaux had been moved almost entirely to the regions, and more authority was being delegated to country offices, which was at the heart of the transformation under way at UNHCR.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.