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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 42nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUBAREZ (Yemen)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 66: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION TO AVERT NEW FLOWS OF REFUGEES: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/37/416 and Add.1, A/SPC/37/3, A/SPC/37/L.36 and L.37)

1. Mr. MUSA (Somalia) said that his delegation had consistently supported the agenda item under consideration and had co-sponsored General Assembly resolutions 36/124 and 36/148 in the hope that that world body could attempt to find global political solutions to the difficult problem involved, which was a source of human suffering, bedevilled relations between countries and created economic and social upheavals. His country, which was hosting the largest number of refugees in Africa, knew only too well the plight of people who had to flee their homes and survive on donations, never knowing what the future held for them. During their flight for survival and freedom from oppression, they underwent intolerable suffering and covered enormous distances, enduring hunger, disease and the acts of cruelty which men sometimes inflicted on their fellow men. When they reached their country of asylum, they had to endure the hardships to which the destitute and uprooted were subject, and, in some cases, the armed attacks of those very forces from which they had fled, which went so far as to unleash diplomatic campaigns to curb the flow in international humanitarian assistance.
2. The efforts made at the international level to meet the needs of refugees showed that the international community was aware of its responsibility towards them, and particular mention should be made of the humanitarian work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, which was one of the greatest achievements of the United Nations. Many representatives had pointed out that the massive flow of refugees created additional burdens for the receiving country, particularly when it was one of the least developed countries such as Somalia. The economic and social effects on the receiving country created intolerable situations, and the negative consequences affected all services and all economic development plans.
3. The refugee problem endangered political stability and posed a threat to peace and security in the region and throughout the world. It was therefore timely that the international community should, at long last, concern itself with the root causes of massive flows of refugees and prescribe appropriate preventive measures. The root causes included armed conflicts, direct or indirect foreign intervention, alien occupation or domination, violations of human rights, colonialism, racism, apartheid, persecution and oppression of religious and ethnic minorities. The list showed clearly the complexity which characterized the deterioration of the international situation and the way in which States interpreted their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the instruments relevant to the subject. In that connection, it would be useful to compile the general guidelines and practical measures currently dispersed throughout the large number of publications existing on the subject, which would help to rectify the tragic refugee situation. If elimination of the root causes was achieved, the international community would be able to remedy the current situation and avert new massive flows of refugees. To that end, the efforts of the world community should be focused on international co-operation, the peaceful settlement of disputes, the

(Mr. Musa, Somalia)

inalienable right of peoples to self-determination and the elimination of inhuman policies. It was indispensable that all States should demonstrate their political will and that the principle of "domestic jurisdiction" or "non-interference in internal affairs" should not be allowed to become an obstacle to the international quest for means of averting the new flows of refugees.

4. Mr. ELSHEIKH (Sudan) said that, as a result of the colonial legacy, his country had suffered from the problem of the exodus of refugees after attaining independence but had managed to resolve it in the most amicable way and to put an end to it in 1972.
5. The report of the Director General of UNRWA in document A/37/416 brought out the sufferings of the Palestinian refugees in the occupied territories and in Lebanon. The report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees submitted to the Third Committee, likewise painted a not very encouraging picture, since there continued to be alarming numbers of refugees in Asia, Central America and parts of Africa.
6. The international community, despite its good will, had not done enough to stamp out inhuman practices against refugees, let alone to eliminate the causes of the problem. Unless régimes such as those of Israel and South Africa were forced to respect the norms of international law and the relevant international instruments, the problem of refugees would continue to exist for a long time to come. The denunciation of policies of occupation and foreign intervention in the internal affairs of other States was another prerequisite for the elimination of the problem. Economic oppression and the gap between the rich and poor in the world were a major factor in the destabilization process in the countries of the third world, thus causing new flows of refugees. The international community should, therefore, find a fresh and realistic approach to achieving a lasting solution and averting new flows of refugees.
7. His delegation was a sponsor of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.36 and believed that both the draft resolution and the group of experts established by General Assembly resolution 36/148 should be accorded the maximum support. He was sure that the work of the group would be based on the humanitarian values embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the relevant international instruments. It was also indispensable that Member States and regional organizations should co-operate in the work of the group.
8. Mr. ADJOYI (Togo) pointed out that the refugee problem had been getting worse in recent years, owing to the dictatorial and terrorist régimes which had come to power in various places and to natural disasters and the economic crisis, which affected the poor nations worst. The number of refugees had reached such heights that it had become a matter of deep concern for the international community. A tribute should be paid to UNHCR and also to Governments, United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for the help they had given. Refugee flows could upset the stability of receiving countries and destroy the political and economic stability of large regions and even of the whole world.

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(Mr. Adjoyi, Togo)

9. Referring to General Assembly resolutions 35/124 and 36/148 concerning the problem, he said that, under the latter, the General Assembly had decided to establish a 17-member group of governmental experts with a well-defined mandate. When the Secretary-General had held consultations with regional groups to appoint those experts, various groups had proposed that the number of experts should be increased, and, for that reason, the Secretary-General was proposing that the figure should be increased to 24. In his delegation's view, that number was appropriate since, without being excessive, it made possible a balanced representation of the regions and of those interested in the question. The increase did not alter in any way the original mandate of the group which should devote itself especially to analysing the deep and genuine causes of refugee flows in order to propose measures which might make it possible to avert new flows of refugees. Resolution 36/148 had been adopted by consensus, and his delegation hoped that the same would be the case with draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.36.

10. Mr. XIE Qimei (China) said that, in his delegation's view, the agenda item on international co-operation to avert new flows of refugees was designed to ascertain the true causes of the flows of refugees and to find means of averting new flows. The General Assembly, in its resolution 35/124, in addition to stating its conviction that "the United Nations is called upon to consider suitable means to avert new flows of refugees", had strongly condemned "all policies and practices of oppressive and racist régimes as well as aggression, alien domination and foreign occupation, which are primarily responsible for the massive flows of refugees throughout the world". Thus, the resolution had already paved the way for the debate on the item in the Committee and had indicated the primary causes of the refugee problem.

11. Despite the substantial humanitarian aid provided by the international community, the refugee problem remained serious. The useful report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/37/12) as well as that of the Special Rapporteur entrusted with the task of studying the question of human rights and massive exoduses had highlighted the cruel living conditions of the refugees, whose number, already very high, was constantly increasing.

12. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had given rise to millions of refugees, while the Vietnamese aggression in Indo-China had reduced about 1 million people to the status of refugees. In the Middle East, Israel's aggressive expansionism had created a large number of Palestinian refugees, while in Lebanon a large-scale massacre of refugees had recently been perpetrated by Israel. In addition, South Africa's racist policy had generated a large number of refugees, while in Latin America the number of displaced and homeless persons continued to grow. That was the reality facing the international community, which had to be aware of the fact that the massive flows of refugees jeopardized peace and stability in many parts of the world.

13. China considered that the international community could have solved those problems through the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 35/124 and 36/148, and regretted that, despite the provisions of those resolutions, no real

(Mr. Xie Qimei, China)

progress had been made. It was to be hoped that the General Assembly at its current session would be able to move forward in solving that problem on the basis of the resolutions mentioned.

14. In its letter dated 14 July 1981 addressed to the Secretary-General (A/36/582), the Chinese Government had clearly stated its position on the question of refugees, and during 1982, had explained its views in greater detail in connection with the studies carried out by Prince Aga Khan concerning massive flows of refugees. China considered that the problem of refugees was due particularly to the policies of aggression and expansion followed by certain countries, which used force in order to occupy other countries and resorted to colonialist and racist practices against certain groups of inhabitants in their own territories. Consequently, the final solution of the refugee problem required eradication of the fundamental cause. To that end, the international community should take firm measures to force the countries concerned to respect the relevant United Nations resolutions and to put an end to their policies of aggression and expansion, to withdraw completely the troops with which they had invaded other countries and to put a halt to their practices of colonial domination and racism.

15. His delegation wished to point out that the Vietnamese Government, in its reply to the Secretary-General in connection with the item (A/37/416), had made unjustified attacks against China. In that regard, it should be recalled that, in 1979, when Viet Nam had engaged in a number of provocative acts and had carried out armed incursions into Chinese territory, China had found itself obliged to counter-attack in its own defence. Later, Viet Nam had indulged in hostile acts and China had taken the necessary measures, while displaying great moderation. There was no war between China and Viet Nam, and much less was China waging what the Vietnamese authorities called a "many-sided war of destruction" against Viet Nam. Neither was it true that China was encouraging the flight of Vietnamese refugees from their country or that it was using them for activities of any kind. On the contrary, those refugees were the product of the policy of repression and discrimination pursued by the Vietnamese authorities against their own people, a policy which had forced China to assume the heavy burden of receiving 260,000 Vietnamese refugees.

16. Mr. VOLLEBAEK (Norway) said that his Government regarded the consensus resulting from the debate at the previous session as a manifestation by all Member States of the view that the United Nations had a responsibility to improve international co-operation in order to avert new flows of refugees. The existing international instruments and institutions in the humanitarian field, while not themselves preventing the flow of refugees, were indispensable in the efforts to ease the situation for those who already were refugees. His delegation wished to commend in particular the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for its efforts to relieve the plight of refugees in all parts of the world, but considered that those efforts should be continued in appropriate forums separate from the Office of the High Commissioner.

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(Mr. Vollebaek, Norway)

17. In addition to concerning itself with the suffering of millions of individual refugees, the international community should bear in mind that a large number of refugees might have a destabilizing effect on whole regions and present the receiving countries with grave problems. Developing countries were particularly affected, as the stream of refugees often strained their already scarce resources. Norway was therefore convinced of the need to improve the international community's ability to anticipate conflicts and thus be better prepared to meet the needs arising therefrom. That could be done only through international co-operation.

18. When considering what could be done in order to remove or minimize the fundamental causes of many flows of refugees, it should be kept in mind that there already existed several important international instruments which prohibited acts of aggression and violation of human rights. The United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights all contained provisions and obligations relevant to the question of what caused refugee flows.

19. In the light of the foregoing, his delegation viewed the Group of Governmental Experts set up by General Assembly resolution 36/148 as a useful instrument for the further study in depth of what could be done to avert new massive flows of refugees. According to its mandate, the Group was to "undertake as soon as possible a comprehensive review of the problem in all its aspects with a view to developing recommendations on appropriate means of international co-operation" in averting new flows of refugees. However, it had not been possible to nominate the members of the Group as foreseen in that resolution, and although the Secretary-General, in his note A/SPC/37/3 of 18 October 1982, indicated that a large number of Member States showed great interest in the work of the Group, he further stated that several regional groups wished to name a larger number of experts than would be possible for the total of 17 stipulated in the resolution. After intensive consultations, the Secretary-General had suggested that an enlargement to 24 members might be the most appropriate solution. His delegation agreed to the enlargement of the Group in accordance with that suggestion, which, it hoped, would obtain a consensus.

20. Within the framework of its mandate, the Group should, in his delegation's view, take into account relevant existing international instruments, norms and principles, and due regard should be given to the views expressed by Member States in documents A/36/582 and Corr.1 and Add.1, and A/37/416 and Add.1.

21. Mr. NGUYEN (Viet Nam) said that, according to the most recent estimates, the number of refugees currently exceeded 12 million. The causes of that problem were too numerous and varied for anyone to be able to attribute it solely to the behaviour of Governments of countries of origin, as some circles were trying to do. Similarly, the causes of flows of refugees were not limited to natural disasters or violations of human rights, but included, inter alia, the inequalities between the developed and developing countries resulting from centuries of exploitation by colonialism and neo-colonialism, the policy of terror and violence of the apartheid régime and of Zionism against the peoples of illegally occupied

(Mr. Nguyen, Viet Nam)

territories, imperialism's wars of aggression against the peoples of certain countries in South-East Asia and the economic blockade and acts of destabilization committed by imperialist and hegemonist circles against the Governments of countries which had opted for independent national development.

22. His delegation considered that in order to eliminate those multiple causes of the refugee problem it was necessary to develop constructive, frank international co-operation in which those mainly responsible for that tragedy would play an especially active part. Such co-operation would require States Members of the United Nations scrupulously to respect the principles of the Charter and the relevant resolutions, as also their international obligations. Moreover, such co-operation would require the developed countries to adopt in good faith measures for the establishment of a new international economic order that would ensure the equitable distribution of wealth, which would help to reduce migratory flows. Justice demanded that those primarily responsible should help to mitigate the harm which they had caused; it was obvious that as long as those evils persisted, the number of refugees and displaced persons could only increase.

23. With regard to the establishment of a mechanism to foster international co-operation to avert new flows of refugees, he observed that if the Security Council, with all the authority conferred on it by the Charter, could not put an end to aggression in certain parts of the world or restore their inalienable rights to peoples subjected to occupation and foreign domination, as were the Palestinian and Namibian peoples, it was very doubtful that a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly could succeed at that task. Moreover, in view of the great diversity of flows of refugees, his delegation thought that the specific characteristics of each case should be taken as the point of departure for making more effective use of existing international mechanisms and instruments designed to foster co-operation, whether bilateral or multilateral, in the search for a more adequate solution. That solution could take the form of bilateral agreements between the countries and international organizations concerned, on the basis of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries in question.

24. With regard to the Group of Governmental Experts on International Co-operation to Avert New Flows of Refugees, established under General Assembly resolution 36/148, his delegation could support it to the extent that that General Assembly initiative constituted a genuine humanitarian endeavour and not an instrument of cold war.

25. With regard to Vietnamese refugees and displaced persons, his delegation wished to emphasize once again that the Government of Viet Nam had done everything it could to find an adequate solution to that problem. In May 1979 a seven-point memorandum of agreement had been concluded between the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and UNHCR, and on 8 October 1982, in Geneva, the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had reviewed their co-operation and the results achieved in the past year in implementing the Programme of legal departures from Viet Nam (A/37/557). His

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(Mr. Nguyen, Viet Nam)

delegation wished to take the opportunity to pay a tribute to UNHCR for its effective help to Vietnamese refugees and displaced persons and for its fruitful and friendly co-operation with Viet Nam.

26. With regard to the people of Viet Nam, victims of the most barbarous war of aggression in history which had been inflicted on them by imperialism, and of the war of destruction to which they were currently being subjected by the hegemonism of a great Power, they had the right to require that the problem of Vietnamese refugees should be solved at the point of origin, and that the imperialist and hegemonist media should put an end to all incitement and encouragement to people to leave Viet Nam, to the economic blockade imposed on the country and to all acts tending to make the provision of adequate international economic aid to Viet Nam more difficult.

27. Referring to the statement of the representative of China, he said that the calumnious remarks of the latter were part of the hysterical campaign which the Chinese authorities persisted in waging against Viet Nam after committing acts of aggression that had forced thousands of Vietnamese elderly people, women and children to leave the provinces on the country's northern frontier. It was ironic that the representative of China dared to cite the United Nations Charter and express compassion for the Vietnamese refugees of Chinese origin when it was the Chinese leaders who were daily inciting young Vietnamese to leave their country and who were using Vietnamese refugees to carry out subversive activities and acts of sabotage against the people of Viet Nam. His delegation reserved the right duly to reply to the statement of the Chinese representative at the appropriate time.

28. Mr. LOBO (Honduras) said that the Government of his country was concerned at the world problem of the massive flow of refugees, which was having an impact on the life of Honduras, affecting even its social, political and economic stability. One fundamental aspect which might be considered with a view to mitigating the problem was that of the observance of human rights, a theme which had taken shape in the Charter of the United Nations and in numerous international instruments which were likewise legally binding. Internal conflicts which violated human rights affected two spheres of international law, namely, human dignity and international peace. An oppressive régime was the germ which all too often gave rise to the use of force, with broad external repercussions. Honduras was prepared to co-operate with international bodies in the search for a solution to problems relating to the full protection of human dignity.

29. With reference to the Group of Governmental Experts on International Co-operation to Avert New Flows of Refugees, whose principle task was to find effective means of applying the legislation on the matter, he said that that would be possible only if there was a will to implement the relevant treaties in good faith and if the States Members of the United Nations demonstrated by their actions that they were striving to perfect the system by which the international community was governed.

(Mr. Lobo, Honduras)

29. His Government thought that the mandate of the Group of Governmental Experts should be renewed and that the possibility of convening a specialized conference on the basis of the studies made by the Group should be considered. Furthermore, the Group of Governmental Experts should consider the advisability of using the following means of averting new flows of refugees: (a) promoting the solution of internal conflicts through political understandings conducive to the establishment in all the countries in the region of democratic, representative and pluralist systems, based on the will of the people expressed in regular and free elections; (b) respecting and promoting human rights, political, economic, social and cultural; (c) fostering national reconciliation in cases where there were deep divisions within a society by broadening opportunities for participation in the framework of democratic processes and institutions, without discrimination of any kind; and (d) preventing the use of a country's own territory for purposes of supporting, supplying, training or leading terrorist or subversive elements in other States.

30. His delegation had supported the initiative of the Federal Republic of Germany in respect of the inclusion in the agenda of the item "International co-operation to avert new flows of refugees", and it took satisfaction in being one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.36. Honduras wished the draft resolution to provide for Latin America to have 20 per cent of the seats on that body, namely, five rather than only four.

31. Mr. KA (Senegal) said that Austria, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Honduras, Iceland, Indonesia, Jordan, Luxembourg, the Philippines, Rwanda, Spain and the United States of America had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.36.

AGENDA ITEM 61: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE POPULATION OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES
(continued) (A/37/162, A/37/485, A/37/525, A/37/541, A/SPC/37/L.26-L.34)

32. Mr. NOORANI (Pakistan) introduced draft resolutions A/SPC/37/L.28 and A/SPC/37/L.29, sponsored by Bangladesh and Qatar, joined by Afghanistan, Cuba, India, Madagascar, Malaysia and Pakistan. He pointed out that there was a typographical error in the English version of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.29: in the first line of operative paragraph 3 the word "occupy" should be replaced by "comply".

33. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) introduced draft resolutions A/SPC/37/L.30, A/SPC/37/L.31 and A/SPC/37/L.32, sponsored by Bangladesh and Qatar, joined by Afghanistan, Cuba, India, Madagascar, Malaysia and Pakistan. Subsequently, Senegal had also joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.30. He noted that the content of the draft resolutions was quite familiar to the Committee, for it had been the subject of many other resolutions in the past, although they had not produced substantive results. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolutions would be given broad support.

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AGENDA ITEM 65: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued) (A/SPC/37/L.13/Rev.1, L.14, L.19, L.20, L.21, L.22, L.23, L.24 and L.25)

34. Mr. SHEHATA (Egypt) introduced draft resolutions A/SPC/37/L.13/Rev.1 entitled "University of Jerusalem for Palestine Refugees" and A/SPC/37/L.14 entitled "Offers by Member States of grants and scholarships for higher education, including vocational training, for the Palestine refugees", sponsored by Bangladesh, Cyprus, Jordan and Kuwait, in addition to Egypt.

35. Referring to the preamble and the operative paragraphs of the two draft resolutions, he said that, since the existing educational system was inadequate from every point of view and UNRWA had always supported the just cause of the Palestinian people, support must continue to be given to anything that would strengthen and consolidate the educational infrastructure for the Palestinian people and he therefore hoped that the draft resolutions would be adopted by consensus. He also announced that Egypt was sponsoring draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.19.

36. Mr. NOORANI (Pakistan) introduced draft resolutions A/SPC/37/L.19 entitled "Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip", sponsored by Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan and Yugoslavia, and A/SPC/37/L.20, entitled "Resumption of the ration distribution to the Palestinian refugees", sponsored by Bangladesh and Pakistan. Referring briefly to the preambular and operative parts of both draft resolutions, he emphasized that draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.20 was not a criticism of the work of UNRWA, which had had to set priorities because of the financial difficulties it was facing. It was important to resume the ration distribution to the Palestinian refugees, and the entire international community should co-operate in that task. He therefore hoped that Member States would consider the draft resolutions favourably and adopt them by consensus.

37. He also introduced draft resolutions A/SPC/37/L.23, entitled "Special identification cards to all Palestine refugees", sponsored by Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, and A/SPC/37/L.24, entitled "Protection of Palestinian refugees", sponsored by Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Pakistan. Referring to the preambular and operative parts of the two draft resolutions, he said that draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.23 was designed to facilitate UNRWA's work and to try to have the Palestinian refugees provided with identification cards so that they would not be regarded as terrorists and disturbers of the peace. Draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.24 was concerned with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. In that connection he said he hoped that the world community would do everything possible to make Israel respect its obligations under the Charter. UNRWA had not yet been able to restore its services and the time had come for the international community to act. He therefore hoped that the Committee would adopt the draft resolutions by consensus.

38. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) introduced draft resolutions A/SPC/37/L.21 and A/SPC/37/L.22 entitled, respectively, "Population and refugees displaced since 1967" and "Revenues derived from Palestine refugees' properties", sponsored by

(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Yugoslavia. In view of the content and the humanitarian nature of the two draft resolutions, the sponsors hoped that they would be adopted by consensus.

39. Mr. LICHENSTEIN (United States of America), introducing draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.25, noted that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East had been established 33 years earlier in the hope that peace and security would soon be restored in that region, and as a temporary effort to meet the needs of Palestinian refugees. Those hopes had not been fulfilled but the determination to help was stronger than ever. Recent events in Lebanon had clearly shown the need for all the parties to the conflict to discard old attitudes and take new steps towards peace and fraternity among neighbours. He believed that the peace proposals advanced by President Reagan signalled a growing determination to turn away from the battlefield and towards the negotiating table, as was also shown by the quickening of diplomatic activity in recent months.

40. UNRWA had performed and was continuing to perform important tasks on behalf of the refugees. Recently it had worked closely with the Governments of Lebanon and Israel, local authorities, the International Committee of the Red Cross and various private voluntary agencies. In view of the continuing need for emergency services in Lebanon, he informed the donor community that the United States would make available a further sum of \$14.5 million. The specific programmes for which those funds would be used left no doubt that they would serve the humanitarian purposes for which they were intended.

41. He regretted the instances of abuse of UNRWA's humanitarian services and any attempt to use them as a mask for military or terrorist activity or in preparing for conflict. The United States was seriously concerned about the misuse of the Sibling vocational training facility and, as the members of the Committee were aware, had withheld certain payments to the Agency until it had finally reviewed the Commissioner-General's report on the abuse at Sibling. He was confident that the Commissioner-General would take all possible action to strengthen UNRWA's management and oversight capabilities to ensure that the Agency's resources were used only for the humanitarian purposes envisaged in its mandate and by the contributing countries and organizations. Donor countries needed to provide more technical support and guidance to UNRWA. He looked forward to more information on the Agency's programmes.

42. In submitting the draft resolution he wished to affirm once again the need to assist Palestine refugees, and to reiterate his country's support for the voluntary principle of funding UNRWA's work. He also wished to express his thanks to all Governments and organizations which had responded so generously with contributions, and he applauded the decision by the European Economic Community to convert half of its contribution in kind to cash in order to provide funds needed for the Agency's education programmes. He also commended the Commissioner-General's initiatives in concentrating the Agency's resources on essential services.

43. Mr. KINDE (Ethiopia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he had expected the representative of Somalia to keep to the item under consideration when making his statement, but instead, that speaker had resorted to all kinds of allegations and distortions. He had claimed that Somalia had the largest number of refugees in the world and that those refugees had originated in Ethiopia and were the victims of forced expulsion. Ethiopia had never accepted the figures submitted by Somalia, which paraded its own needy citizens in refugee camps for fund-raising purposes.

44. A United Nations inter-agency mission which had visited those so-called refugee camps in December 1979 had reported on the drought, the arid land, the poor harvest and the decline in exports. It had indicated that the food deficit was becoming greater every year and that a massive human tragedy could develop. Another United Nations mission which had visited that country a year later had said also that the majority of the population in Somalia was nomadic and that when serious drought occurred such persons were settled in government camps. As soon as the worst of the drought had passed those families would return to their nomadic life. That pertinent observation was also confirmed in an article in the Herald Tribune in September 1980, which mentioned camps that had been set up in Somalia during the drought and were still in existence five years later. None of the people living in those camps was a refugee and none of them worked.

45. In a country where 80 per cent of the population was nomadic, the victims of drought had no alternative but to go to relief camps. In a country where, according to an item published in the Washington Post in August 1981, the Refugee Commission kept no records, no file cabinets, no paper and no pencils, the authorities had claimed to be sheltering 2.3 million refugees but had then changed the figure to 1.3 million and had asked for \$360 million in assistance, which was almost equal Somalia's gross national product.

46. Nevertheless, thanks to the efforts of the international community the truth was being revealed. The Guardian had said in August 1981 that figures for Somalia's refugees must be taken with a grain of salt, as the 27 international agencies operating in Somalia had dismissed such figures as being out of all proportion and had asked United Nations demographers to carry out a census. The authorities in Somalia had so far refused to publish the results. According to a United Nations survey, the camps held 450,000 refugees. Any reduction in foreign aid would only aggravate the country's problems. The survey had not been circulated publicly because Somalia had objected and United Nations officials had become concerned lest donors might feel that they had been victims of a confidence trick perpetrated by the Government of Somalia.

47. In September 1980, The Philadelphia Enquirer had reported that Somalia had been defeated in a war, that it was short of food, that there was a drought, that the economy was in ruins and that there was opposition to the Government. The so-called refugee camps were no more than places where the nomads gathered in order to receive free food, and their number continued to escalate.

(Mr. Kinde, Ethiopia)

48. On the issue of human rights, the International Commission of Jurists had produced a report on the oppressive nature of the régime, which had carried out mass detentions and executions and had eliminated all civil and political rights, thus forcing over 100,000 Somalis to flee the country. The security services detained people for unlimited periods; there was no appeal against such actions and the security services acted with impunity. Tens of thousands of Somalis had been detained, deported and persecuted.

49. Ethiopia was in a revolutionary situation in which it had to defend itself against foreign aggression, including Somali aggression which, only four years earlier, had launched an unprovoked attack against Ethiopia with 23,000 regular soldiers, 12,500 militia, 250 tanks, 70 combat aircraft and 350 armoured troop carriers. In the course of that aggression, Somalia had caused damage in Ethiopia amounting to millions of dollars and had destroyed schools, hospitals, churches, mosques, bridges, factories, farms and houses, with the result that 240,000 people had been displaced. The problem of displaced persons had not yet been overcome.

50. Lastly, his delegation categorically rejected the allegations of the representative of Somalia on the question of discrimination and reminded the Committee that the clan in power in that country persecuted other national minorities in Somalia, 6,000 of whose members had sought refuge in Ethiopia. In regard to the situation in eastern Ethiopia where there were 575,000 Ethiopians who spoke Somali and who were allegedly victims of discrimination, the members of the Committee would do well to read an article by Mr. Conor Cruise O'Brien, a former United Nations staff member, which had been published in the 23 March 1980 issue of the British periodical The Observer following a visit made by the author to the area. The article had completely refuted the ridiculous allegations to which he had referred and had stated that at no time had the author seen any sign of current or recent repressive activities against the civil population in general.

51. Mr. ABOUCHAER (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply with reference to the statement by the representative of the United States, said that his delegation regretted that the contribution of the Government of the United States to the expenses of UNRWA was the same as for the previous year, considering the extent to which the circumstances of the Palestinian refugees who were receiving assistance from the Commissioner-General had deteriorated because of the brutal Israeli aggression against Lebanon.

52. The maintenance of that level in the current critical situation of UNRWA represented an act of political pressure by the United States Government in an attempt to impose its own conditions on UNRWA and to control its activities. Furthermore, maintaining the contribution at that level was tantamount to punishing the Palestinian men, women and children who were victims of Israeli aggression and rewarding the Israeli aggressors. At the same time the United States authorities were continuing to provide economic and military assistance to Israel on an enormous scale, to a value of more than \$2 billion annually. In addition, every time that the Israelis made illegal use of such assistance the United States Government found a pretext to justify such actions, even to the extent of deceiving American public opinion itself.

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(Mr. Abouchaer, Syrian Arab Republic)

53. In conclusion, he said his delegation considered it unnecessary to weary the members of the Committee with examples of the bias of the United States authorities in favour of Israel and against the Arabs. It was to be hoped that those authorities would one day decide to free themselves from Israeli pressure and adopt a policy which would be consistent with the true interests of the people of the United States.

54. Mr. MUSA (Somalia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that in view of the lateness of the hour, his delegation would reserve its right to reply to the comments of the representative of Ethiopia at the Committee's next meeting.

55. Mr. HUSSAINI (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, thanked all those States which had announced pledges to UNRWA for assistance to the Palestinian people as well as to those States which had submitted and supported resolutions concerning the rights of the Palestinian people.

56. In his statement the representative of the United States had referred to humanitarian help to the Palestinian people as being a temporary humanitarian effort; it should be remembered, however, that that humanitarian effort had already been in existence for 34 years so that it was difficult to categorize it as temporary. Furthermore, both the Palestinian people and the international community would like to see the problem ended once and for all so that the Palestinians could live as an independent people who would not be obliged to rely on help of any kind.

57. Referring to the question of the looting and closing of schools for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon by the Israelis, he reminded the Committee that the Secretary-General, in his report to the Fifth Committee, had pointed out that 136 staff members of UNRWA had been detained by the Israeli forces and had not yet been freed.

58. Nevertheless, the Palestinians wished to thank all countries and Governments, including the Government of the United States, for the limited help which they had offered to the Palestinian refugees, in the hope that in the very near future, a truly lasting peace would be achieved which would permit the Palestinian people to live freely in their own independent State.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.