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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

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REPORT OF THE THIRTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
(21-22 September 2005)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The meeting was opened by the Chairman of the Executive Committee, His Excellency Ambassador. Juan Martabit (Chile), who welcomed delegations and thanked Members for their confidence in electing him as Chairman. He was honoured to preside over this, his first formal ExCom meeting. The Chairman further expressed the gratitude of the Committee for the contribution made to the work of the Committee by his predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Hernán Escudero Martínez (Ecuador).

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA OF THE THIRTY-FOURTH MEETING

2. The agenda for the meeting (EC/55/SC/CRP.18) was adopted.

III. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT REPORT OF THE THIRTY-THIRD MEETING

3. The draft report of the Committee's thirty-third meeting (EC/55/SC/CRP.19) was adopted.

IV. PROGRAMME BUDGETS AND FUNDING

4. Introducing this agenda item, the Deputy High Commissioner explained that UNHCR's 2006 proposed budget reflected the High Commissioner's plans, priorities and longer-term strategy, including the centrality of protection to its work; the establishment of a post of Assistant High Commissioner (AHC) for Protection; and the Office's role in the humanitarian reform initiatives and the inter-agency response to internally displaced persons. Current budget year challenges in managing the projected gap between revenue and the approved 2005 budget included the impact of unexpected exchange rate losses, on which an *Aide-Mémoire* had been made available to delegations. The Deputy High Commissioner believed that the Office could maintain financial stability in 2005 thanks to the measures taken to cap, cut, prioritize and stagger disbursement of spending authority, but appealed for extraordinary end-of-year contributions.

5. Commenting more specifically on the proposed 2006 budget, the Deputy High Commissioner underlined the efforts made to incorporate results-based management (RBM) initiatives and to conduct comprehensive needs-based assessments with all key partners through participatory planning exercises. The 16 per cent increase in the Annual Programme Budget for 2006 was due mainly to the proposed mainstreaming of the Burundi and Chad operations. The Deputy High Commissioner then commented on the proposed redistribution of some Headquarters posts which was cost neutral and would not increase the number of staff at Headquarters. With regard to the High Commissioner's revised proposal on the establishment of a post of AHC for Protection, efforts had been made to define more clearly the linkages with the Department of Operations and the Field and to distribute responsibilities more evenly between the current and the proposed AHC positions. The creation of a dedicated unit for policy formulation to provide guidance on key issues, including increased involvement with situations of internal displacement, was being created from existing resources.

A. Programme budgets and funding for 2005

6. The Controller and Director of the Division of Financial and Supply Management took the floor to introduce the Update on programme budgets and funding for 2005 (EC/55/SC/CRP.22). He provided further details of measures being taken to manage the 2005 Annual Programme Budget and the negative impact of exchange rate fluctuations with an unexpected appreciation of the US dollar, which had effectively reduced funds available in 2005 by \$45 million. The *Aide-Memoire* on exchange rate fluctuations explained that while these fluctuations could cause significant disruption to UNHCR's financial position in the short term, their impact was generally 'neutralized' over time as the effects on income were offset by similar effects on expenditure. The Controller cautioned that although the projected budgetary shortfall of \$98.9 million would be carefully monitored and managed, unless additional contributions were forthcoming, the Office would not be able fully to implement the already capped budgets. Transfers from the Operational Reserve had been relatively high from Category II, but lower from Category I than in 2004, reflecting efforts to maintain as high a balance as possible under the latter in case of emergency needs.

7. The Director of the Division of External Relations (DER) commented on the 2005 funding situation, reiterating previously stated concerns over the projected shortfall for the Annual Programme Budget. He also drew attention to funding levels for the major supplementary programmes for repatriation operations to Burundi, south Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; for activities in eastern Chad and Darfur; and for the Iraq operation. All of these required additional support in order for UNHCR to continue activities into the last quarter without interruption. The Office had pursued efforts to increase and diversify its funding base, to tap further into the private sector, notably through the launch of UNHCR's Council of Business Leaders, and to explore development and other budget lines, including from ministries of the interior and of justice. Participation in the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) had been more consistent and efforts had been made to strengthen joint activities with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to further common goals. In closing, the Director appealed again for additional and flexible contributions in order to close the year without disruption to operations.

8. Many delegations expressed serious concern over the projected shortfall, the impact of the budget caps and the potential gaps in delivery for some operations, notably repatriation situations. Some queried how the cuts had been prioritized. Several delegations renewed calls for adequate reflection of host country contributions, and one delegation queried the absence of data on refugee populations in the Americas region.

9. The delegation of Morocco stated its reservations concerning the budget proposed for 2006 with respect to the population in Tindouf (Algeria). It noted that it had still not received the reply promised by UNHCR to its enquiry on registration of this population, and that meanwhile UNHCR was maintaining the figure, based on a 1982 estimate by Algeria, of 165,000 persons. The static nature of this figure over the years, and the non-registration of this population, represented an atypical situation in UNHCR and violated resolutions of the General Assembly as well as ExCom conclusions. Morocco had information according to which UNHCR, WFP and OLAF had concluded that the figure advanced by Algeria was greatly exaggerated. Morocco would therefore not be able to adopt the budget envelope proposed for the population in the Tindouf camps.

10. In reply, the delegation of Algeria recalled that, between 1997 and 2000, UNHCR and WFP, in collaboration with the Algerian authorities, had carried out a pre-registration in the Tindouf camps which had identified 154,000 refugees, most of them women and children. Noting that UNHCR had declared during the debate that it would limit assistance to 90,000 refugees, considered to be the most vulnerable among this population, Algeria questioned the criteria used in taking this unilateral decision. In response, Morocco stated that, according to UNHCR, the pre-registration organized in 1999 took place without the presence of the individual family members.

11. The Deputy High Commissioner and the Controller assured delegations that the situation with regard to UNHCR's funding for 2005 was not as serious as in 2002. No drastic measures would be required, but there was a need for adjustments to cover costs and manage unpredictable

losses due to exchange rate fluctuations, as well as for additional funds. The capping process had not involved centralized budget cuts. Managers in the Field and in individual Headquarters units were empowered to apply their own criteria, for example in relation to the rate of programme implementation.

B. Annual Programme Budget for 2006

12. Several delegations were concerned by the proposed 16 per cent increase in the Annual Programme Budget from 2005 and queried whether this was realistic in light of the projected funding shortfall in 2005. While supporting the principles of mainstreaming supplementary programmes into the annual programme and of flexible, unearmarked contributions, one delegation asked whether the integration of large supplementary budgets such as the repatriation operation for Burundi might not result in less resources being available for this operation and called for sustained funding for this reintegration operation.

13. Many delegations welcomed the more field-oriented protection focus confirmed in the 2006 budget and encouraged the pursuit of moves towards RBM and comprehensive needs assessments. However, there were a number of calls for figures to be broken down further to reflect regional, sub-regional and even country-level goals and objectives. Suggestions on how to make the budget document more "reader friendly" included the integration of tables within the narrative text. On the question of the use of the Operational Reserve Category II, there was general support for prolongation of the pilot period on the understanding that there would be an independent review prior to a decision on its use in the longer term. One delegation suggested that UNHCR should establish ethical guidelines and a code of conduct on private sector fund raising. Another called for regular reporting on gender and equality issues.

14. Much discussion centred on internally displaced persons (IDPs). Several delegations welcomed the High Commissioner's transparent presentation on this issue during the informal consultative meeting of 20 September. Concern was expressed over the budgetary implications of the invigorated United Nations collaborative approach. While acknowledging the High Commissioner's stated intention to keep a "firewall" between refugee and IDP expenditure, with costs for the latter to be financed by "additional" funds, delegations queried how much UNHCR spent already on IDPs and how it could determine whether funds were indeed "additional". There was also concern about UNHCR being the "funder of last resort" in clusters where it has the lead and how this would be managed.

15. Following discussions during the informal consultative meeting on 20 September, there was broad support amongst delegations for the creation of a post of AHC (Protection) with the proviso, proposed by two delegations, that the decision include a request to the High Commissioner to consider this post creation in the broader context of the Marnett report recommendations and to report back to ExCom at its fifty-seventh session in 2006. The decision would also ask for an assessment of the impact of the new post on the delivery of protection and structural organizational changes, to be reported on at ExCom's fifty-eighth session in 2007.

16. In responding to general issues raised concerning the budget for 2006, the Deputy High Commissioner confirmed that Comprehensive Needs Assessment criteria would be included in the planning instructions for the 2007 budget preparations. She also expressed appreciation for

the contributions of host governments and hoped to address their concerns further in the future through the Comprehensive Needs Assessments. While acknowledging the risk of an expectation gap in the 2006 budget, the Deputy High Commissioner believed that once identified against expected funding, the Office would adjust and plan how to manage this gap with a longer lead time than in previous years. With regard to the concern over a potential decrease in funding for supplementary programmes once they are mainstreamed into the annual programme, the Deputy High Commissioner agreed that this was a risk and proposed that UNHCR undertake a study to assess the impact of mainstreaming large supplementary budgets into the annual budget and report back to the Standing Committee. She also pledged to make the annual programme budget document more "reader friendly" and welcomed informal exchanges with delegations on how to do so. In response to one query as to the future of the Convention Plus initiative, she explained that the unit would be mainstreamed at Headquarters with some functions moving into Protection and others to Operations services. On the question of a code of conduct for private sector fund raising, the Deputy High Commissioner said that the Office had some guidelines on this but had not yet established a formal ethical code. The Director of DER clarified questions regarding criteria for the decision whether or not to mainstream supplementary budgets, explaining that the norm was to do so after one year; however, if the situation in question was not stable, it might be left as a supplementary programme for a further year to allow for flexibility.

17. On the issue of the creation of the post of AHC (Protection) and the corresponding organizational changes, the Deputy High Commissioner noted that there was general support for this, but that delegations wished to be assured of a number of points. These included early action on filling the vacant post of AHC (Operations); improved coordination of UNHCR's activities across the board; no additional financial implications; presentation of a report after two years on the added value of the position in relation to better protection delivery to the Field as well as its role in the continuing process of strengthening overall management efficiency and culture throughout the organization; more regular reporting on statelessness issues; and establishment of a D1 position dedicated to resettlement.

C. Biennialization of the programme budget

18. The Controller introduced the paper on the proposed move to biennialize UNHCR's programme budget. The ACABQ had welcomed the progress made and endorsed the plan outlined in conference room paper EC/55/SC/CRP.20. In relation to the challenges foreseen and potential measures to mitigate these, the Controller drew attention in particular to the need to develop specific criteria for the timing of the mainstreaming of supplementary programmes - including those created for potential future additional engagements with IDPs - into a biennial programme budget and called for consultations with member States on this issue in the year to come. The proposed changes to the Financial Rules in relation to a move to biennial budgeting would be presented to the Standing Committee in the course of 2007, prior to which UNHCR would propose informal consultative meetings on a range of key issues.

19. Delegations expressed broad support for biennialization, but the majority who took the floor indicated that they would continue to offer single-year funding contributions and would expect annual reporting to continue. It was hoped that biennial budgeting would help the Office improve its performance and move further towards results-based budgeting and management,

and there was a call for early consultations with donors and the identification of criteria for the mainstreaming of supplementary programmes. The Controller thanked delegations for their strong support and agreed to develop proposals on how to integrate supplementary programmes into a biennial programme budget for discussion at consultations.

V. MANAGEMENT, FINANCIAL CONTROL, ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT AND HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Finance

20. The Controller introduced the report on UNHCR's accounts for the year 2004, noting that total expenditure amounted to \$1.027 billion with a carry-over into 2005 of \$65 million. This result had been achieved through a combination of careful management and fiscal discipline. Initial budget caps applied at the beginning of the year had been lifted by the fourth quarter, thanks to large exchange gains realized the previous year. The Controller assured delegations that, as recommended by the Board of Auditors, the Office was continuing its efforts to strengthen financial control on projects undertaken by implementing partners.

B. Oversight

21. Addressing the agenda concerning the Report of the Board of Auditors on UNHCR's accounts for the year 2004 and the measures taken or proposed in response to these recommendations, the Controller noted that the accounts had received an unqualified opinion which was particularly welcomed as this was the first year of closing the accounts using the PeopleSoft system which had presented a number of challenges. With regard to the report of the Board of Auditors, UNHCR agreed with almost all of the recommendations and had started to implement these, notably in relation to the resettlement anti-fraud plan of action; the funding of after-service liabilities in respect of post-retirement benefits and the establishment of guidelines for posting expenditures funded under the United Nations regular budget; and the delegation of financial authority and revision of financial instructions on procurement, supply and cash management and accountability at the field level, in line with the introduction of the Management Systems Renewal Project (MSRP). Further details on ongoing follow-up to the audit recommendations for 2003 would be reported at the 35th meeting of the Standing Committee in March 2006.

22. The main concern raised by delegations was the need to give priority to ensuring that audit certificates could be issued for implementing partners. Delegations also underlined the importance of continuing efforts to get suitably qualified staff "in the right place at the right time" and one delegation expressed the hope that recommendations to reduce the use of project staff would not jeopardize the SURGE and resettlement deployment schemes. One delegation called for a briefing on anti-fraud measures related to resettlement processing.

23. In his responses, the Controller noted that the anti-fraud measures referred to did not just concern resettlement processing, but that these were part of overall United Nations efforts to combat fraud. On the question of audit certification for implementing partners, new instructions

had already been issued and improvements were expected. The Deputy High Commissioner added her assurances that the deployment schemes, which were necessary for flexibility and response to emergencies, would not be affected by the recommendation to discontinue project posts.

24. The Chief of UNHCR's Audit Service introduced the report on internal audit in UNHCR for 2004-2005. In selecting the audit assignments for the year in question, priority had been given to emergency operations and other large-scale programmes or projects, including a number of repatriation operations in Africa; the Chad and Sudan operations; UNHCR's activities under the UNDG Iraq Trust Fund; its involvement in the tsunami relief efforts; and various aspects of MSRP. Potential savings and recoveries identified totalled some US\$ 3.4 million. New reporting arrangements under which member States could request a copy of an audit report had led to prompter and more attentive responses to audit findings, a positive development which led to increased transparency for both UNHCR and the Office for Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). During the reporting period, UNHCR's Audit Service had embarked on a risk management pilot project in collaboration with PricewaterhouseCoopers which aimed to develop a culture of risk awareness and active risk management within the Office.

25. In response to questions from one delegation, the Chief of the Audit Service explained that his service could sometimes be involved in fraud investigations but that this depended on the type of situation and could be in cooperation with the Inspector General's Office. The Deputy High Commissioner added that UNHCR had been making considerable efforts to strengthen its oversight mechanisms and raise the level of professionalism amongst personnel, notably in the area of fraud control, including by the establishment of four new posts for the investigations unit as well as four new posts for inspection functions.

C. Management

26. The Director of the Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications (DIST) reported on achievements and outstanding challenges for the Division as it pursued its efforts to be an internal catalyst for change in the organization and to lay an information and communications technology (ICT) foundation for the future. The new ICT strategy, as described in conference room paper EC/55/SC/CRP.23 (and Corr.1), had been endorsed by senior management and was guiding ICT developments, focusing in particular on extending the reach and use of the MSRP; standardizing refugee registration and emergency response applications; and enhancing UNHCR's knowledge management capacity at Headquarters and in the Field. Delivery of MSRP systems at Headquarters was on course towards completion. In the Field, the Director commented that there were particular challenges in order to roll out new applications to over 160 offices with over 1700 users, calling for a phased and flexible approach. However, he spoke of the great opportunities that MSRP was bringing to the organization to increase productivity as staff adapted to the system in order to adopt faster and more efficient ways of managing the Office's business processes.

27. Points raised by delegations included how UNHCR could assess the benefits of the new system and analyse the investments made, as well as how the necessary level of technical expertise could be maintained in the Field once MSRP implementation was completed and the project was phased out. One delegation commended UNHCR's decision to switch service providers to use the Geneva-based United Nations International Computing Centre (ICC), bringing significant cost savings over the coming three years.

28. The Director of DIST confirmed that the issue of sustaining qualified technical expertise amongst field staff in the future was being considered. From the budget point of view, the intention was to bring MSRP costs to zero by the 2008 budget; however, he cautioned that despite outstanding collaboration from regional bureaux, the Field roll-out was very complex and challenging. He fully agreed that an analysis of MSRP investment returns was required and assured delegations that UNHCR was already trying to assess costs and criteria for measuring and demonstrating productivity returns which would be pursued as the system was put in place globally in the coming few years. In response to one query, he underlined that the priorities set in the IT Strategy were linked to UNHCR's global objectives and priorities.

29. The Deputy High Commissioner recalled some of achievements to date in providing real-time reporting on supply movements and access to budget lines. Future stages in implementation for human resources management services would eliminate costs and posts and bring greater efficiency. She announced that a demonstration on MSRP would be set up during ExCom.

D. Human resources

30. The Director of the Division of Human Resources Management provided an oral update to the Standing Committee, in which he provided up-to-date figures on UNHCR's staff, including the percentage of women in its international professional workforce, and outlined progress made with regard to the issue of "project staff" and "staff-in-between-assignments". He also outlined developments in career management and transition; working conditions; performance management; the development of management skills; and accountability. He foreshadowed work on the development of an integrated human resources strategy and the further modernization of outdated information systems under MSRP.

31. Several delegations welcomed the update as comprehensive and useful, and requested that future updates on human resources issues be provided in advance of meetings to allow for more substantive consideration and debate. While expressing appreciation and support for improvements in human resources management, including notably the developments with regard to "staff-in-between-assignments", delegations continued to be concerned about a number of issues, including the drop-out rate from training courses and the nature of the courses; the shortage of experienced protection field staff, especially female protection staff; and, more recently, about the impact an expanded role of UNHCR in internally displaced persons situations might have on staffing requirements.

32. The Director responded he would make his oral update available in written form and would welcome the opportunity in future to provide updates in advance. On training courses, he briefly outlined the genesis, nature and controls of the three main training courses which would be mandatory and noted more generally that available courses were well-received, but might not

be sufficiently “targeted” within an integrated human resources strategy. He would need to consider further the question on the drop-out rate. With regard to staff deployments and the shortage of experienced protection field staff, the fast-track appointment procedure and emergency team deployments had proved to be useful tools, but yet more flexible mechanisms were required. A related question in some situations was whether there were indeed sufficient posts as well as staff to fill them. This issue required further analysis. The Director affirmed that staffing for IDP situations must not be at the expense of staffing for refugees; the Division had been involved with internal IDP core group meetings from the start and was quite conscious of this imperative. In response to as specific questions on "staff-in-between-assignments", he provided detailed statistics on their number and the average time staff remained in this situation; the downward trend was now constant.

33. In response to a query from the Chairman on figures presented for staffing and funding allocations, the Director agreed on the need for consistency, accuracy and transparency in such figures, but noted that statistics might include different categories of staff for different purposes. UNHCR could provide figures on how many staff worked in or in support of different regions, as it had figures for the amount of the total budget it allocated to different regions, which could be confirmed by the respective bureaux. In response more particularly to questions from the Chair and some delegations on staffing and funding for the Americas region, the Deputy High Commissioner and the Director of the Americas Bureau provided figures and references for these.

VI REGIONAL ACTIVITIES AND GLOBAL PROGRAMMES

34. The Deputy Head of the Emergency and Security Service (ESS) and the Chief of Field Safety Section (FSS) presented the Update on Staff Safety and Security Management (EC/55/SC/CRP.21), outlining: the factors responsible for a comprehensive review of security management; the main issues of the two-year security work plan; the high priority being placed on training and capacity building; a summary of the MOSS Survey; collaboration with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (DSS) and other United Nations organizations; and the future focus of work. Strong emphasis was given to UNHCR's line leadership having "ownership" of security management and the establishment of a "culture of security" within UNHCR.

35. Delegations reaffirmed their appreciation of the importance of ensuring the security of UNHCR staff, and particularly for those who worked in remote and dangerous locations. Delegations asked the Office to include funding needs for 2006 as soon as possible and sought clarification of how funds would be raised, notably for what appeared to be a \$10 million gap in funding. One delegation asked what would be expected of ExCom members, and when? Another delegation urged States to ratify the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. Several delegations noted the importance of partnerships and system-wide responses in the area of staff security, and were interested in receiving additional information on the role of the United Nations Security Coordinator and the DSS, and how cooperation was experienced "on the ground". One delegation asked for further advice on the

status of work on the development of more explicit guidance on working with the military, another on the role the eCentre could play in this field. Delegations considered the selection and training of staff in security measures to be a high priority, but one delegation was interested to hear more about investment in physical security equipment.

36. On funding issues, the DHC and the Chief of FSS responded that the Office had missed the critical period for inserting certain funding needs in the 2006 Annual Programme Budget due to the need to get up-to-date information from certain field offices. Of the options available for funding, the highest and first priority was being given to seeking funding from United Nations common funds since the problem was a common one. The acting Head of ESS and the Chief of FSS confirmed that UNHCR saw itself very much as part of the common United Nations framework established by the United Nations Security Coordinator and worked closely with DSS in the Field, though the latter was very much "work in progress". Collaboration would be further strengthened which should allow UNHCR to decrease the number of Field Safety Advisors deployed, especially in capitals. They also outlined developments in training, including those aimed at security risk management and those of the eCentre. In response to the question on physical measures, the Chief of FSS provided information about the list of measures approved and implemented, and compliance rates.

VII PROGRAMME/PROTECTION POLICY

37. The Director of the Division of Operational Support presented an information note on the Relevance of UNHCR's activities to the Millennium Development Goals (EC/55/SC/INF.1), highlighting the gradual integration of the MDGs into UNHCR's strategic objectives and annual programme directives as well as programme monitoring tools. She emphasized that from UNHCR's perspective, each of the MDGs is just as important to humanitarian as to development actors and that they are equally applicable to refugees as to their host communities. UNHCR needed to redouble its efforts to ensure that refugees and others of concern to the Office benefit from and contribute to the achievement of the MDGs. The Director went on to outline how UNHCR hoped to address this challenge.

38. Delegations who took the floor indicated strong support for UNHCR linking protection and assistance to the MDGs and commended UNHCR for its efforts to incorporate the MDGs in its work. It was particularly important that host governments take refugees into account in their national development plans. The positive contribution by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to include refugees and returnees in poverty reduction strategies was also welcomed. One delegation emphasized that the right to self-reliance was integral both to UNHCR's core mandate and to the MDGs.

VIII COORDINATION

39. The Director of External Relations (DER) introduced the document EC/55/SC/INF.2 "Update on Coordination Issues," highlighting some of the key points in the document. He stressed the continuing UNHCR commitment to such fora as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and support for the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator and

OCHA's Internal Displacement Division (IDD) in determining how best to strengthen the inter-agency response to the plight of internally displaced persons (IDPs). He also referred to a number of inter-agency missions which took place during the last year to important operations including to areas affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami; together with the IDD to Colombia, Burundi, Uganda, and Kenya to examine the situation of the internally displaced in those countries; and with other sister agencies to Kyrgyzstan, Georgia and the Russian Federation (Chechnya and North Ossetia), to name a few. Several joint assessment missions with the World Food Programme (WFP) also took place.

40. The Director spoke about UNHCR's activities within the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), including involvement in the UNDG/World Bank needs assessments for countries emerging from conflict, and taking the lead on behalf of UNDG in the planning mission for the Somali joint needs assessment. He went on to explain some of the key bilateral cooperation activities undertaken by UNHCR in recent months, with special emphasis on the ongoing partnership with the World Food Programme. He also cited recent collaboration efforts with the International Labour Office (ILO), the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), among several others. He mentioned UNHCR's work with partners in several migration-related fora including the Geneva Migration Group (GMG). The Director concluded his introduction with specific references to the Office's work with NGOs, most frequently in field situations as operational and implementing partners. In 2004 UNHCR channelled some US\$ 248 million through over 600 of these NGO partners.

41. In response, several delegations expressed keen interest to have further information on the recent actions taken within the IASC regarding the strengthening of humanitarian response and the "cluster" approach to humanitarian emergencies. One delegation stressed the need for UNHCR to work more with sovereign States and identify them as having a lead role in dealing with situations of IDPs. There was concern expressed by one delegation that UNHCR, as a protection agency, should do more to develop exit strategies with its partners. There was broad support expressed for UNHCR's collaboration with WFP, IOM and UNICEF and DPKO, while one delegation cautioned on relying too much on Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) and United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) where more experienced staff may be required. The role of UNHCR's partnership with NGOs was also largely supported, but one delegation cited the need to work more closely with implementing partners. UNHCR's work with its partners in the field of migration management was also supported.

42. In response to the remarks from the delegations, the Director of DER thanked them for their useful comments. He underscored the complexity of the work on the improved humanitarian response, the tight deadlines involved in the process, and the need to consult broadly with partners. He also confirmed that the IASC Principals would further discuss the details at their meeting in December. Concrete action plans would be formulated early next year and delegations would, of course, be consulted throughout the process. The Director reassured delegations that concerning IDP situations, UNHCR would always seek the authority of governments and the Secretary-General before embarking on any IDP programme. He confirmed that collaborating with agencies at an earlier stage would allow UNHCR better to formulate exit strategies. On migration, he noted the work being done was of a long-term nature and complex, but that UNHCR and its partners were striving to achieve some coherence in this important area.

IX ANY OTHER BUSINESS

43. The Chairman reminded the Committee of some practical arrangements for the forthcoming session of the Executive Committee from 3 to 7 October 2005, including the address by the Secretary-General on Thursday 6 October, the seating arrangements for the session which again this year would follow those for the United Nations General Assembly, and the election of officers for the next ExCom Bureau which would take place on the morning of Friday 7 October, with the new Chairman to take office the next day. He also drew delegations' attention to the Annual Consultations with NGOs, notably the session to be presided over by the NGO Rapporteur and the ExCom Rapporteur on Thursday 29 September from 1130 to 1230 in Room XVII at the Palais des Nations, which he invited delegations to follow with interest.

44. There being no other business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed.