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Chairman: Mr. Al-Hinai (Oman)

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01-65043 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 114: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions (*continued*) (A/56/3, A/56/12 and Add.1, A/56/128, A/56/333 and A/56/335; A/C.3/56/L.39)

1. **Mr. Al-Najar** (Yemen) said that the humanitarian tragedy of refugees in various countries throughout the world was unbearable. Increasing numbers of people were obliged to flee their countries to save their lives and escape the hell of armed conflict, in which the sufferings of women and children went unheeded. Efforts must be made to relieve their plight. His Government had been quick to sign the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Optional Protocol. Yemen's geographical position and lengthy coastlines, with many islands, meant that it was near the flashpoint of the Horn of Africa; it suffered the effects of conflicts in the area and would therefore benefit if those conflicts were resolved and peace were established. The country had opened its doors to refugees from the Horn of Africa for reasons of fraternity, good neighbourliness and humanity. The report of the High Commissioner indicated that Yemen had taken in 60,545 refugees. In reality the figure was much higher, at 150,000 refugees, and had been confirmed by the representative of the High Commissioner in Yemen.

2. Yemen had taken appropriate measures to deal with the flow of refugees. It had established a national refugee commission and a camp in the Jaraz area to provide assistance to refugees in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), had formulated national legislation on refugees, and had encouraged the voluntary repatriation of refugees as the situation in Somalia had stabilized.

3. Receiving countries had to assume a heavy burden and cope not only with tragic cases but also with ecological, health, economic and financial difficulties. The large number of refugees in the country thus represented an additional burden for the people and Government of Yemen. He urged the international community to help the Government assume that burden, and called on UNHCR to redouble its efforts in that regard. He also urged donor countries to provide urgent and ongoing aid since conflicts

continued and voluntary repatriation was almost impossible, so that the situation of refugees constantly grew worse.

4. Of particular note was the tragedy of Palestinian refugees as a result of the Israeli occupation. He urged the international community and all peace-loving countries to give serious consideration to the humanitarian situation of the refugees so as to restore peace in conflict zones and create the conditions for a return of normality and stability.

5. **Ms. Monroy** (Mexico) said that asylum and refugee policy in Mexico was based on foreign policy considerations of sovereignty, solidarity and international cooperation, as well as respect for human rights. UNHCR had recognized Mexico's contribution to lasting comprehensive and humanitarian solutions to refugee issues.

6. Her Government, which had acceded to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, was improving administrative services to meet the needs of persons recognized as refugees. The Mexican Refugee Assistance Commission (COMAR) was working to wrap up Guatemalan refugee programmes. Of the more than 40,000 Guatemalan refugees, 70 per cent had opted for voluntary repatriation, which had concluded in 1999. Efforts were currently continuing to assimilate Guatemalan refugees who had chosen to remain in Mexican territory.

7. Her Government had taken part in the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of UNHCR with such activities as the delivery of naturalization letters to 421 Guatemalan refugees on the first World Refugee Day and the issuance of a commemorative postage stamp and a lottery ticket on the theme of refugees.

8. Her Government had drawn up a new agenda for refugees. The first component was designed to complete the integration of Guatemalan refugees and improve the institutional infrastructure for the protection of refugees. The 21 years' experience of Guatemalan refugees in Mexico had had a fundamental impact. Mexico guaranteed refugees the right to elect for voluntary repatriation or to remain in the country and acquire Mexican nationality. Work was now under way to complete their integration in the country, including the delivery of naturalization documentation, ownership of land and production projects. Work was

also under way to establish a national structure for the protection of refugees. Creation of an eligibility committee was the first priority.

9. Further, Mexico's participation as a full member of the UNHCR Executive Committee, the second component of the new programme for refugees, heralded a new stage in the country's contribution to the international protection of refugees. It was hoped to base that contribution on principles stemming from the country's traditions and experience, namely: voluntary repatriation and full integration of refugees in settlement countries as the best way to find long-term solutions to the refugee problem; the imperative need for prevention, which had various elements, some immediate, such as strengthening national capacities to deal with refugee situations, and others medium-term, such as eradication of the underlying causes through the economic and social development of all countries; national cooperation, solidarity and participation in costs as means of dealing with global refugee situations; and the need for a clearly defined human rights focus to avert the discrimination and xenophobia of which refugees were frequent victims.

10. The global consultations on revitalization of the international system of protection and analysis of means of adequately meeting international protection needs would allow the Organization and Governments jointly to define a world programme for refugees for the twenty-first century.

11. **Mr. Zoumanigui** (Guinea), speaking on behalf of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo, said that the mention in the report of the High Commissioner of HIV/AIDS, the reintegration of refugees, the environment, community development criteria, refugee women, refugee children and adolescents and elderly refugees showed the will and determination of UNHCR to consider the various issues relating to refugees both globally and in detail. The question of the responsibilities and obligations of refugees in receiving countries and in countries of asylum must be carefully examined. The countries of the subregion welcomed the encouraging results of the participation of refugee women from the various regions in resolving the problems affecting them, in particular problems relating to community participation and conflict resolution. Coordination of the activities of the various parties involved, under UNHCR

auspices, would help to improve the effectiveness of their activities.

12. The countries of the subregion welcomed UNHCR involvement in the programme on training and strengthening of the inter-agency initiative on the rights of the child. In that regard the countries of the subregion wished UNHCR, in cooperation with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, to review in detail the influence and effect of drugs on children affected by armed conflict.

13. Although there had been a slight reduction in the number of refugees handled by UNHCR, the refugee issue remained disquieting, hence the fundamental need for the mobilization of financial resources. In addition to the resources that could be provided by Member States and development partners, the countries of the subregion supported the initiatives undertaken by the High Commissioner to improve the effectiveness of the agency, as stated in paragraph 6 of the report.

14. With regard to the budget and the financing of operational activities, the countries of the subregion welcomed the fact that in 2000 for the first time UNHCR had submitted all of its activities in a consolidated budget, in accordance with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Executive Committee. The countries of the subregion welcomed the inspections that had been carried out in 17 countries of Africa, Asia and Europe, and would welcome information on the results so that their respective authorities could take appropriate steps.

15. The African continent was currently experiencing devastating conflicts, and the West African subregion, in particular, had suffered the disastrous consequences of the civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, as well as their impact on the economy, way of life, the environment and security of receiving countries. The fact that the High Commissioner had made his first visit to West Africa was an indication of the magnitude of the refugee problem in the subregion. The Governments of the subregion, aware of the imperatives of peace, security and development, and under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), had embarked on the quest for conflict resolution and peace-building and, in that regard, welcomed the contribution by the United

Nations, the Organization of African Unity and civil society, in particular the women of the Mano River Union.

16. The convening, in conjunction with OAU and UNHCR, in Guinea from 27 to 29 March 2000, of a conference to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the OAU convention on refugees was a demonstration of recognition of the subregion by the international community for its efforts on behalf of refugees. The countries of the subregion welcomed the results of the missions by various United Nations mechanisms, in particular the Fall Mission. They endorsed the creation of a United Nations Office for West Africa, to which they offered their full support. The coordination initiated between the Governments of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the three countries of the Mano River Union, merited the support of the international community. In fact, for the countries of the subregion the time had come to consolidate peace and security, a precondition for the attainment of sustainable development. In that regard there was a need to further strengthen coordination between humanitarian institutions, development agencies and funds, organs for the maintenance of peace and security, and Member States. A solution to the problems of refugees in Africa lay in an objective determination of the causes of conflicts and their peaceful settlement.

17. The international community should not confine itself to humanitarian considerations but must also act in a preventive manner through peace-building and the establishment of a climate that was propitious to development, security and prosperity. In that regard the countries of the subregion welcomed the recommendations of the Secretary-General contained in his report on the prevention of armed conflict (A/55/985). In view of the lack of adequate resources and the instability of the subregion, in particular in the context of implementation of refugee programmes, there was a need, as a priority objective of the international community, to increase the protection and assistance offered.

18. Although the 1951 Convention was based on the concept of solidarity, in particular through sharing the responsibilities attaching to the protection of refugees, receiving countries continued to bear the brunt of the burden. Those countries needed material and financial means to provide food, social services, employment, housing and training, to deal with environmental

issues, and to strengthen capacity. The international community must assume its responsibilities.

19. The situation of persons displaced within their respective countries because of war, violence and natural catastrophe also gave cause for concern. The countries of the subregion welcomed progress in that regard, as reported in the note by the Secretary-General (A/56/168).

20. UNHCR needed to expand its operations throughout the world on a non-discriminatory basis. The international community must pay particular attention to Africa in view of the large numbers of refugees on the continent.

21. **Mr. Vienravi** (Thailand) said that, despite the relentless efforts of the international community, the world refugee situation remained worrisome and had worsened in recent months. Of particular concern was the situation in Afghanistan, where millions of people had fled their homes and become refugees in neighbouring countries, or had been internally displaced. In that regard he commended UNHCR and the various humanitarian agencies that provided assistance to them. As a traditional country of first asylum for some decades for millions fleeing fighting and conflict, Thailand fully understood the plight of refugees and displaced persons, as well as the heavy responsibility borne by host countries. Accordingly, as a gesture of solidarity with the United Nations and the international community, on 16 November 2001 his Government had donated 3,000 metric tons of rice to Afghanistan through the World Food Programme. In addition, the Thai Red Cross had also donated 10,000 blankets to Afghanistan through the Thai Red Cross Association.

22. However, while the international community should continue to respond to the refugee situation in Afghanistan, it was imperative for UNHCR to allocate its available resources in a balanced manner to efforts aimed at finding an effective solution to the refugee situation in all regions. UNHCR should place more emphasis on the search for long-term and durable solutions to the problem of refugees and displaced persons. While protection of refugees and displaced persons in countries of first asylum remained an important task for UNHCR and the international community, questions regarding prevention, reintegration, resettlement and repatriation — the other side of the coin — must also be addressed. As the High

Commissioner had noted, his mission was not protection alone but protection and solutions, and long-term durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons were without doubt the best investment that could be made in peace and stability. An effective and comprehensive solution to the problem of refugees and displaced persons required involvement and political will on the part of all those concerned. Countries of origin, countries of first asylum, countries of settlement and international organizations must work together on the basis of shared responsibility and burden-sharing.

23. At the same time it was not possible to ignore the humanitarian burden that host countries, in particular developing countries with meagre resources, were obliged to shoulder in receiving a large number of refugees and displaced persons, or the negative impact and difficulties that those countries must endure as a consequence. Such a burden could not continue indefinitely, and his Government took the view that repatriation was the preferred durable solution. The role of countries of origin was vital if such a durable solution was to be attained. Hence, besides working with countries of first asylum, UNHCR, together with other partners, should also engage countries of origin in order to eradicate the root causes of mass exoduses and create conditions conducive to the safe return and reintegration of returnees. Humanitarian and development assistance in countries of origin was crucial to reintegration and the prevention of new flows of refugees.

24. His Government attached the utmost importance to the quest for durable solutions to the problem of refugees and displaced persons, not only because Thailand itself had for many decades shouldered the responsibility of providing shelter to millions of refugees and displaced persons, but also because it firmly believed in the promotion of the human rights of those who had to flee their homeland, and out of basic compassion. Thailand currently provided temporary shelter and assistance to more than 108,000 displaced persons along its western border, not to mention nearly a million illegal foreign workers. In that regard he was pleased that Myanmar had agreed to address the issue of displaced persons at the next meeting of the joint commission for cooperation between Thailand and Myanmar in January 2002, and hoped that it would represent a significant step towards finding a solution to the problem.

25. For its part, Thailand had cooperated with UNHCR, facilitating early access to temporary shelters, the registration of displaced persons, and relocation and repatriation. Thailand had also worked in partnership with other competent international organizations, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), as well as with non-governmental organizations.

26. His delegation supported the proposal to revise the mandate of UNHCR to cover internally displaced persons, and would welcome further assistance from donors to help displaced persons, including through the provision of health care and training so that, on returning to their homeland, they could contribute to the development of their own countries.

27. **Mr. Dauth** (Australia) said that while nearly 4 million Afghans had taken refuge in Pakistan and Iran, the international community's record in sharing that burden with countries of first asylum had not been exemplary. Recent humanitarian crises, particularly Kosovo and the African Great Lakes, had several common threads that should guide future action. There was a crucial need for strong international cooperation in support of UNHCR activities. UNHCR had demonstrated its leadership in building a strategic response to crises and in mobilizing support with a view to securing lasting solutions.

28. Australia, as a destination country for many emigrating from the Middle East and South Asia, was actively participating, in cooperation with UNHCR and IOM, in analysis of the link between asylum and migration. UNHCR must be an integral part of peacekeeping and reconstruction efforts in building a comprehensive response to international crises. The High Commissioner must have the resources needed to discharge that mission and contribute to sustainable solutions.

29. Australia remained committed to the 1951 Convention and Protocol, and backed that support with generous funding. It was a major country of resettlement and would remain so. In 2000 it had resettled 41 refugees for every 100,000 inhabitants, whereas the United States of America had resettled 29 per 100,000, and Sweden 20 per 100,000. Regrettably, Australia had become an attractive destination for illegal migrants, a problem faced by many other countries, and a phenomenon that undermined the

integrity of the international protection system. Tackling it required a determined national response and concerted regional and multilateral action. Australia stood ready as a responsible international citizen to assist UNHCR in its mission of providing protection to those who most needed it.

30. **Mr. Kiniger-Passigli** (International Labour Organization) said that two years previously the International Labour Organization (ILO) had set up a programme on crisis response and reconstruction based on employment promotion, social protection and social dialogue intended to address the socio-economic problems caused by crises in countries and territories facing the consequences of armed conflicts, natural disasters, rapid political and social transitions, and financial and economic downturns. To that end ILO had built partnerships with United Nations specialized agencies and other organizations working in the field of reconstruction and development. A central theme had been to facilitate the socio-economic reintegration of refugees through the implementation of job-creation, income-generation and social integration programmes.

31. Protecting and assisting refugees, displaced populations and vulnerable groups required an end to thinking exclusively in terms of humanitarian assistance. Relief was undoubtedly essential, but much more was needed to restore the conditions for a decent life in societies devastated by war, disasters or socio-political upheavals. ILO sought to bridge the gap between relief and long-term development and to contribute to providing durable solutions. Once their physical security and immediate food needs had been met, refugees and internally displaced persons demanded only one thing: decent work, conferring freedom and security. If refugees and vulnerable groups were not to become a burden on society there was a need to invest in their future. Employment expansion, poverty reduction and social integration of refugees and other vulnerable groups would contribute greatly to security in not just one country but throughout the subregion concerned. The first step must be to assess skills and prepare individuals for a productive life. Women in camps could learn new skills, which they might not have been able to do under normal conditions. They could also be helped to set up microenterprises and be given guidance to facilitate their reintegration.

32. If such groups were not likely to return for the foreseeable future, social dialogue must be promoted

around common interests, in particular productive assets and resources, so as to avoid tension with the host community and eliminate fears and prejudices. ILO had considerable experience in local economic development programmes.

33. It was important for potential beneficiaries, including refugees and other vulnerable groups, to participate in the planning of reconstruction to create a sense of ownership of their future. Reconstruction could lead to job creation if labour-intensive, equipment-supported technologies were adopted.

34. ILO sought an even stronger partnership with Member States, employers' and workers' organizations, United Nations agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions, non-governmental organizations and all who were committed to social justice, equal opportunities and lasting peace.

35. **Mr. Kastberg** (Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, United Nations Children's Fund) said that in recent years the international community had witnessed appalling violations of the rights of refugees, internally displaced persons and other civilians caught up in conflict. The level of violence and brutality in today's warfare was unprecedented: rape, destruction of crops, poisoning of wells, ethnic cleansing and outright genocide. Combatants abandoned all human standards, unleashing ferocious assaults against helpless children and communities. Even children were used as fighters, caught up in a maelstrom in which they were not just the targets of warfare but the perpetrators of atrocities.

36. Ending impunity was critical, otherwise the vicious cycle of human rights violations against children would not be brought to an end. UNICEF called for violators of children's rights not to be covered by amnesties in the context of peace agreements. Those who violated children's rights must answer for their actions. However, accountability was not simply the spectacle of war criminals in the dock. It must be much more: it must involve the creation of a political and social climate in which all those who violated children's rights or colluded in such violation were made to feel the repugnance of a civilized world. That required courage and political leadership from Governments and civil society.

37. UNICEF pledged its collaboration on the question of protracted refugee situations. To that end, it was of critical importance to ensure strategic engagement by

all relevant partners. UNICEF was ready to support advocacy efforts to promote awareness of the need to resolve those serious situations. UNICEF was also committed to a closer dialogue with UNHCR to explore how it could support and protect children and women and contribute to durable solutions.

38. However, meeting basic needs was not enough, the international community must also contribute to the development of individuals and respect for all their human rights. It could not afford to continue witnessing whole generations of children being condemned to misery and helplessness for lack of a political solution. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most widely ratified international human rights instrument, presented a unique opportunity for UNICEF and other organizations working to support refugee and displaced children in that it imposed on Governments obligations to protect and support all children, including those who were refugees or internally displaced.

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.39: Enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

39. **Ms. Paterson** (New Zealand), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.39 on behalf of the original sponsors and Bangladesh, said that the purpose of the draft resolution was to enlarge the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from 57 to 61 members in accordance with two decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council in May and July 2001. The resolution requested the Council to elect the additional members at its resumed organizational session in 2002. The desire of Ecuador, Guinea, New Zealand and Yugoslavia to become members of the Executive Committee reflected their strong support for the work of UNHCR and their wish to strengthen their contribution to that important aspect of the work of the United Nations. She commended the draft resolution to the Committee for adoption by consensus.

Agenda item 115: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/C.3/56/L.28/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.27/Rev.1: The rights of the child

40. **Ms. Stevens** (Belgium) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the European Union, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and the other

original sponsors, as well as Andorra, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, El Salvador, Guyana, Iceland, India, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mali, Malta, the Marshall Islands, Morocco, Namibia, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, South Africa, Suriname, Thailand, Tunisia, Ukraine and Zambia, and read out various revisions.

41. The second part of paragraph 2 had been redrafted to read: “and that, as at 12 November 2001, ten States had become parties to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, thereby allowing it to enter into force on 12 February 2002”.

42. Paragraph 4 had been redrafted to read: “*Welcomes* the convening of the Second World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children at Yokohama, Japan, from 17 to 20 December 2001, and the regional consultative meetings for its preparation, and invites Member States and observers to ensure their participation in the Congress at a high political level”.

43. Paragraph 5 (c) had been redrafted to read: “To request the Secretary-General to conduct an in-depth study on the question of violence against children, taking into account the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly on children, and put forward recommendations for consideration by Member States for appropriate action, including effective remedies and preventive and rehabilitative measures”.

44. Owing to deferral of the special session of the General Assembly on children, the European Union and the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, traditional sponsors of the resolution on the rights of the child, had decided at the current session to replace the comprehensive resolution by a procedural resolution to avoid any duplication of the current negotiations in preparation for the final document of the special session. The European Union and the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States wished to see substantive consideration of the question of the rights of the child renewed by the Committee at the fifty-seventh session and trusted that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Agenda item 119: Human rights questions *(continued)***(a) Implementation of human rights instruments**
(continued) (A/C.3/56/L.34)

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.34: Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

45. **Mr. Hahn** (Denmark), introducing the draft resolution, said that Argentina, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Ukraine, had joined the sponsors. He drew attention to various revisions.

46. Paragraph 20 had been redrafted to read: “*Calls upon* Governments to cooperate with and assist the Special Rapporteur in the performance of his or her task, to provide all necessary information requested by the Special Rapporteur, to respond appropriately and expeditiously to the urgent appeals of the Special Rapporteur and to give serious consideration to requests by the Special Rapporteur to visit their countries, and urges them to enter into a constructive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur in following up his or her recommendations”.

47. Paragraph 21 had been redrafted to read: “*Reiterates* the need for the Special Rapporteur to be able to respond effectively, in particular to urgent appeals, to credible and reliable information that comes before him or her, and invites the Special Rapporteur to continue to seek the views and comments of all concerned, in particular Member States”.

48. The draft resolution was the outcome of various open-ended consultations with a number of sponsors and other interested delegations. Combating torture was a high priority for his Government, and the draft resolution offered an additional instrument to that end. The sponsors trusted that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms *(continued)* (A/C.3/56/L.41, L.42, L.43, L.44, L.45, L.46, L.47, L.48 and L.49)

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.42: Human rights and unilateral coercive measures

49. **Mr. Montwedi** (South Africa), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and China, said that, once again, States were being urged to refrain from implementing economic, political or other measures of a coercive nature against other States that prevented them from exercising their sovereign rights. Such unilateral measures were not in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries was concerned by the fact that, in violation of international law and the Charter, some States continued to adopt unilateral coercive measures which had negative effects on humanitarian activities. The sponsors of the draft resolution trusted that it would receive the support of an increasing number of States that were not members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.42: Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights

50. **Mr. Montwedi** (South Africa), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and China, said that the text before the Committee was an update of the resolution at the previous session; it incorporated references to the Millennium Declaration and to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance as two recent events that had contributed to the strengthening of international cooperation on human rights. The sponsors trusted that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.43: The right to development

51. **Mr. Montwedi** (South Africa), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and China, said that the draft

resolution was one of the most important drafts submitted by the Movement. For the past three years the Committee had adopted procedural resolutions on the right to development, and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries had decided to submit a substantive draft resolution based on the intersessional work done in Geneva by the Working Group on the Right to Development. There now existed a solid basis for practical implementation of the right. As in the case of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.42, consultations on the draft were continuing, and the sponsors trusted that consensus would soon emerge and that other States would join the original sponsors.

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.44: Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order

52. **Ms. de Armas García** (Cuba) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, who had been joined by Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Cameroon, El Salvador, the Gambia, Haiti, Iraq, Kenya, Madagascar, Sierra Leone and Swaziland. The draft resolution recognized that international relations, both political and economic, must be characterized by a deep sense of democracy, justice and equity that would allow all citizens and countries to have an equal voice in decision-making. In turn, the existence of a democratic and equitable international order would guarantee a climate that was propitious to respect for all human rights and democratization in every country of the world. The draft resolution incorporated virtually verbatim the text already adopted by the General Assembly with the overwhelming support of the developing countries. The sponsors trusted that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus. She called on the developing countries to support a draft that was essentially favourable to the interests of the countries of the South.

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.45: Respect for the purposes and principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations to achieve international cooperation in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms and in solving international problems of a humanitarian character

53. **Ms. de Armas García** (Cuba), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.45, said that Benin, Cameroon, Haiti, Kenya and Mozambique had joined the sponsors. The draft resolution, which reproduced the text adopted with broad support at the fifty-fifth session of the

General Assembly, was based on the premise established at the World Conference on Human Rights that the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms must be viewed as a priority objective of the United Nations in accordance with its purposes and principles, in particular international cooperation. In the context of those purposes and principles, the promotion and protection of all human rights constituted a legitimate aspiration of the international community.

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.46: Strengthening United Nations actions in the field of human rights through the promotion of international cooperation and the importance of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity

54. **Mr. Amorós** (Cuba), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.46, said that Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Mozambique and Tunisia had joined the sponsors. The draft resolution stressed that international cooperation for the development and promotion of human rights, which were among the purposes included in the Charter of the United Nations, must make a practical contribution to the prevention of massive and flagrant violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the consolidation of international peace and security. The promotion, protection, and full realization of those rights and fundamental freedoms, which constituted a legitimate concern of the international community, must be governed by the principles of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity, and must not be utilized for political purposes, a principle explicitly incorporated in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. The draft called on United Nations human rights organs to take account of those considerations in the discharge of their mandates; the sponsors trusted that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.47: Respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States in electoral processes as an important element for the promotion and protection of human rights

55. **Mr. Reyes** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution, said that Cameroon, the Gambia, Ghana, Haiti, Kenya, Mauritania and Somalia had joined the sponsors. The draft resolution was similar to those

submitted over the previous decade. As circumstances had somewhat changed since the first introduction of the draft, as a result of the fear that international cooperation by the United Nations could be used to interfere in the affairs of developing countries, and of the fact that the United Nations had demonstrated its ability to establish a system of electoral assistance for States requesting it that took account of the interests of the countries of the South and other interested countries, his delegation had held broad consultations to adapt the draft in the light of recent developments and the interests of the various parties.

56. The current draft contained substantive changes over the earlier versions. Firstly, it recognized the important role of the United Nations in electoral assistance. It also reaffirmed the importance of holding periodic, fair and free elections as a means of guaranteeing the development of democracy. Similarly, paragraph 8 reaffirmed that the will of the people should be the basis of the authority of government. The draft reaffirmed the principles on which it was based, in particular, the right to self-determination, sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. His delegation and the other sponsors trusted that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.48: The right to food

57. **Mr. Amorós** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the 71 sponsors, said that Bhutan, Botswana, Iraq, Italy, Myanmar, the Niger, Mozambique, the Philippines, Sierra Leone and Somalia had joined the sponsors. The right to food enjoyed special recognition in broadly accepted human rights instruments and declarations. Nevertheless, hunger and food security remained worldwide problems, and had even worsened considerably in some regions. More than 800 million people, principally in the developing countries, lacked sufficient food to meet their basic needs, which constituted a violation of their basic human rights. Without the consolidation of a peaceful, stable and appropriate political, social and economic framework, it would not be possible at the national and international levels to give due priority to that right.

58. The draft resolution reaffirmed that hunger constituted an outrage and a violation of human dignity and required the adoption of urgent measures at the national, regional and international levels for its elimination, including through the mobilization of

technical and financial resources from all sources. It also encouraged all States to take steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the right to food. Further, it encouraged the Special Rapporteur to continue to promote that right, and the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to provide all the necessary human and financial resources for the effective fulfilment of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur. It invited Governments, relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, treaty bodies and non-governmental organizations to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur.

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.49: Human rights and cultural diversity

59. **Ms. Vadiati** (Islamic Republic of Iran), introducing the draft resolution, said that Cambodia, Cameroon, the Dominican Republic, Guinea, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Morocco and Somalia had joined the sponsors. The cultural diversity and development of all peoples and countries enriched humanity's cultural life. The draft resolution welcomed the adoption of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It also welcomed the Millennium Declaration and recognition at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance of the necessity of respecting and maximizing the benefits of diversity among nations. It urged all actors on the international scene to build an international order based on inclusion, justice, equality and equity, human dignity, mutual understanding and promotion of and respect for cultural diversity and universal human rights, and to reject all doctrines of inclusion based on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. It also urged States to work to ensure that their political and legal systems reflected the multicultural diversity within their societies and, where necessary to improve democratic institutions so that they were more fully participatory and avoided marginalization. The sponsors trusted that the draft, as in previous years, would be adopted by consensus.

60. **Mr. Reyes** (Cuba) said that Ethiopia had also joined the original sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.47. In the Spanish text of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.43, the asterisk (*) indicating that South

Africa was submitting the draft resolution on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and China had been omitted.

61. **Mr. Shen** Guofang (China) said that in the Chinese text of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.42 the footnote should indicate that the draft had been submitted on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and China.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.