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Seventy-seventh year

9178th meeting

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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Agyeman	(Ghana)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Ms. Dautllari
	Brazil	Mr. De Almeida Filho
	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Gabon	Mr. Biang
	India	Mr. Raguttahalli
	Ireland	Mr. Gallagher
	Kenya	Mr. Kiboino
	Mexico	Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez
	Norway	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation	Mr. Kuzmin
	United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Alhefeiti
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

Agenda

Briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President: I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Ambassador Michel Xavier Biang, Permanent Representative of Gabon, for his service as President of the Council for the month of October 2022. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Biang and his team for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Grandi.

Mr. Grandi: I thank the Security Council for hosting me, and I thank you, Mr. President, for your country's commitment to refugee protection, inclusion and solutions. Ghana is indeed an example to be followed. I take this opportunity to wish you the very best during your presidency this month.

For one moment, please look at the multiplicity of global challenges, which members know very well — growing conflicts, the climate emergency, pandemics, energy and food crises — through the eyes of the more than 103 million refugees and displaced people, who are among the most impacted by all of them. I am sure that members will feel, with desperate urgency, the need for the international community to cooperate in order to reverse the current trajectory and find solutions. Most regrettably, however, through those very eyes, members will also observe its failure to do so.

Let me offer some thoughts from that perspective.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has driven the fastest and largest displacement witnessed in decades. Some 14 million people have been forced from their homes since 24 February. Ukrainians are about to face one of the world's harshest winters, in extremely difficult circumstances. Humanitarian organizations have dramatically scaled up their response, but much more must be done, starting with an end to this senseless war. Unfortunately, we see the opposite. And the destruction caused by strikes at civilian infrastructure, which happens as we speak, is quickly making the humanitarian response look like a drop in an ocean of needs.

Increasingly, the focus of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is on helping displaced people in Ukraine, working under the Government's able leadership. Of the neighbouring countries, Moldova continues to need special attention, given its vulnerability. Meanwhile in the European Union, we have seen an open, well-managed and, above all, shared refugee response that has proven wrong many of the statements frequently repeated by some politicians — that Europe is full, that relocation is impossible and that there is no public support for refugees. And given the likely protracted nature of the military situation, we are maintaining a high level of preparedness for further population movements, both inside and outside the country, while taking into account different possible scenarios and the scope and limitations of humanitarian assistance.

But I do not need to remind the Council that it is not only Ukraine where conflict has driven people from their homes. In the past 12 months alone, UNHCR has responded to 37 emergencies around the world. Yet the other crises are failing to capture the same international attention, outrage, resources or action.

UNHCR is trying to be present wherever there is forced displacement. We are with the people of Ethiopia — more than 850,000 of whom were displaced in the first half of this year. The recent surge in the conflict is having an even more devastating impact on civilians. Please be united in urging a positive outcome to the talks between the parties taking place in South Africa, as their failure would no doubt bring more death, destruction and displacement and further restrict our already limited ability to reach those in need, in Tigray and other regions.

We are in Myanmar, where an estimated 500,000 people were displaced in the first six months of this year, with humanitarian access remaining a huge challenge, and where, I must recall, conditions for the return of almost 1 million Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, where options for them are limited, remain a very distant possibility.

We are in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where brutal attacks, including revolting accounts of sexual violence against women, has added more than 200,000 people to the 5.5 million already displaced in the country. On Sunday, the Secretary-General expressed deep concern about the surge in hostilities between the Congolese army and the Mouvement du 23 Mars. I worked as a field officer in the Democratic Republic of the Congo 25 years ago. It is hard to believe that the horrors I witnessed back then are repeating themselves, with displacement once again being both a consequence of conflict and a complicating factor in the web of local and international tensions. Surely we can do better in trying to bring peace to that beleaguered region.

Those crises, and many more, including the countless protracted situations like those of Afghan and Syrian refugees, and some of the multiple, complex population flows in the Americas, are not only fading from media attention, but they are being failed by global inaction. And displacement is becoming increasingly complex. New factors are forcing people to flee, intersecting with traditional drivers of displacement, especially the climate emergency.

I am aware that the link between climate and security has been much-debated. From my perspective I simply wish to highlight a few practical points showing the intersection between climate change and displacement, which in many situations includes a clear connection with conflict as well.

We know that climate change is ravaging resources that have sustained communities for generations. That creates tensions, often of intercommunal nature, especially in already fragile contexts where Governments do not have the assets, or even control of territory, to support adaptation and resilience strategies and programmes. I fear that, without more attention and much greater financing for prevention, adaptation and development and governance support, tensions, frustrations and competition will grow and

spark wider conflict, with deadly consequences, including displacement.

And what is a starker example of what we call loss and damage than being displaced and dispossessed from one's home?

Last week in Somalia I met emaciated men, women and children who had walked for days to get help. Mothers whose children had died en route. People who had outlived conflict just to have their last remaining coping mechanisms — their crops and their cattle — die before their eyes. There and elsewhere, conflict is also an obstacle to relief, as humanitarians are often prevented from helping people in their places of origin by insecurity and fighting. Those affected are therefore forced to move, sometimes when they are too weak to make the journey. And sometimes across borders as well.

I met Somali refugees pushed into already drought-affected areas of Kenya, which, despite its own challenges, has provided extraordinary hospitality to refugees for generations. As I discussed with President Ruto last week, Kenya is making a landmark shift from encampment of refugees to inclusion — a transition that I hope all will robustly support.

The confluence of climate change and conflict has created very protracted displacement. Therefore, inclusion and, where possible, integration, both in refugee contexts and situations of internal displacement, are important peacebuilding measures that require greater international recognition and support.

There are many hotspots affected by this spiral. I am extremely worried about the situation throughout the Sahel, for example, where the convergence of climate change, poverty and weak governance with the action of armed groups, and the often-brutal reaction of Governments, have already displaced 3 million people, including — increasingly — to coastal states like yours, Mr President, as well as to North Africa and Europe.

It is therefore clear that responses to climate change must take into account both its link to conflict and the displacement it causes, dimensions that I hope will be in clearer focus than in the past at the upcoming twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

On our side, we have stepped up our legal support to States, increased our operational response for those

displaced by climate and conflict — such as in the Horn of Africa, the Sahel and Mozambique — increased efforts to reduce the environmental damage caused by massive displacement — such as in the Niger and Bangladesh — and used artificial intelligence and predictive analytics to try and at least prepare for displacement of this nature.

But this is clearly not enough. I have focused on the climate emergency and its relationship with conflict and displacement to convey the enormous complexity of refugee crises today. I am sometimes worried that such complexity is lost in the frequently simplistic debate over population flows. Let me therefore conclude my remarks by drawing the Council's attention to four areas.

First, we need more resources. Humanitarian aid is under enormous pressure. Despite a record level of income, including \$1 billion from private donors, UNHCR faces a major funding gap this year in some of its crucial operations. Food aid for refugees, as a case in point, has been cut in many operations for lack of funding — despite the help of the United States and other States present here — at a time where food insecurity is growing, including as a result of the war in Ukraine. Hence the crucial importance of the continuation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. But this is also about safeguarding development cooperation as an essential tool to make communities resilient and immune to the shocks of cyclical crises, breaking the terrible spiral of disaster, conflict and displacement.

Secondly, seriously strengthening peacebuilding is key — for example, by reinforcing, much better than is usually done, the capacity of the police, the judiciary, local Government and overall rule of law in fragile countries. We at UNHCR have a good vantage point on this because peacebuilding is crucial to resolving displacement — by allowing refugees to return home, for example — and of course, from the Council's perspective — by preventing the recurrence of conflict. But peacebuilding will fail unless development actors take more risk and boldly invest even when conditions remain fragile — Burundi being a case in point.

Thirdly, humanitarian action must be better safeguarded, from different viewpoints. One is straightforward security. Threats to humanitarians are increasing, with deadly consequences, as we have seen in the past few days in Ethiopia. Parties to conflicts must protect our work and enable access to people in

need. Furthermore, everyone must uphold international humanitarian law and contribute to preserving the civilian character of refugee settings, which is an increasing challenge in many parts of the world. Armed elements must be separated from refugees and those displaced, and those needing protection must not be conflated with combatants.

Another perspective on safeguarding humanitarian action is that we should remember that, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross, up to 80 million people live in areas under the control of non-State actors. They are often vulnerable or displaced. Many are caught up in highly politicized conflicts. Others live in countries under sanctions. But no matter how polarized the context, humanitarians must be able to operate everywhere that lives must be saved. At times, that may involve uncomfortable interactions with those who control the territory. I raise that because we are often forced to negotiate humanitarian carveouts, as they are called, on a case-by-case basis. I therefore welcome the current efforts in the Security Council to ensure greater predictability in such matters.

Fourthly and lastly, it is needless to say, but allow me to reiterate that we need the international community, starting with the members of the Security Council, to overcome its divisions and disagreements, at least when it discusses humanitarian issues, and hopefully when it addresses, or strives to address, the root causes that are displacing people around the world. That is because what I saw in Somalia last week was a condemnation of us all and of a world of inequality, where extraordinary levels of suffering are receiving scandalously low levels of attention and resources. It was a condemnation of a world where those that have contributed the least to global challenges are suffering the most from their consequences, and of a world where the dramatic rifts that we witness every day here in the Security Council's own debates are leading us all to the brink.

The suffering, loss and despair of 103 million uprooted people and many more, which my colleagues and I witness every day, are not the fantasy of an idealistic humanitarian worker. They are very real. Allow them to be a humble, but compelling call to action.

The President: I thank Mr. Grandi for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Kiboino (Kenya): I congratulate you, Mr. President, on Ghana's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. You have our support. I also thank Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for his briefing this morning.

The continued increase in the number of refugees globally as a result of protracted armed conflict, economic crises and the effects of climate change is of great concern. We note that 83 per cent of refugees globally are hosted by developing countries, with the least developed countries providing asylum to 7 million people, representing 27 per cent of the global total of refugees.

Protracted conflicts, the climate crisis, global inequality and a trade and investment order that is not development-friendly are leading to increasing migration. Developing countries, which are struggling to manage multiple crises, are shouldering the largest responsibility in the hosting of migrants and refugees.

From our experience in Kenya, the hosting of large numbers of refugees for more than three decades in socioeconomically and ecologically fragile settings represents formidable challenges. Those include acute environmental stress and conflicts between refugees and host communities over dwindling resources. In addition, opportunistic terrorist groups have used refugee camps as staging grounds for recruitment and radicalization, as well as their operations.

In High Commissioner Grandi's recent five-day visit to the region, which he just mentioned, he witnessed first-hand the situation of refugees in Kenya and that of internally displaced persons in Somalia. In Kenya, he visited the Kakuma and Dadaab camps, where 20,000 refugees arrived this year alone. He saw how the worst drought in 40 years in the Horn of Africa has affected refugees and host communities in Kenya. In Somalia, he witnessed how the ravaging drought was displacing hundreds of thousands and was compounding an already devastating humanitarian situation.

Kenya has upheld, and will continue to uphold, its obligations to host and protect refugees, in accordance with the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. In view of the refugee crisis in our region and globally, alongside other Member States, we will continue to advocate for continued burden- and responsibility-sharing, in line with the Global Compact

on Refugees. We wish to underscore four points in that regard.

First, the international community has consistently not responded adequately to the appeals made by developing countries and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the funding of refugee relief efforts. As refugees and internally displaced persons, who are the least responsible for global warming, suffer its worst effects in the Horn of Africa and elsewhere, the world must not turn aside. We appeal for sufficient funding to enable UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies on the ground to provide life-saving support to those in need.

Secondly, funding aside, the wealthiest countries, with their high-employment economies, can do a great deal more with regard to the resettling of refugees. While financing is one pillar of responsibility, hosting is the other. Apart from providing financial support to UNHCR, wealthy countries should therefore provide opportunities for the resettling of refugees.

Thirdly, Kenya previously expressed grave concern over the worrisome trend in recent years by which people of African descent travelling to Europe via the Mediterranean suffer extreme violations of their human rights, with thousands losing their lives. In addition, early this year, we witnessed a surge of refugees from Ukraine owing to the war. We observed, with great concern, credible reports of the discriminatory and racist treatment of refugees of African descent fleeing Ukraine for safety in Europe. We thank the agencies and people of goodwill who came to their rescue. We strongly recommend that all States, recognizing their obligations under international humanitarian law and refugee conventions, systematically seek to purge racial discrimination and ethnocentrism from their refugee and migration control systems.

Fourthly, the most effective and sustainable way of dealing with the refugee problem is to tackle its root causes. Those include climate change and forced displacement, leading to unmanaged migration and trafficking. Without determined investment in climate change mitigation and adaptation, the trends will only worsen. The twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will provide an opportunity to get on the right path by developed countries meeting their past commitments, and not seeking to block the

development path of countries in the global South in the mistaken belief that that is a solution to climate change.

In conclusion, I reiterate the imperative for the international community to support refugees, host countries, countries of origin and all other relevant stakeholders in the protection, assistance and eventual return of refugees to their home countries. Kenya will continue to work closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in that regard.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): Let me start by thanking Gabon for its excellent presidency last month. While I thought you had set a record, Mr. President, I understand you did not. But it felt like a record, and we really appreciate the spirit of inclusion that Gabon brought to the Security Council. We know we kept you busy, but you met the challenge.

Let me also welcome Ghana's presidency this month — it starts today with an important topic.

I thank United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Grandi for his briefing. I appreciate his focusing on the increasing refugee crises and the needs that he presented to us today.

In that regard, the United States and Ireland are hopeful that members of the Council will support a proposal that we have submitted to create a standardized humanitarian carveout for actors who are under sanction regimes so that entities like the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will benefit. For the United States, its support for the humanitarian work of UNHCR and its partners is unshakeable. The United States continues to proudly be the world's leading donor to UNHCR, and we call on our fellow Member States to step up and further fund it in this time of desperate need. We especially call on those countries that have a record of creating refugee crises to do more. If you caused it, you should pay for it.

Right now, UNHCR truly needs our help. Members heard the appeal from the High Commissioner. The number of refugees and forcibly displaced people grew dramatically this year, from 90 million to more than 103 million — I repeat, 103 million.

The main reason of course is Russia's war in Ukraine. Russia has driven more than 14 million people from their homes, as we heard from the High Commissioner this morning. It has exacerbated the global food security crisis. When we combine that with

ongoing conflicts and unprecedented climatic events, it is no wonder farmers and families are fleeing their lands and homes. Russia is weaponizing winter. Its attacks against Ukraine's energy infrastructure will be life-threatening for the Ukrainian people, especially during the cold winter months.

The United States is working to ensure that its humanitarian partners are adequately resourced to help the Government with winterization efforts. We commend our European allies and partners for their generosity in hosting approximately 7 million displaced Ukrainian citizens and others fleeing Russian aggression. But I also want to commend Kenya. We have seen the long-term commitment that Kenya has made to hosting refugees. I think the number is close to — if not more than — 500,000 refugees right now in Kenya. I started working on refugee issues in Kenya as a refugee coordinator in 1994, and many of those refugees are still in Kenya today. I therefore once again thank Kenya for being a great host to refugees.

Concerning Ukraine, we are supporting Ukrainians at home and abroad. In April, we launched *Uniting for Ukraine*, a process for Ukrainians and their immediate relatives to seek humanitarian parole in the United States. Through that programme and other legal pathways, the United States has provided refuge for more than 190,000 Ukrainians.

A few months ago, I had the privilege of speaking to some of them in Chicago. I met a woman and her teenage son who had fled Kharkiv. They spoke in harrowing detail of hiding in the basement of their apartment during shelling, the struggle to find food and fears for their relatives and their neighbours' survival. But they also told me that, since their arrival in the United States, they had found hope. They have been welcomed warmly in their new community, and they are grateful to all the friends, contacts and organizations that have helped them settle and begin to heal.

Around the world, refugees deserve that same love, attention, care and support. In Somalia, an unprecedented drought has displaced nearly 1 million people this year. Famine is likely unless the international community, including the United Nations system, steps up. The United States acted early to address that crisis, providing more than \$850 million this year in assistance to Somalia as part of its efforts to address the Horn of Africa drought. We call on other donors to increase their contributions as well.

The United Nations humanitarian agencies family should act now and scale up its response. We do not want to have any regrets about the situation. The drought-affected and conflict-affected communities in Ethiopia and Kenya also face catastrophic food insecurity and impossible choices to cope with scarcity. Parents starve so that their children may eat. As of August, there are almost 5 million acutely malnourished children, more than 1.4 million of them severely malnourished, in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

The recent resumption of violence in northern Ethiopia has exacerbated one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. Humanitarians have had to pull back and suspend operations and have reported a severe shortage of cash, fuel and essential relief commodities for the more than 9 million Ethiopians in need. The supply of ready-to-use therapeutic food is completely depleted, leaving the most vulnerable children suffering from the most severe form of malnutrition without that essential lifeline. The United States has provided more than \$688 million in support for the northern Ethiopia humanitarian response over the past fiscal year. But needs are extreme, and they are still growing.

For the desperate plight of the Syrian people, we are grateful to Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt for continuing to provide safe haven to nearly 6 million refugees from Syria. We are alarmed by credible reports that refugees returning to Syria face torture, arbitrary detention and forced disappearance. The truth is that conditions inside Syria are not safe for large-scale refugee returns.

We urge the international community to join us in maintaining support for Syrians and the communities that host them. We also urge the Council to put politics aside, as we heard from the High Commissioner, and do the right thing by extending the United Nations cross-border aid mandate in January, when it will expire. Humanitarian needs in Syria are greater today than ever. The United Nations and its partners cannot meet those needs without continued cross-border access.

Venezuelan refugees and migrants also need our continued support. Nearly 6 million Venezuelans have fled to more than a dozen countries in the region. Colombia, which currently hosts more than 2.4 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants, has approved more than 1.6 million applications for temporary protected status. We commend Colombia and others in the region for doing their part. For our part, we have provided

nearly \$2.7 billion in assistance for the Venezuelan regional crisis in the past five years, and we will continue to take the issue seriously.

While each of those situations around the world is unique, they share common themes. Hunger, conflict and climate are displacing people who are already vulnerable. To that end, we welcome UNHCR's ambitious new initiative to improve accountability for crisis-affected individuals and communities. It rightly emphasizes the need to bring successful, innovative accountability approaches to scale, especially new digital tools for enhancing community feedback. The United States looks forward to the success of the initiative and learning more about how States can support it.

In the meantime, we are committed to the vision of the Global Compact for Migration. We are also committed to helping refugees everywhere, because refugees are the definition of bravery. They are extraordinary and they deserve our unending support.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to congratulate Gabon and the Gabonese delegation on their very successful presidency of the Council for the month of October, and to wish Ghana good luck in November. I thank Mr. Grandi for his briefing today and above all for his remarkable work at the helm of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). He reminded us that this year we have reached the sad record of 100 million people displaced around the world. The causes of that displacement are many and varied — they include an increasing number of conflicts, growing global food insecurity and malnutrition, and climate change. Displaced women and girls also suffer from specific challenges that we need to address, including access to sexual and reproductive health care and exposure to higher risks of sexual violence. In that context of crisis, UNHCR's mandate remains more essential than ever. I therefore commend the remarkable work, courage and dedication of all UNHCR staff.

Since the beginning of Russia's illegal aggression against Ukraine, Europe has witnessed the largest displacement of people in the world since the Second World War, with 7.5 million refugees and 6.5 million internally displaced persons. France is sparing no effort in response to that tragedy. We have pledged €200 million in humanitarian aid; we are hosting more than 100,000 Ukrainians; and we are providing

schooling for more than 20,000 children who have fled the war. France will continue to support UNHCR's work in support of the millions of displaced Ukrainians, especially when it comes to protecting them from the combined effects of war and the cold winter.

Support for Ukraine in no way diminishes our attention to other humanitarian crises. France has mobilized fully to respond to other humanitarian emergencies, particularly in the Sahel and the Middle East. As of 2021, we have doubled our voluntary contributions to UNHCR and are now its eighth largest donor. Similarly, France is assuming its share of responsibility by resettling refugees on its territory and welcoming people in need of protection. Providing assistance to people forced into exile is a duty. We must do everything we can to help countries that are on the front lines of large-scale displacement. It is only through an approach based on solidarity that we will succeed in improving the care of refugees and displaced persons. In that context, threats to food security and nutrition also impose a duty of solidarity. France is mobilized through the Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission initiative, the Save Crops Operation and the European solidarity lanes. We will also co-sponsor the next Global Refugee Forum in late 2023, which should improve our cooperation in receiving refugees and strengthening asylum systems all over the world.

Lastly, we will not compromise on the fundamental principles related to the return of refugees. The regime in Syria is selectively sorting its returning refugees and thereby continuing its policy of demographic engineering by alternative means, something that it has been carefully working on since the conflict began. That is why I must reiterate that the conditions for dignified, safe and voluntary return have not been met, and that the regime alone can remove the obstacles to that return. It is essential that UNHCR be able to ensure the effective monitoring of Syrian refugee returnees, as well as the conditions for their return.

In conclusion, it is up to the Council to create the conditions for the lasting settlement of crises in order to address the root causes of population displacement.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): Let me start by congratulating Gabon on its excellent presidency for the past month. We also wish your delegation, Sir, all the best for the month of November and want to assure you of the Brazilian delegation's full cooperation. Brazil would also like to thank the High Commissioner

for Refugees for his presentation. Brazil is proud of its partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which extends to the national, regional and global levels. Humanitarian response and the promotion of human rights are among the seven priorities established by Brazil for its term on the Security Council.

In a year marked by conflict and increased food insecurity, it is worrisome to note that the number of people forcibly displaced rose to more than 100 million, not to mention those considered to be stateless or of undetermined nationality. Owing to underreporting, those numbers are probably significantly higher. That alone should serve as a wake-up call for stronger action to promote peace and address all the causes of forced displacement. The lingering social and economic effects of the coronavirus disease make it even more urgent to adopt far-reaching responses at the local, national, regional and global levels, as the pandemic continues to have a devastating impact on refugees and other vulnerable groups.

Cooperation and solidarity are key to sustained and comprehensive humanitarian responses, and the principle of shared responsibility lies at their centre. We also understand that where people's reasons for seeking refuge are concerned, the international community must look at the cross-cutting drivers that are often the result of manifold structural factors rather than a single trend alone. While we agree that the effects of climate change exacerbate all humanitarian emergencies, we understand that it should be integrated into humanitarian discussions in such a way that it does not overshadow the importance of prioritizing political solutions to contemporary conflicts, which continue to be the main drivers of displacement. We also underscore the urgency of providing climate financing, technology transfer and capacity-building for countries in need within the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Brazil has been granting protection through its humanitarian visa policy to people affected by the conflicts in Afghanistan and Ukraine — a policy that also benefits Haitians and people affected by the conflict in Syria. Brazil is especially grateful for the High Commissioner's support to Operação Acolhida, or Operation Welcome, a multi-sectoral Government task force in charge of the integration, reception and voluntary internal relocation of Venezuelans at our

northern border. Since 2018, approximately 800,000 Venezuelan migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have received some sort of assistance through the operation. Upon arrival, indigenous people, elderly people, women, children and people with disabilities are given special attention. The approximately 400,000 Venezuelans who have decided to stay in Brazil have full access to all public services, the labour market and social benefits on an equal basis with our nationals. I hope that Council members have had a chance to visit our exhibition on Operation Welcome held at United Nations Headquarters in recent weeks.

All parties to armed conflict should facilitate safe and unimpeded passage for relief actions that are humanitarian and impartial and conducted with no adverse distinction, in line with international humanitarian law. It is worrisome that some parties to conflicts have imposed bureaucratic measures to hinder humanitarian operations.

The Council has a significant responsibility for ensuring the protection of civilians in armed conflict, as evidenced by its adoption of two important resolutions adopted last year: resolution 2573 (2021), on objects indispensable to the survival of civilian populations in armed conflict, and resolution 2601 (2021), on the protection of schools and education in armed conflict.

Yet strengthening that architecture has not been enough to reduce the heavy civilian toll of armed conflict. The current challenges are well known and include hostilities against medical and humanitarian personnel, the increased vulnerabilities faced by women, children, refugees, internally displaced persons and persons with disabilities, and the vicious cycle of armed conflict and hunger.

Among the ongoing challenges the Council faces, allow me to address one in particular: the reports concerning the unintended consequences of United Nations sanctions on humanitarian assistance. Brazil encourages the Council to continue its work to adjust the sanctions framework in order to effectively minimize the suffering of the civilian population. Sanctions can be legitimate and effective when they are multilaterally created, strategically targeted and designed to have minimal impact on the civilian population.

Like many coercive measures, however, they will have unintended consequences, but humanitarian space must always be preserved. That is why we welcome the initiative led by the United States and Ireland and

strongly encourage the Council to agree on an effective and comprehensive humanitarian carveout across all United Nations sanctions regimes.

As we advance the preparations for convening the next Global Refugee Forum, the High Commissioner should bear in mind that we must join our efforts to accelerate deliveries that reflect the principle of shared responsibilities as the central axis of an increasingly coordinated and unified response. Brazil remains fully committed to contributing to that effort.

In conclusion, I would like to ask the High Commissioner two questions. My first question, in the context of the reportedly growing politicization of the topic of humanitarian assistance is: What have been the main challenges in that regard for those in the field and how could the Council better assist their work? Secondly, I would like to echo the remarks of my colleague from Kenya on the transfer of funds for climate change and also follow up the High Commissioner's briefing: How can his Office help to speed up the transfer of resources from developed to developing countries in order to combat climate change and build resilience?

Mr. Gallagher (Ireland): Let me join others in commending Gabon on its presidency of the Security Council last month — and now it finds itself in the most comfortable chair in the Chamber. I also would like to wish you, Mr. President, the best of luck for the month ahead.

I would like to thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for once again delivering a sobering briefing. But the dedication of his team and the staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to alleviating the suffering of refugee populations gives us hope. It demonstrates our collective will to address displacement, even if we are failing to demonstrate an equal will to address the root causes.

As the High Commissioner said, hunger, climate events and the economic crisis are all driving displacement, but as he told the Executive Committee in Geneva last month, conflict remains the biggest driver of forced displacement. I therefore think that we around this table need to be frank and clear. The High Commissioner is doing his job — we are not doing ours. We in the Security Council are failing to live up to our mandate to prevent and resolve conflict and the forced displacement and related suffering of millions is the consequence.

The numbers speak for themselves. We heard today that more than 100 million people are displaced: in Myanmar, 1.3 million people are internally displaced and 1 million Rohingya refugees are outside the country; in Venezuela, more than 7 million people have been forced to escape hunger, violence and deprivation; in Ethiopia, 4.2 million people have been displaced, many as a result of the ongoing conflict in the northern part of the country; in Afghanistan, 7 million people have fled, many of them from the Taliban violence and repression; and in Syria, 6.6 million refugees have been forced to flee the conflict, with nearly 7 million more people internally displaced and in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. Each of those situations on our agenda — or that should be on our agenda — represent a failure to prevent or address conflict.

Worse still, nine months ago, one United Nations State Member — a member of the Council — chose to wage war on another. Russia's war of aggression on Ukraine spurred the greatest displacement of people on the European continent since the Second World War. It also accelerated a global food insecurity crisis, further driving displacement and suffering across Africa, the Middle East and beyond. Some 6.2 million people are now internally displaced in Ukraine and 7.7 million Ukrainians are refugees.

Ireland has welcomed and given shelter to tens of thousands of Ukrainians. In doing the same, many of us here have experienced large-scale refugee inflows for the first time. It has been a sobering and humbling experience, one that I hope will translate into greater solidarity with long-term and large-scale refugee hosting countries such as Kenya, as well as Bangladesh, Lebanon, Türkiye, Colombia, Uganda, Germany and Pakistan.

As we heard, a changing climate is shifting the calculation for refugees and displaced persons. Future returns, always difficult, may now be next to impossible. The link between climate and displacement is irrefutable. Climate crises threaten lives and livelihoods and contribute to instability and conflict.

Ireland asserts that, in order to fully understand conflict drivers and consequences such as displacement, the Security Council has a responsibility to understand the impacts of climate change on security. We already see the evidence across our agenda — startlingly so in the Horn of Africa, where millions bear the disproportionate consequences of conflict, hunger and

climate change. Greater humanitarian aid is needed for the Horn of Africa, but it will not be enough. We must redouble the Council's attention to instability, conflict and the pursuit of peace.

We cannot address the needs of millions of displaced persons without humanitarian access. Those blocking aid delivery must stop and facilitate immediate unhindered access. There can be no impunity for those who target humanitarian actors or seek to use starvation as a weapon of war. The Council must ensure accountability for violations of international humanitarian law.

Gang violence has internally displaced 115,000 people in Haiti, adding to those already displaced by the earthquake. Many Haitians are undertaking precarious journeys to seek refugee protection. They should not be turned away or sent back. Last month, the Council used one of its tools to establish a new sanctions regime for Haiti through the adoption of resolution 2653 (2022), which includes an important carveout to ensure that the vital work of UNHCR and other humanitarians is unhindered by sanctions. That is an important principle for any sanctions regime.

And as the representative of the United States mentioned, that is why Ireland has worked with the United States to put forward a proposal to mainstream a humanitarian carveout across all sanctions regimes — and I took note of the High Commissioner's comments in that regard. The Council has a responsibility to use the tools available when required, but they must be effective and without unintended consequences for humanitarian efforts.

The High Commissioner and his colleagues are doing their job. What more can we do? First, as the High Commissioner asked at the beginning of today's meeting, we must do better. We must redouble our efforts to support inclusive political solutions that can end violence, prevent displacement, facilitate humanitarian access and allow safe return, and we must do so without fear or favour. Secondly, we must hear directly from refugees and displaced people — those bearing the brunt of our inaction and inadequacy, and those whose eyes the High Commissioner asked us to look through when we consider the issue. We must also fulfil our mandate and end the persistent conflicts driving displacement in the countries and regions on our agenda.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate Ireland's steadfast support for the High Commissioner and UNHCR. Ireland's funding to UNHCR continues to grow, and our core funding is at its highest level ever. We will continue to advocate for those who seek shelter as refugees and internally displaced persons, and we will work with the High Commissioner to provide humanitarian support. We know that his work would be so much easier if we in the Council did ours better.

Mr. Biang (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): It is a pleasure to see you leading our work, Mr. President. I want to congratulate Ghana on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council in November, wish you every success and pledge our brotherly support. I thank High Commissioner Filippo Grandi for his informative briefing.

The plight of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in the world is very worrying. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has declared 42 new emergencies in 30 countries since 2021 and has reported that nearly 100 million people are currently displaced around the world. The war in Ukraine has added millions to the numbers of displaced — approximately 8 million in Ukraine and more than 5.2 million refugees throughout Europe. Every year, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports an increase in forced displacement.

As Mr. Grandi said just now, climate change is increasingly the cause of displacement in a number of regions of the world, particularly the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. According to the Red Cross, by 2050, 200 million people may be in need of international humanitarian assistance every year due to the effects of climate change, including its socioeconomic impact.

The international community does not do enough to share the cost of international protection for those seeking asylum. The unprecedented number of people forcibly displaced is unsustainable. Funding for humanitarian action around the world is not enough to meet the various challenges facing the international community, such as food insecurity, epidemics, access to drinking water, the safety of women, especially in refugee camps, and access to education for the young. We must initiate genuine cooperation in order to ensure that these responsibilities are equally shared without further delay. It is a duty to our collective conscience and an absolute priority.

The war in Ukraine has given new relevance and validity to the key principles of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, specifically the right to seek asylum under international law and the prohibition on returning refugees to persecution and danger. In that regard, this is where we should commend Ukraine's neighbouring countries for their remarkable effort to show solidarity by unhesitatingly receiving a majority of asylum-seekers fleeing the war. Regrettably, many countries around the world maintain policies designed to deter asylum applications. Such restrictive and short-sighted policies force women, men and children to undertake dangerous journeys by land or sea, risking their lives and fuelling a lucrative trade for smugglers involved in trafficking in human beings. The indecency of such policies aimed at deterring the destitute is what to a great extent has helped to make the Mediterranean a vast cemetery of shame for the restless souls of young Africans, killed by gross indifference.

The world is in the grip of a crisis of solidarity that calls for an international response to the distress of those who find themselves exiled or in refugee camps. We must step up our urgent response on the political, security, financial, logistical and humanitarian fronts. That response should not be based on accidents of geography. We must genuinely share the responsibility for protecting people who have fled their homes in search of safety. We must agree on a fair and predictable system that can protect those forced to leave everything behind because of violence and persecution.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate and emphasize that the right to asylum is the most emblematic human right. Receiving and protecting asylum-seekers therefore amounts to respecting human rights. Refusing to receive or even discriminating against asylum-seekers amounts to violating human rights. Let me say it again. Refusing to receive or even discriminating against asylum-seekers is a violation of human rights. We reiterate our support for High Commissioner Grandi for his tireless efforts on the ground.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We congratulate Ghana on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council this month and thank Gabon for its successful presidency in October. We welcome Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and thank him for his briefing.

Assistance to refugees is an essential component of comprehensive efforts aimed at maintaining international peace, security and stability. Russia continues to take measures to maintain high standards and further develop mechanisms for providing assistance to persons seeking protection, in accordance with its international legal obligations and the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees. We believe it is very important to improve our cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as the main international body for addressing issues in the area of forced migration. We see UNHCR's work as particularly important in major humanitarian crises and consider it a crucial part of comprehensive measures to resolve such crises.

The expanding geography of conflicts, poverty and economic inequality continues to force people out of their countries of origin. However, the reasons for these problems often lie in the irresponsible policies of Western States, which have acquired a taste for imposing their dictates and conducting geopolitical experiments on weaker countries. They have plundered the resources of African States, strangled their economic independence, destroyed the statehood of Libya by military force, occupied part of Syria and abandoned Afghanistan to its fate while seizing or indeed stealing its national assets. All those countries and regions are hotbeds of mass migration.

We would like to draw attention to the importance of the continuing efforts to facilitate the voluntary return of Syrian refugees. Russia's initiative to promote the voluntary repatriation of Syrian forced migrants remains relevant. We consider ensuring favourable conditions for the return of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their places of permanent residence an absolute priority and an important step towards achieving long-term stabilization in Syria. We call on UNHCR to continue to support the implementation of the initiative for the voluntary return of Syrian refugees to their homeland.

We note the efforts of UNHCR to address the problems of Ukrainian IDPs and refugees. A number of our colleagues today emphasized in particular the situation of refugees from Ukraine. As Council members know, the Ukrainian crisis entered its hot phase primarily owing to the unwillingness of the Kyiv authorities, who were encouraged by Western sponsors, to implement the Minsk agreements. For eight years, the incessant shelling of the peaceful cities of Donbas

by the Ukrainian armed forces led to a mass exodus of the residents of those territories to Russia. That process accelerated after the Kyiv regime abruptly intensified its shelling of Donbas on the eve of our special military operation.

More than 4.5 million people, including 688,000 children, have found refuge in Russia. All those people came to our country voluntarily, saving their lives and the lives of their loved ones from the Kyiv regime. The Russian side is making every effort to receive and accommodate those individuals and provide them with comprehensive assistance, including in areas related to employment, the placement of children in kindergartens and educational institutions and the provision of social payments and benefits. People arriving from those territories receive free health care and a free medical examination and medicine. Procedures have been simplified for them to obtain proper legal status on the territory of the Russian Federation.

They are also granted the right to work in the Russian Federation without obtaining work permits or patents and can apply for one-time lump-sum financial assistance and monthly payments. Therefore, our migration and social mechanisms have made it possible to fully resolve issues related to the reception and welfare of forcibly displaced persons from the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics and Ukraine and facilitate their further integration.

Employees of the UNHCR Office in Moscow regularly visit the temporary accommodation centres for those forcibly displaced in various Russian regions and note the effectiveness of our efforts to ensure decent living conditions for those persons in my country.

For its part, Russia will continue to provide the UNHCR with comprehensive support.

Ms. Dautllari (Albania): I would like to thank Gabon for its work in assuming the Security Council presidency for the month of October. I wish you, Mr. President, all the best for November.

I would like to thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, for his briefing today and for his leadership.

It is sad to hear about the increasing number of people fleeing their homes because of conflicts, violence, food insecurity, discrimination, inequality, economic and social crises, poverty and climate change, as detailed by the High Commissioner.

As we heard, the war in Ukraine alone has affected more than 14 million people. After more than eight months of the conflict, the displacement continues and lives and civilian infrastructure are being destroyed. The Russian war in Ukraine has taken emergency responses to new levels and is the largest and fastest-created displacement crisis in Europe since the Second World War.

Responding to and funding the new emergencies, such as in Ukraine, needs to be addressed in addition, to and not instead of, other situations. We should not forget the millions of Syrian refugees and displaced persons, about the same number as displaced Ukrainians. Afghans already constitute one of the largest refugee crises. We should also not forget the millions of people displaced worldwide, including in Myanmar, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and elsewhere. We should maintain the focus on all crises and search for solutions by supporting countries of origin and host countries and help people rebuilding their lives if they make the choice to return.

Unfortunately, the Security Council has been unable to prevent displacement crises, reduce further risks and maintain peace and security. That is why it is important to be united in giving the right signals and to overcome the divisions.

We commend the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in scaling up responses to the increasing protection needs of displaced persons and refugees and ensuring international protection through humanitarian response and strategic actions.

Albania commends the refugee-hosting countries worldwide that welcome millions of people and continue to demonstrate solidarity and provide them with assistance and services. We have done the same as well for Afghans escaping persecution by the Taliban.

In that context, it is important to hear the voices of refugees, United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners; to implement the principles of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the legal and policy tools available for effective international protection; to support and fund the work of United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners; and to strengthen humanitarian access to those in need, including displaced persons and returnees, as well as

early recovery, in line with Security Council resolutions. Albania supports the efforts of UNHCR in that regard.

In conclusion, we support the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees in order to ensure a whole-of-society approach, in solidarity with refugees and affected countries, and we support the initiative of the United States and Ireland on mainstreaming the humanitarian carveout across sanctions regimes.

Mrs. Alhefeiti (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month and to assure you of our full support in managing the Council's work. I also thank Gabon for its successful and productive presidency last month and thank Mr. Grandi for his briefing and the important work that he and his team have carried out globally.

Today our world faces a significant number of difficult challenges, including climate change, food insecurity and armed conflicts, which cause forced displacement and directly affect those who are displaced; in addition, those challenges are further compounded by the ongoing challenges of recovery from the coronavirus disease pandemic, economic instability and growing polarization.

It is not just the number of challenges that is cause for our increasing concern but also their intensity and the difficulty of overcoming them. This year, for the first time on record, the world reached a grave milestone, with 100 million people forced to seek security and safety away from their homes and obliged to deal with difficult living conditions. We stress the need for all refugees to have equal access to basic services to meet their needs, such as their needs for food, water and health services, as well as protection from all forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation.

We continue to follow with concern the many complex humanitarian situations, including in Afghanistan, Myanmar and Ukraine. The United Arab Emirates continues to provide relief assistance to affected people worldwide, including by providing support for Syrian and Rohingya refugees, as well as internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ethiopia.

We note that the Security Council is currently looking into adopting humanitarian exceptions regarding sanction regimes, and we strongly support

that as a member of the Council. We will seek to implement that on the ground so that refugees and all those in need of assistance can receive the necessary humanitarian assistance.

Addressing the root causes and contributing factors of forced displacement must remain our overarching approach in order to prevent it from occurring in the first place. In order to end conflicts peacefully, political solutions, dialogue and de-escalation must remain the building blocks of our efforts. That approach is also more efficient and cost-effective, as it ensures that the most vulnerable are able to remain safe in their homes.

At the same time, we believe in the potential of education to address the root causes of forced displacement. As noted by High Commissioner Grandi at the RewirED Summit held in the United Arab Emirates in 2021, it is important to find new solutions in order to ensure education to those forcibly displaced, develop their skills and promote their capabilities to build a better future for them and lessen the risk of leaving them behind.

The United Arab Emirates has consequently sought to invest in innovative education means, including the Digital School launched this year to train educators and provide distance learning for children, including children in a number of refugee camps in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America.

However, we all know that climate change increases the pressures resulting from forced displacement, perhaps to alarming rates. According to a World Bank forecast, there could be up to 216 million people displaced by climate change globally by 2050. That requires effective strategies capable of adapting to changes to lessen the consequences of that phenomenon on forced displacement. The extent to which the international community will seriously and effectively respond to those issues depends on the attention that the Security Council devotes to them.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates remains committed to the protection of refugees and IDPs, including through its provision of humanitarian aid and emergency relief to the most vulnerable, with a focus on women and children. We will continue to work closely with our international partners, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, I congratulate Ghana on assuming the presidency

of the Security Council for the month of November. Mr. President, I believe the Council will achieve every success under your leadership. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Gabon for successively presiding over the Council during the month of October.

I thank Mr. Grandi for his briefing. Under the leadership of the High Commissioner, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has overcome many challenges and done a great deal of work to alleviate the plight of refugees in many countries and regions. China commends this and will, as always, support the UNHCR and the work of the High Commissioner.

At present, the international situation continues to be turbulent. The coronavirus disease pandemic is not over yet, and global food, energy and financial markets fluctuate with great frequency. All of this exacerbates the severity and complexity of the refugee problem around the world.

The total number of refugees and displaced persons worldwide exceeded 100 million for the first time in 2022. This is a record high. The growing humanitarian needs of this group of people, the severe lack of humanitarian funding for them and the fact that humanitarian agencies such as the UNHCR have been forced to lower relief standards are all of grave concern. The international community should continue to carry forward the humanitarian spirit, step up efforts to mobilize resources, strengthen multilateral and bilateral cooperation and strive to ensure that each and every refugee is protected.

Developing countries have hosted 83 per cent of the world's refugees, and developed countries should earnestly fulfil their aid commitments and help ease the pressure sustained by developing countries. It is necessary to adhere to the non-politicization principle in handling refugee affairs, resolutely put an end to using refugee status as a cover for terrorists and criminals, and safeguard the credibility of the refugee protection system.

Armed conflicts are closely related to the issue of refugees. The Security Council should play an active role in alleviating the plight of refugees. It is necessary for the Council to properly fulfil the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, promote the political settlement of hotspot issues and provide a peaceful environment for addressing the refugee problem. It is necessary to

support peacekeeping missions in providing assistance to such humanitarian agencies as the UNHCR in line with their mandates and within their capabilities. It is necessary to strengthen cooperation with such institutions as the Peacebuilding Commission, actively promote post-conflict rebuilding in conflict-affected areas and create favourable conditions for refugees to return to their homes.

Regaining peace, returning home and rebuilding a homeland is the simple wish of every refugee. For many, however, this simple dream is far from being lived in reality. Refugees and displaced persons have continued to increase as a result of the crisis in Ukraine. The coming long winter will further aggravate their plight. China commends the countries neighbouring Ukraine in hosting millions of refugees and calls on the international community to increase humanitarian assistance to relevant refugee groups so as to ensure that they are properly resettled. Peace is the fundamental solution to the problem of Ukrainian refugees. The international community should focus on promoting peace talks so that all relevant parties will resume such talks and end the fighting at an early date and achieve an earlier political solution to the crisis.

The question of Palestine has dragged on for a long time. Millions of Palestinian refugees have been displaced and deprived of their future, with their homes occupied, their rights trampled on and their security threatened. The international community must continue to provide funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, increase assistance to Palestinian refugees, take concrete actions to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question, and put an end to the suffering of Palestinian refugees as soon as possible.

The Syrian crisis has resulted in nearly 7 million Syrians crossing the border to become refugees. This has had a huge impact on the countries neighbouring Syria, including Lebanon and Jordan. This is the bitter fruit of external military intervention and imposed democratic transformation. The international community should reflect deeply on this to avoid the recurrence of such tragedies. At present, Lebanon and other countries neighbouring Syria are struggling to host and resettle refugees. The international community should continue to actively promote the political settlement of the Syrian issue, improve the humanitarian situation throughout Syria and promote an early return of Syrian refugees.

The war in Afghanistan has displaced 11 million Afghans, with millions of Afghan refugees in the neighbouring countries of Pakistan and Iran alone. The international community should maintain constructive engagement with the Afghan interim administration, actively support the peaceful rebuilding and development of Afghanistan and create conditions for the return of refugees. At the same time, in order to increase assistance to Afghanistan, it is urgent to address the country's frozen overseas assets as soon as possible and use them to help the Afghans out of their plight.

With regard to those who entered Bangladesh from the Rakhine state of Myanmar to avoid chaos, we support Myanmar and Bangladesh in resolving the problem through friendly consultation. Since the beginning of the year, Myanmar and Bangladesh have communicated many times on repatriation. They are moving towards the goal of initial repatriation within the year. The international community should acknowledge and encourage this and support the UNHCR and other international relief agencies in continuing to provide humanitarian assistance. China will also continue to make an active effort to this end.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize that Africa is the continent with the most concentrated and striking refugee situations. China highly appreciates the kindness, tolerance, solidarity and resilience shown over a long period of time by refugee-hosting African countries. China calls on the UNHCR to continue to give priority to Africa, mobilize resources, provide support to African countries and lend a helping hand to African refugees at a time when they need the help the most.

Mr. Ragutthalli (India): I also extend our congratulations to Gabon for its successful presidency of the Security Council in the month of October, and I would like to convey our congratulations and best wishes to the delegation of Ghana for its presidency during the month of November.

At the outset, I thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, for his briefing.

Historically, India's approach to the refugee issue has always been driven by the ideals of compassion and empathy. Those ideals are in the spirit of our cultural ethos and our belief that the world is one family. India has always welcomed communities facing persecution

in foreign lands. Zoroastrians and Jews, when faced with persecution centuries ago, found a ready home in India. Now, both are an integral part of India's proud pluralist culture and heritage.

India also hosted more than 10 million refugees from Bangladesh, then East Pakistan, when genocidal terror was unleashed on them. India's humanitarian response to the refugee influx from Bangladesh was one of the most sophisticated and empathetic in contemporary history.

Today a large number of refugees continue to stay in India. Our programmes to assist them are managed entirely from our own resources. The Constitution of India guarantees all the basic rights to all persons, not just our citizens. India remains committed to facilitating the dignified, safe and sustainable return of those foreign nationals to their homelands, in line with the national laws of, and our mutual agreement with, the country concerned.

India has also assisted Palestinian refugees through partnering with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). India continues to support UNRWA's role in human development and the delivery of humanitarian services. We increased our annual pledge to the Agency from \$1.25 million to \$5 million in 2018 and have contributed \$20 million over the past four years, including \$5 million this year.

In his briefing today, the High Commissioner updated the Council on the refugee crisis across the world and the associated challenges. We note with concern the surge in the number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) under the mandate of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). That number now stands at more than 90 million people. The magnitude of the problem is indeed worrisome. India appreciates the efforts made by UNHCR in helping refugees in various countries.

In that regard, let me offer the following five observations:

First, the primary duty and responsibility of protecting and assisting IDPs falls to the States concerned. International action must remain within the bounds of the concept of sovereignty and, therefore, should only be at the request of the country concerned.

Secondly, we need to focus on preventing people from being forced to leave their homelands. Towards that end, preventing armed conflicts, countering terrorism and building and sustaining peace through facilitating sustainable development and good governance remain critical. We cannot have States following policies of exacerbating conflicts on the one hand, and then refusing to tackle the refugee influx on the other.

Thirdly, the refugee issue is a global challenge, and no country alone can resolve it. We must continue to foster a global perspective that promotes the collaboration and participation of all Member States and relevant stakeholders in line with the relevant international law. India supports the central role of the United Nations in dealing with the refugee issue.

Fourthly, we firmly believe that the principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality must be upheld in dealing with refugee matters. That is crucial if we are to maintain the credibility of the international refugee protection mechanism. Member States and UNHCR must remain committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and avoid the politicization of the humanitarian work. We also encourage UNHCR to continue to help build, strengthen and use national capacities for protection and humanitarian action. We also understand the importance of working with local responders in order to ensure the localization of solutions and ownership of the process.

Fifthly, the refugees have also been affected by the global economic slowdown. Humanitarian aid has therefore become more important than ever. Member States should provide indiscriminate and equitable services to refugees and take them into due account in national response strategies. Empathy is of core importance in that context.

In closing, India remains committed to providing the relevant humanitarian assistance to refugees. We also believe that this humanitarian endeavour must be consistent with welfare objectives and national security. We strongly believe that determined action, solidarity and multilateralism are needed more than ever in order to address the refugee issue.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, Mr. President, I wish you all the best during your presidency, and reiterate the support of my delegation. I also wish to recognize Gabon's excellent work during its presidency last month.

I thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, for his documented, timely and proactive briefing.

So far this year, we have witnessed an increase in forced displacement around the world. We have all heard it before — no region is exempt from this problem. We are very concerned that more than 103 million people have been forced to flee their homes, either within the borders of their countries, as internally displaced persons, or abroad, in search of international protection.

As High Commissioner Grandi explained today, while the contexts are diverse, violence, poverty, the lack of opportunities, political instability and climate change all contribute to exacerbating current trends.

The conflict in Ukraine has been one of the main drivers behind the global increase in the number of displaced people this year. More than a third of the country's population has been forced to flee their homes because of the war — 7.5 million Ukrainians have sought safety in other countries and almost 7 million are internally displaced.

In addition to recent problems, such as the war in Ukraine or the conflict in northern Ethiopia, we are also witnessing new waves of displacement in regions with protracted conflicts. The resurgence of the Movement du 23 mars in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo or the intensification of the activity of extremist groups in the Sahel have forced entire communities to move and have led to a deterioration of the humanitarian situation.

In addition to armed conflict, food insecurity and the negative effects of climate change are increasingly placing pressures on people by affecting their livelihoods and leading to competition for increasingly scarce resources. That has been the case, for example, in South Sudan owing to flooding and in Somalia owing to drought, phenomena that have contributed to aggravating intercommunal violence.

It is a priority to recognize that women and girls are disproportionately and differently affected by conflict and the various factors that generate displacement. That is clear in the case of Afghanistan, where the measures that restrict the rights of women and girls also have an impact on the decision to try to move to other regions or to leave the country.

Mexico is convinced of the need to develop diagnoses that take into account the diversity of factors

that force people to seek refuge or move within their countries. But only a comprehensive understanding of these phenomena will enable the international community to find solutions based on cooperation and solidarity that place the specific needs of refugees and internally displaced persons at the centre.

In that regard, we highlight the significant efforts of the High Commissioner, and we reiterate our support to him. We also reiterate our call to gradually, but consistently, include mental-health services and psychosocial support for refugees and displaced persons in regional and national responses. That is an area that requires greater attention

I conclude with a brief reference to our region. In 2021, Mexico received the third-highest number of new applications for refugee status in the world, particularly from people from Central America, Haiti and Venezuela. True to its tradition in that respect, and with the support of the High Commissioner and his team, 72 per cent of the applications received a positive response. In Mexico, we have incorporated the commitments under the Global Compact on Refugees into our national programmes, as we believe the Compact to be a key instrument for dealing with those applying for refugee status in line with a human rights approach. My country hopes that the Global Refugee Forum, which will take place next year, will be a good opportunity to explore comprehensive solutions based on recent experience to ensure the rights of all refugees and internally displaced persons.

Ms. Juul (Norway): Let me take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming your role for the month of November. I would again like to thank our colleagues from Gabon for guiding us so ably through October.

Let me first thank High Commissioner Grandi most sincerely for his very important briefing to the Security Council today and for his leadership.

As we vividly heard from the High Commissioner, armed conflicts, violence and persecution are forcing an unprecedented number of people to flee and seek safety and protection. We are particularly concerned about the high number of children and young people being forcibly displaced, many of them alone. They are at risk of recruitment to armed groups. They must be protected against human trafficking and sexual and gender-based violence. We must ensure that their

right to education is upheld. They need a protective environment and hope for the future.

There are several negative trends that must be reversed. Armed conflict and persecution remain the main drivers of displacement. Across conflicts, warfare in urban areas is killing and injuring civilians, destroying homes, schools and hospitals and depriving people of access to basic services and a means of survival. Russia's war against Ukraine is a horrifying example of that. Such challenges are then compounded by climate change and environmental degradation, which, in themselves, also drive instability, conflict and displacement, as we heard from the High Commissioner's recent visit to Somalia and Kenya.

Meanwhile, food insecurity is also on the rise, as both a consequence and a driver of conflict, leading to further displacement and affecting many host communities. We see that in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, as well as other regions. We cannot stand idly by in the face of such challenges.

First, we need stronger political will and leadership to address the root causes and prevent conflict and displacement. The Security Council has a mandate to prevent conflict, and we must support the Secretary-General in his mediation efforts. But prevention is also about good governance, inclusive and sustainable development and building resilience against climate change, food insecurity and poverty.

Secondly, on the importance of protection, parties to armed conflict must protect civilians and, to the extent possible, reduce the risks that drive displacement. Protection must also be at the core of the humanitarian response. That requires safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access, and the sustained presence of humanitarian actors over time. All States and other relevant parties must do their utmost to protect and assist displaced persons and comply with refugee law, human rights and, where applicable, international humanitarian law in doing so.

Thirdly, we must seek durable solutions that benefit both the displaced and their host communities. That demands complementary approaches that link humanitarian assistance with development, climate action, peacebuilding and human rights work. The participation of, and accountability to, affected communities and displaced persons themselves are crucial.

Norway supports the Global Compact on Refugees as a road map to inclusive and durable solutions for the protection of refugees. We welcome the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement and the appointment of a Special Adviser. Together with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, they will be key in supporting affected States in finding durable solutions.

The global community must show solidarity with the displaced and their host communities through broader burden- and responsibility-sharing. We need to engage more countries, international financial institutions and the private sector. Flexible, unearmarked funding is key to meeting the changing and growing needs. The High Commissioner's role and mandate remain as relevant as ever. We reiterate Norway's strong support for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): Let me join other speakers in congratulating Gabon on its excellent presidency in October. I wish Ghana all the best for the month of November. I thank High Commissioner Grandi for his briefing, and I offer congratulations on the recent extension of his term by the General Assembly.

The United Kingdom commends the tireless efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as other humanitarian agencies, non-governmental organization and host nations, for all that it does to support those forced to flee their homes.

Climate change, conflicts and the long-term fallout from the coronavirus disease pandemic have led to shocking and unprecedented levels of displacement, as we heard today. There are more than 300 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and more than 100 million forcibly displaced.

With that context in mind, we echo the horror expressed by others at President Putin's latest atrocities in Ukraine, which are substantially adding to the humanitarian caseload. Strikes on civilian targets ahead of winter serve no other purpose than to spread terror. As we heard from numerous statements this morning, that unprovoked aggression has already displaced more than 14 million people and left almost 18 million in need of humanitarian assistance. It is also causing food insecurity across the planet.

The crisis in Ukraine is but one example of the need to address the drivers of displacement. The United

Nations, with the support of Member States, needs to focus on solutions to crises. From Ethiopia to Syria and Myanmar, we owe it to the millions of refugees and displaced persons to find practical, long-term political solutions to prolonged crises.

Furthermore, the Council needs to continue to ensure that actors on the ground meet their responsibilities. That means adherence to international humanitarian law, ensuring that refugee returns are voluntary, safe and dignified and allowing humanitarians to safely carry out their work unhindered. And in that context, the United Kingdom supports the initiative of the United States and Ireland to secure a horizontal sanctions exemption for humanitarian workers.

Lastly, the United Kingdom is taking life-saving action. Our international development strategy sets out our long-standing commitment to life-saving humanitarian work. We intend to contribute more than \$3 billion to humanitarian needs globally over the next three years. As we look ahead to the Global Refugee Forum next year, the Council should place the plight of refugees and the forcibly displaced at the centre of its decision-making. Without long-term solutions, the humanitarian caseload will only continue to escalate.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Ghana.

At the outset, I would like to thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, for his insightful and compelling briefing, which provides a clear but sobering picture of the global refugee situation. I also thank him for his very kind words about my country and its continuing contribution as a host country for refugees, particularly for our region and beyond.

Our shared determination to develop the global architecture designed to address the world refugee situation makes the role of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees critical to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless persons. While acknowledging the important measures in place at the national and regional levels for addressing the global refugee situation, we remain concerned about the continued rise in the numbers of global refugees. As of May, 100 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide, and that includes an increase of 10.7 million displaced people as compared to the end of the previous year. The war in Ukraine has

been a major driver, but, in many parts of the continent of Africa, the situation remains dire, with more than 26 per cent, or more than 18 million, of the world's refugees hosted in the region.

The High Commissioner's recent visit to the Horn of Africa revealed the seriousness of the situation. In Somalia this year alone, for instance, the number of people internally displaced primarily by drought is nearing 1 million, with another 500,000 displaced owing to conflict and insecurity. It is therefore critical for the international community, including the Security Council, to unite and spare no effort in assisting the countries concerned to break the cycle of conflict and climate crises. Ghana would like to make a few points that we believe should underpin global efforts in addressing the global refugee crisis, especially in the context of Africa.

First, we believe that the instruments in place at the international level, including the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, remain the most viable and sustainable tools for addressing the situation of refugees. We encourage Member States to make good on their commitment to implementing them, including the Global Compact for Refugees, adopted in 2018.

Secondly, the increasing rate of refugees in Africa requires deeper cooperation between the United Nations and regional arrangements to deal with the situation effectively. In that regard, we welcome stronger cooperation between the United Nations and continental initiatives, such as the African Union (AU) Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, which came into force in 2012. The focus of the AU's 2019 theme, "Year of refugees, returnees, and internally displaced persons: towards durable solutions to forced displacement in Africa", demonstrates Africa's commitment at the highest level to addressing this menace, including in relation to the regrettable situation that we see daily on the Mediterranean Sea.

Thirdly, it is vital to pay attention to addressing the drivers of instability, which are an aggravating factor in the refugee situation. The heightened insecurity in most parts of the continent resulting from the increasing incidence of terrorist attacks and from climate change and the pandemic, among other things, is also worsening the displacement of huge populations and requires urgent attention. We therefore welcome

the ongoing efforts to address the conflicts and political situation on the continent and urge for sustained action.

Fourthly, other aggravating factors, including the coronavirus disease pandemic and climate change, are a major worry, especially because more than 70 per cent of refugees come from highly climate-vulnerable countries, while 80 per cent of people displaced by conflict live in countries that are highly vulnerable to climate change. The insecurity created by climate change, especially on the continent of Africa, requires a stronger commitment on the part of the international community, including through harnessing available instruments such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032). That will help to weaken environmental threats to the African continent and their impact on social and political instability. We welcome the strengthening of the Council's collaborative arrangements, with the relevant United Nations entities doing commendable work through peacebuilding interventions aimed at addressing climate-related security threats.

Lastly, as the High Commissioner and a number of delegations have already indicated, it is important for humanitarian funding to be increased to help meet the increasing humanitarian needs resulting from the rise in internal displacements and refugees globally. It is important for us all to take advantage of the upcoming Global Refugee Forum in 2023 to make a difference through a display of unwavering political will that can ensure that real and timely support is provided to stakeholders, including host-country authorities, to enable them to adequately address the refugee situation.

In conclusion, Ghana believes that the effective implementation of the Global Compact for Refugees is germane to tackling the refugee situation, and we encourage Member States to make good on their commitment to its implementation.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Mr. Grandi to respond to the some of the comments and specific questions that have been raised by delegations.

Mr. Grandi: I thank you, Sir, for the statement that you have just made in your national capacity, which was virtually a summary of the main points that

were discussed here this morning, and for your very wise advice. I would like to also thank all the members of the Security Council who expressed support for my organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and our partners and staff. That is very much appreciated. While I should have perhaps been clearer, I can assure everyone that despite all the challenges that we face together and our concern about the fact that political solutions are not forthcoming, we will continue to do our work. As the representative of Norway said so clearly, we will maintain protection at the heart of what we do on many of the front lines that the Council deals with from the political perspective.

With regard to something that was mentioned by several members — of whom the representative of Brazil was the first — I want to stress that I mentioned climate change to highlight the complexity of today's movement and the importance of considering such factors in the current general discussion on the climate emergency, with the approach of the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in November and next year. Given the importance of those forums, I would encourage that the connection to displacement and conflict be considered in them. But as I have said in many forums, it is conflict that mostly continues to drive displacement, and of course that is why it is a tradition for me to come to the Council at least once a year to share my views with its members, because their work is closely linked to ours. We somehow pick up the pieces when the Council cannot reach political solutions. However, we appreciate the enormous difficulties involved in that, and we continue to encourage the Council in those efforts.

One question today asked what the Council can do to best assist us. The best way is to continue to work on such political solutions. That is something that we ourselves cannot do, but we expect the Council to strive to achieve them so that our work is made easier. As many are aware, every year we celebrate World Refugee Day on 20 June, and I always make a symbolic trip on that occasion. This year I went to Côte d'Ivoire, because that country, which produced almost half a million refugees during the difficult years of its own civil war — you, Sir, will be well aware of that, given that yours was one of the host countries — has now changed its trajectory and returned to peace and stability, with 90 per cent of refugees having returned. Those who

have not returned will be integrated into neighbouring host countries, including Ghana. Therefore, I wanted to stress that, when positive political action is taken, solutions to displacement can be found. It is not always a negative trajectory, it can be positive, too.

The representative of Gabon mentioned, and many other members echoed, that we must not apply criteria — and our response should not change — according to geographical area, or the place from which people come. I would stress that all people fleeing armed conflict, as well as discrimination and persecution, are equal in our view and must be treated equally. We will continue to insist on that, because it is very important, but unfortunately it is not always the case. There is inequality even in the manner in which the victims of the worst situations are treated. That is something that we will continue to remind all parties to avoid.

Some Council members mentioned — and I said so myself — that the response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, particularly in the European Union but also in other countries, has been quite exemplary. I would like to echo the Canadian representative here in New York who, when I presented my report to the Third Committee of the General Assembly yesterday, took the floor to state that the reception and treatment of Ukrainian refugees should not be an exception, but the norm. It should be the model upon which we build when it comes to hosting refugees and basis for comparison. I think a very high standard has been set, which I hope will set a precedent.

The United States, as well as many others — in fact, almost all members — mentioned the importance of continuing to support not only UNHCR, but also the humanitarian agencies, non-governmental organizations and others involved in providing humanitarian responses, with adequate funding. I mentioned in my opening remarks that it is also extremely important not only to continue to sustain global humanitarian efforts, but to ensure that there is no backtracking or reduction in development assistance, because the link between the two is fundamental.

That is something I saw clearly in Somalia last week. Of course, we must ensure that the suffering Somali people receive food, medical care and shelter — all of those — through humanitarian interventions. However, if we do not simultaneously build their resilience and their immunity to the shocks of climate change,

conflict and other hardships, we will continue in a spiral of humanitarian assistance that is unsustainable in the long term.

I must be frank and say that this year, with 37 emergencies, when I visit places and tell my colleagues that we are not doing enough, which I sometimes do, they ask me how we can possibly do more. We can no longer even find enough people to respond to those emergencies, because we are spread so thinly across the world in trying to counter those situations. Indeed, in my opening remarks, I said that we can be counted on. We will continue to lead and participate in humanitarian responses, but we are spread very thinly at the moment. If the situation does not improve in some places, I do not know how much thinner we can be spread and continue to be effective.

That is just to sound the alarm, so to speak. What if we do not receive funding? This year, we do have a funding gap. I have been in this role for almost seven years, and this is the first year that I am expressing alarm at the funding gap. We have managed in previous years — we were never fully funded, but we managed.

This year, in some operations, especially in Africa and in the Middle East, we are struggling with funding. Even in areas for which it would seem obvious that we should receive funds, such as the Horn of Africa, the Sahel and the response to the Syrian refugee crisis, which many members have mentioned, we are falling short. That means that we will have to make cuts. How am I to tell host countries that have been struggling under the weight of millions of refugees that we cannot provide the same level of cash assistance as in previous years? Unfortunately, that is going to happen this year, unless we receive urgent additional funding now and, of course, into 2023.

I am fully aware that everyone is struggling and that budgets in donor countries are tight in the wake of the coronavirus disease response and the various impacts of the crisis in Ukraine. Nonetheless, I must tell it as it is and, unfortunately, the cost is very, very high.

I thank those members who mentioned access. Access is a very difficult issue in situations of active conflict. I have mentioned access in parts of Ethiopia, but the issue applies to many other places. I would like to stress that it is particularly difficult in areas that are theatres of conflict. In Ethiopia, we work in many parts of the country. Ethiopia is a large refugee host country and has been a host country for decades, and we work

very well in those areas in which there is no conflict. In those areas where there is conflict, access becomes difficult. That is why I have made a plea for peace talks to succeed quickly, so that we can resume the improved access that we had only a few weeks ago. Therefore, access is possible when there is goodwill, and that is important for the people who are affected by conflict.

I thank the many Council members who mentioned the initiative led by the United States and Ireland on the carveout. What we need is clarity and flexibility so that we can also operate in difficult political circumstances. We need to be everywhere. It does not mean that we recognize anybody. That is not our job. A humanitarian agency does not have any function of recognition; its function is to help the people. If we cannot be there, the people cannot be helped, and being there means having to be interlocutors with whoever controls that territory. That is a fundamental aspect of humanitarian action. If we have to negotiate too much because — understandably — in that particular situation there are sanctions, then it becomes cumbersome and difficult, and we waste valuable time. Therefore, if the Security Council can help us in that key area, and here I speak on behalf of all my humanitarian colleagues, then that will be invaluable. It is an urgent matter, so I make a plea for that.

I believe the representative of Mexico mentioned mental health. This year, our Executive Committee, which is not technically our governing body but is the main forum in which we interact with States, adopted a resolution on mental health. We all recognize that, with the very traumatic nature of conflict today, that is a very important aspect of our response.

Before I conclude, I would like to mention a few specific areas that were also cited by some members. The United States mentioned the need to step up efforts in Somalia, and I strongly agree. I think that includes us as well, and this is one area in which, as I told my colleagues, we need to do more. I think it is a collective responsibility that we all share.

The situation in Somalia is still very bad, although it has improved slightly in terms of humanitarian assistance. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, with whom I had a very long conversation, has also made it one of his priorities to bring under control the security situation, including the Al-Shabaab insurgency. I think it is very important, on the part of the Council, to support him in those efforts. On our part, we must step up

humanitarian assistance in parallel as, hopefully, more territory becomes accessible to humanitarian workers.

Some Council members mentioned the situation in Syria. I did elaborate further on that yesterday, in the Third Committee. I am also worried about the humanitarian situation inside Syria, and I agree that we need to step up our efforts.

Resolution 2642 (2022) gives us space for early recovery projects, and I think that we need to do more of that. And I can assure the representative of Russia, as well as others, that we will continue to talk constructively with the Government of Syria to try to remove the obstacles that prevent people from returning. I was in Syria myself not so long ago, a few weeks ago, and those are very complex but important discussions that we will continue to have in order to create those conditions, because we must recognize that the burden on the neighbouring countries — especially Lebanon, Jordan and Türkiye — is very substantive. But of course, as many of those here have said today, returns must remain voluntary.

There was an important mention, I believe by Ireland, of the situation in Haiti. I would like to echo that: we are concerned about the situation and will be appealing in the next few days to all States receiving Haitians to not to return people to a country that is extremely fragile. I know that the Secretary-General also has put forward some proposals for the situation in Haiti. It is at the moment a very complex and worrying situation, but from our point of view it definitely needs the Council's attention.

We will continue to work wherever Ukrainian refugees are present, and they are present in many parts of the world. I am on my way to Japan in the next few days, and I am going to meet a Ukrainian refugee community in Japan — so, really, there is quite a wide spectrum of host countries. We will also continue to work with the Russian Federation with respect to the Ukrainian refugees who are present on its territory — the representative of Russia mentioned that. I would like to highlight that we have a rather small operation in Russia, so we have very limited access, but we are available to continue to cooperate and to increase the access that we have to people, regardless of the country in which they find themselves.

I would like to express my support to the representative of China, who mentioned many important points, including the one about genuinely

continuing to try to create conditions for the return of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, which requires the cooperation of Bangladesh and Myanmar. That is undoubtedly a priority file for us. I would like to point out that while dialogue between the countries is of course very important, as the representative of China stressed, that alone will not guarantee the return of refugees.

The conditions and discrimination that still prevail where they come from must be lifted if we want people to go back. Otherwise, as the people who want to go back always tell us, they will not do so until they no longer fear reprisals, violence or the other situations they endured just a few years ago — as everybody remembers. I am worried about the situation, because I think that with the political evolution in Myanmar itself, things have become more difficult. I was a little bit more optimistic before the military takeover last year, but we should not give up, and we should continue to insist on addressing that particular issue.

I would also like to thank the representative of India for his question, the matter of which is outside of my Office's mandate. Palestinian refugees fall under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), at least in the areas in which it operates. But if he will allow me, I would like to support his call for support to UNWRA. As he knows, I was the

Commissioner-General of the Agency before becoming High Commissioner, and I think that its work in support of Palestinian refugees in the Middle East is very important and deserves full and sustainable support, even under the very difficult present circumstances.

I think that I have covered all the points. I would like to conclude my remarks by thanking members of the Council for having mentioned the global compact on refugees, which remains an important toolbox adopted four years ago, the tools of which are available to everyone here, as well as other countries, to improve the response to refugee crises and crises of displacement. I would also like to thank the Council for having mentioned that the Global Refugee Forum, the first of which we held in Geneva in 2019, will be convened again at the end of next year. Colombia, France, Japan, Jordan, the Niger and Uganda will be the co-conveners, together with UNHCR, and it will be co-hosted by Switzerland and UNHCR. We hope that everyone here, as well as other countries, will invest in the preparation of the Forum and participate at an adequate level — it is a ministerial meeting — because it will be an important moment to reflect on all that we have discussed today and to look to the future with renewed determination, despite all the challenges.

The President: I thank Mr. Grandi for the clarifications he has provided.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.