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THIRD COMMITTEE  
46th meeting  
held on  
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at 3 p.m.  
New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 46th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CHAVANAVIRAJ (Thailand)

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(Mrs. Khamisani, Pakistan)

foreign occupation. Those facts had been acknowledged by the international community in numerous resolutions on the subject adopted by the General Assembly, the Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement. Pakistan had welcomed the Afghan refugees on purely humanitarian grounds and in accordance with the precepts of Islam. Pakistan must now look after them and was suffering the effects of conditions created in Afghanistan. Despite its limited resources, it had extended humanitarian assistance to the refugees and had received support for that purpose from UNHCR, friendly governments, and several intergovernmental organizations, to which it was extremely grateful. Since Pakistan bore the main burden for the upkeep of Afghan refugees, its economic and financial resources had been strained to the utmost. It therefore hoped that the international community would respond generously to the needs of the refugees until they were able to return to their homeland.

9. Contrary to what was claimed by Afghanistan, Pakistan had not interfered in any way in Afghanistan's domestic affairs, and it categorically rejected the slanderous accusations of the representative of the Kabul régime. The number of Afghan refugees in Pakistan was 2.9 million, a figure that corresponded to the number of refugees registered and was well known to UNHCR, as was clear from its report A/38/12. It was ridiculous to allege that those refugees were nomads making seasonal visits to Pakistan, because up to 1978 the number of such nomads had never exceeded 50,000. It was equally ridiculous to claim that Pakistan was preventing them from returning to their homeland. Pakistan had neither the desire nor the capability to prevent them from doing so, but it was obvious that those who had fled from oppression and persecution would return home voluntarily only under conditions that guaranteed their safety and honour. It would be better for the Kabul régime to heed the international community's call to redress the situation in Afghanistan in order to resolve the problem of Afghan refugees in neighbouring countries.

10. The plight of millions of refugees in Africa deserved the special attention of the international community. Her delegation had noted with satisfaction the preparations for the second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa and hoped that Member States, United Nations bodies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations would lend the High Commissioner for Refugees their full co-operation to ensure that the Conference was a success.

11. The plight of the large number of refugees who had been forced to take shelter in neighbouring countries following the foreign military intervention in Kampuchea also must not be forgotten.

12. The High Commissioner for Refugees had given Member States crucial assistance in the maintenance of the refugees and in solving the problems caused by their arrival. It was equally important that the international community should address itself to eliminating the root causes of the exodus of the refugees and find durable solutions to their problems, the most desirable being voluntary repatriation. It was encouraging to note that many States were paying increased attention to that aspect of the problem and seeking to prevent new outflows of refugees. Her delegation reaffirmed its total support to UNHCR and the international community in their efforts in that direction.

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13. Mr. LEE See Young (Observer for the Republic of Korea) said that as the report of UNHCR showed, the overall situation of the refugees remained grave, although there had been no new major outflows in the year just past. Given the scope and urgency of the problem, it was the international community's responsibility to support the efforts of UNHCR to find a solution. The Republic of Korea, which had experienced a massive inflow of refugees at the beginning of the 1950s, was aware of the importance of humanitarian action in that field and would continue to co-operate with the High Commissioner.

14. In view of the recent attacks on defenceless refugees in several parts of the world, it was urgent that the international community should take steps to secure their protection and that Governments should co-operate with UNHCR. They should extend international protection to the refugees, offer them asylum without refoulement, treat them according to internationally recognized standards and respect their fundamental human rights. The Government of the Republic of Korea would continue to contribute financially to UNHCR's assistance work and would announce shortly the amount of its contribution for 1984.

15. Since 1977, the Republic of Korea had been one of the countries of first asylum for refugees from Viet Nam, 638 of whom had already been sent to the major resettlement countries. In 1980 it had offered \$5 million in response to the appeal made at the International Conference for the Relief of Indo-Chinese Refugees. The Republic of Korea also appreciated the humanitarian efforts of the Government of Pakistan in taking in the millions of refugees who had fled from Afghanistan after the Soviet armed intervention. Lastly, the Government of the Republic of Korea, convinced that it was necessary to lessen the burden represented by refugees for the countries of Africa, a continent where the situation was particularly serious, had participated in the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, held in 1981, and demonstrated its solidarity with the peoples concerned by making a financial contribution. It was prepared to participate actively in the second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, which the General Assembly had decided to convene in 1984, and to contribute its share of financial and material resources. The Republic of Korea supported UNHCR's initiatives aimed at enabling refugees to become self-sufficient pending a permanent solution for their situation, and it endorsed UNHCR's determination to preserve the non-political character of its activities, which alone guaranteed that its intervention would be effective.

16. Turning to the efforts being carried on by UNHCR in many parts of the world to reunite families, he said the Republic of Korea noted with encouragement that the States concerned had generally welcomed UNHCR's initiatives in that regard. Thirty years after the Korean War, the 5 million refugees who had fled from the North to the South between 1950 and 1953, leaving behind them their homes, parents and children, still had no knowledge of their relatives' fate.

17. Mr. HAN Si Hae (Observer for the People's Democratic Republic of Korea), having asked for the floor, said that the Observer for the Republic of Korea was departing too far from the question being considered by the Committee.

18. Mr. LEE See Young (Observer for the Republic of Korea) replied that the facts he was referring to were directly related to the question under consideration, and he would therefore continue his statement.

19. In 1971, the Republic of Korea Red Cross had taken the first step by starting negotiations on reuniting refugee families. The negotiations had lasted until 1973, when the North Korean Red Cross had unilaterally suspended them. Since then, the efforts of the Republic of Korea Red Cross to deal with that humanitarian problem, independently of any political considerations, had been fruitless. In June 1983, the Republic of Korea television broadcasting system had launched a campaign during which some 100,000 refugees had appeared on the television screen to give all the information they had available about their separated family members, in the hope of finding them or at least of learning their fate. By 14 November 1983, 10,189 persons had thus been reunited with their families, and many others were expected to be so in the coming months. Unfortunately, the campaign was limited to the territory south of the armistice line. It was urgent to act before it was too late, particularly for those who were already old and longed desperately to have news of their families before they died. Humanitarian organizations must do all they could to trace the families that had been separated for 30 years and enable their members to exchange information.

20. Mr. SOERIAATMADJA (Indonesia) said his delegation believed, like the High Commissioner, that voluntary repatriation was the most acceptable and durable option for all the parties concerned. Since voluntary repatriation was often linked to political developments in the countries of origin, it was very important for facilitating such repatriation that political settlements should be attained in those countries.

21. The integration of refugees into the countries of first asylum, another alternative mentioned by the High Commissioner, posed many risks. Those countries were often developing countries which could absorb only a very small number of persons, and local integration could thus have adverse consequences on internal political, economic and social conditions there.

22. The third alternative, namely, resettlement of the refugees in a third country, had proved particularly effective in solving the refugee problems in South-East Asia.

23. In his delegation's view, the physical safety of refugees was a critical problem in many parts of the world, particularly in Lebanon - where hundreds of refugees had been killed in the camps at Sabra and Shatila - in Central America and along the Thai-Kampuchean border. Since UNHCR had neither the means nor the competence to provide refugees with physical protection, responsibility for such protection rested with the international community.

24. The refugee situation in South-East Asia had improved considerably since 1979. Indonesia was one of the countries which offered temporary asylum to large numbers of Indo-Chinese refugees. They had the opportunity to acquire skills in the processing centres set up to facilitate their integration. The current problem

(Mr. Soeriaatmadja, Indonesia)

for the first-asylum countries in South-East Asia was the declining rate of refugee resettlement in third countries. Notwithstanding extensive international assistance, the fact that Indo-Chinese refugees were spending more time in the processing centres was imposing a considerable burden on the host countries.

25. International co-operation to provide protection and other forms of assistance for refugees must be enhanced; it was not worthy that the developing countries, despite their economic difficulties, had continued to provide temporary shelter for refugees, as well as material relief and moral support.

26. Indonesia fully supported the convening of the second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, to be held at Geneva in 1984.

27. Mrs. LUANGHY (Zaire) said that all States, even those not in direct contact with the refugee tragedy, had a responsibility to face the problem, rightly described in the High Commissioner's report as alarming, particularly with regard to international protection.

28. At present there were large-scale movements of populations forced to seek refuge outside their country of origin. With regard to such populations, as well as to individual refugees, countries should strictly observe the basic principles of international protection - asylum and non-refoulement - (and) seek durable solutions, of which voluntary repatriation was of course the most desirable.

29. The African continent currently had the largest number of refugees. The Organization of African Unity had, since its creation, been obliged to face the problem, and in consequence it had adopted a refugee convention which complemented, at the regional level, the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention. The African States faithfully applied the principles of asylum and non-refoulement set forth in both instruments.

30. In order to mobilize resources to assist African host countries, the General Assembly had convened, at Geneva, the first International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa; unfortunately, it had been only partly successful. Therefore, a second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa was to be held in 1984, and the international community must do all it could to make it a success.

31. The Republic of Zaire, true to its tradition of hospitality and in conformity with the international instruments to which it had acceded, was making and would continue to make every effort to alleviate the sufferings of refugees, with the assistance of UNHCR, whose regional bureau was at Kinshasa.

32. Zaire had managed to solve the refugee problem to a large extent, either through the formula of voluntary repatriation - many Zairians had in fact returned to their country following the general amnesty proclaimed on 19 May 1983 - or through local integration. Moreover, Zaire's governmental authorities, with a view to providing a durable solution to the refugee problem, were to establish,

(Mrs. Luanghy, Zaire)

beginning in 1983, a national commission for refugees, which would consist of members of the various ministries involved in arrangements for refugee assistance.

33. The basic respect for human life required that selfish political considerations should be subordinated to humanitarian needs. In that light, Zaire supported all efforts by the United Nations system and voluntary organizations to assist refugees and would support all draft resolutions submitted on the matter.

34. Mrs. DOUMA (Congo) said that forced displacement of people from one country to another stemmed from violation of the fundamental rights of the individual and of peoples, including the right to freedom, self-determination and a truly democratic order. In general, moreover, refugees were merely scapegoats for conflicts in which they had had no part. For the sake of equity and justice, therefore, such innocent people must be provided with asylum, shelter and assistance. Accordingly, credit was due to the measures taken by the United Nations pursuant to the Charter, in close collaboration with Governments, to provide refugees with acceptable living conditions in the host countries. The international community should not forget, however, that a true and a durable solution lay not only in a better application of the principles of international law concerning friendly relations among States and the peaceful settlement of international disputes but also in the reconciliation of the various social group interests within a country. A tribute should be paid to the sacrifices made by host States, the majority of which were developing countries, and to UNHCR's efforts to ease the burden which large-scale influxes placed on those countries. The Congo was a case in point; it had had to take in a large number of nationals of Chad, most of them young people who had fled from the killings and would be seeking an opportunity to continue their education in the host country. Her country had been able to provide most of those young Africans with basic housing, health and educational services. The Government of the Congo wished to thank UNHCR for the help given to its national refugee-assistance committee. The Congo hoped that a peaceful solution could be found for the tragedy facing the people of Chad, through internal negotiation and reconciliation free from outside intervention. Unfortunately, in the case of Chad as in other cases, foreign countries' military assistance sometimes far exceeded their economic or humanitarian assistance, even though only the latter forms could help to reduce tension and settle the conflicts which gave rise to massive exoduses.

35. She hoped that at the second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, the international community would approach the refugee problem in a realistic, determined and pragmatic way which would at last give the world's refugees grounds for hope.

36. Mr. RUPIA (United Republic of Tanzania) said that over the past 30 years, the number of refugees in the world had risen from 1.5 million to 10 million, including 5 million in Africa alone. Those figures indicated the extent of the problem which required immense humanitarian assistance in the immediate term in the form of emergency relief and to which, in the long term, a permanent solution would have to be found.

(Mr. Rupia, United Republic of Tanzania)

37. It should not be forgotten that refugees were never responsible for the conditions which precipitated their departure; moreover, mass exodus was often preceded by the disruption of the economic infrastructure, so that refugees were also poor, hungry and desperate. Refugees were sometimes refused humanitarian assistance because of their race, religion or even the ideology of their country of origin, or were forced back or else detained in camps while awaiting a decision on their status. States should not allow political considerations to override their duty to assist persons who were totally desperate, whatever their race or religion, to adopt more generous policies of asylum and to respect the principle of non-refoulement as rights recognized to refugees under international instruments. It was true that liberal admission policies were sometimes abused and, in reaction, bone fide requests were refused. In many cases, however, delays in the admission of refugees resulted from a lack of experience in handling mass influxes, or the absence of administrative arrangements or structures to determine the eligibility of the persons concerned without delay. That was a technical problem which could be resolved by establishing the necessary legal and administrative framework. In that respect, he recalled the appeal made on that subject by the International Conference on the Situation of Refugees in Africa held in 1979.

38. The Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania had passed legislation to protect persons admitted as refugees, particularly by assuring their physical safety and protecting them from arbitrary measures of expulsion, detention or molestation; that legislation also created certain obligations to refugees which reinforced their rights. The Government had also set up an eligibility commission to review applications for refugee status and formulate plans to handle possible large-scale influxes of refugees and settle them rapidly.

39. Since its accession to independence, the United Republic of Tanzania had received many refugees from most of the neighbouring countries. Thus, it had had to call upon the international community many times to provide the necessary material assistance to ensure refugees the vital minimum - food, clothing, medicine and shelter - until they could provide for themselves. As far as possible, refugees had been settled in existing populated areas, but the Government had often had to devote substantial resources, both human and financial, to the preparation and maintenance of settlement areas, and to provide minimum facilities (education, transport and communications, medical services and the supply of clean water). With the assistance of the Office of the High Commissioner, it had been possible to improve conditions in most camps. It was important to enable refugees to provide for their own needs, particularly when the prospects of repatriation were not good in the immediate future. Thus, refugee camps should not be considered as holding camps, but as community development schemes which would enable refugees to make a start in their new lives if they decided to remain in the receiving country; in the event of voluntary repatriation of all the refugees, they could serve as development centres for the local population. His Government hoped that the Office of the High Commissioner, which was already financing projects for refugees counselling and vocational and technical training centres, and although it was not a development agency as such, would do more in that respect. His Government welcomed UNDP's decision to provide development assistance to supplement the relief provided by the Office of the High Commissioner.

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(Mr. Rupia, United Republic of Tanzania)

40. With the liberation of the former Portuguese colonies and of Zimbabwe, and the improvement of situations which had given rise to mass exoduses, most of the refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania had been able to return to their countries. About 200,000 remained, and there was every reason to believe that their numbers would further diminish. However, there were some refugees whose hopes of repatriation were unpromising or who had lived for a long time in Tanzania and wished to remain: his Government offered them the opportunity of acquiring Tanzanian citizenship. Obviously that policy involved an increase in public expenditure for the provision of basic services, but it also brought about a social and cultural enrichment of Tanzania because of the diversity of the refugees who settled there. If voluntary repatriation was not possible, it was the best permanent solution to the problem of refugees.

41. For the States which bordered on racist South Africa, the problem of refugees was a permanent reality. Those countries were often poor, or small, and therefore ill-suited to bear the immense burden imposed on them by refugees; nevertheless, they were continuing to receive them because they were aware of the humanitarian aspect of the problem and of the obligations which they had undertaken under international instruments protecting the rights of refugees. The international community therefore had a duty to share their burden. Those countries which had received South African refugees who had been victims of institutionalized racism, such as Angola, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Zambia, were also victims of acts of aggression and terrorism on the part of the Pretoria régime; they were therefore entitled to demand that the international community assist them not only in fulfilling their humanitarian role but also in safeguarding their sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence.

42. His Government expressed appreciation to the High Commissioner, who had responded promptly to the appeal made by Lesotho, a victim of the systematic policy of strangulation of South Africa, and found it regrettable that some countries were unwilling to assist Lesotho to resettle South African refugees. It paid tribute to the countries which had made generous contributions to refugee programmes and expressed the hope that their concern about the increasingly slow progress made in finding permanent solutions to the problem would be reflected in increased support to programmes and active opposition to conditions that were the result of Government policies aimed at deliberately excluding the majority of citizens from political, economic and social life on the basis of race and condemning them to flee. His Government was pleased that the second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa would be an occasion to concentrate attention on the seriousness of the problem in Africa and to stress the need to strengthen the capacity of the receiving countries to bear the burden represented by the problem of refugees for their economies and infrastructures.

43. The funds provided through the Office of the High Commissioner and the \$600 million contributed at the first International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, had no doubt helped alleviate the sufferings of many African refugees and opened the way to their voluntary repatriation. However, many refugees were still languishing in exile with little hope of return. They would

(Mr. Rupia, United Republic of Tanzania)

stay there till the primary causes of the problem were eliminated. It had to be recognized that, apart from the victims of natural catastrophes, refugees constituted a political problem: it was States which provoked their exodus and, in some cases, were exploiting the problem of refugees for political purposes; it was therefore up to States to adopt policies which could resolve the problem of refugees in a permanent manner.

44. Echoing the words of President Nyerere on 3 October 1983 during the ceremony honouring him with the Nansen medal, he paid tribute to the dedication and competence of the High Commissioner for Refugees and his assistants.

45. Mr. HAN Si Hae (Observer for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that to finally settle the refugee problem, the political root cause had to be eradicated, which lay in the policy of aggression, war, colonialism and neo-colonialism, domination, zionism and the racism of the imperialists and colonialists.

46. Millions of Palestinians, Namibians and South Africans were deprived of their inalienable right to live in their homelands as a result of the inhuman policy of the Zionists and racists, who were actively supported by the United States. When the Zionists, under the patronage of the United States, had established the State of Israel in Palestine in 1948, 750,000 Palestinian Arabs had been driven from their homes, stripped of their property and condemned to live as refugees and exiles. The expulsion of Palestinian Arabs had continued during the three expansionist wars launched by Israel in 1948, 1956 and 1967. Over the years, the number of refugees, homeless and uprooted had risen to hundreds of thousands. The year before, the whole world had seen how the Zionists had opened fire on Palestinian women, children and old people in Beirut. Responsibility for those crimes, which had appalled the world, lay not only with the Israeli aggressors but also with the United States.

47. In the case of southern Africa, the South African Government's policy of apartheid and its illegal occupation of Namibia had forced many to seek refuge in neighbouring States.

48. With regard to Korea, in 1945 the United States imperialists had militarily occupied South Korea, cut off all communications between the north and the south, and divided the country in two. As a result, a large number of families had been separated. During the Korean war, United States troops temporarily occupying the northern part of the Republic had used threats and intimidation to force large numbers of people to leave the north for the south, thereby further aggravating the problem of separated families. Thirty years had elapsed since the cease-fire had been declared but such families still did not know whether or not their relatives were alive because, although they lived only a very short distance away, they could not meet or even correspond. The Government and the Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had been trying to reduce the suffering of families which were divided between the north and the south.

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(Mr. Han Si Hae, Observer, Democratic  
People's Republic of Korea)

49. To that end, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had proposed at the political conference on Korea held at Geneva in 1954, the restoration of exchanges and communication between the north and the south, and in January 1957, the Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had made a proposal to the South Korean side to discuss the problem of divided families, including the exchange of correspondence. All those proposals had been rejected by the United States and the South Korean side. However, that had not deterred the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from its efforts to reunify separated families. After much hesitation and delay, negotiations had taken place in 1970 between the Red Cross Societies of South Korea and North Korea, at the latter's initiative. However, the negotiations had come to nothing, despite the proposals made by North Korea to facilitate contacts between the people living in the two parts of the country. Since the objective of the authorities of South Korea was not reunification but permanent division, they had, in August 1973, after kidnapping Mr. Kim Dai Jung, a democratic figure of South Korea, and blaming North Korea for the incident, orchestrated a violent campaign against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which had led to the collapse of the negotiations.

50. The root cause of the separation of families in the Korean peninsula was the continued occupation of South Korea by the United States. As long as that occupation continued, the reunification of Korea could not be achieved and the problem of the separated families could not be solved. The problem of the reunification of families in the north and the south had absolutely nothing to do with agenda item 89, entitled "Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees", in view of its character and root causes. Agenda item 98 concerned only the problem of refugees who needed international protection. The United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees made no reference to the refugees of the Korean peninsula. Nevertheless, for purposes of political propaganda, the representative of South Korea had seen fit to raise the matter in connection with the Committee's consideration of that agenda item. The representative of South Korea had even asserted that many divided families had already been reunified in the south. If that were true, one would question why the separated families in South Korea had only recently been reunified when the armistice had been signed some 30 years earlier. The answer was simple: the successive rulers of South Korea had opposed the solution of the problem, and there were still many social, political and legal factors hampering the reunification of the separated families in South Korea.

51. Mr. See Young LEE (Observer for the Republic of Korea) said that the problem of divided families was first and foremost a humanitarian issue and that, for that reason, he did not intend to engage in a political polemic with or reply to the false allegations and lies uttered by the Observer for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who represented one of the most barbarous régimes in the world.

52. Mr. RIETJENS (Belgium) said that his delegation shared the deep concern expressed by the Greek delegation, speaking on behalf of the 10 countries of the European Community, over the grave deterioration of the situation of refugees

(Mr. Rietjens, Belgium)

throughout the world. Given that state of affairs, the responsibilities of the High Commissioner with respect to both protection and assistance were more important than ever before. In his delegation's view, the best way to solve the problem of refugees was to ensure that all States acceded to the relevant international instruments and scrupulously complied with the obligations arising from such instruments and with the fundamental principles relating to the status of refugees, such as the principle of non-refoulement. However, he agreed with the High Commissioner and the Executive Committee that the proliferation of manifestly unfounded applications for asylum would do substantial harm to the cause of genuine refugees. His delegation shared the High Commissioner's fear that some authorities might be tempted to introduce restrictive provisions to counter such abuses. It was therefore essential to involve UNHCR in efforts to define the status of refugees in view of its competence and the special expertise of its staff. Belgium had delegated to UNHCR much of its sovereignty in the matter.

53. Another distressing problem which called for the attention of the international community was the persistence of military attacks on refugee camps. It was regrettable that the Executive Committee had not reached agreement on a statement of principles which would afford greater protection to refugee camps. It was to be hoped that agreement would be reached in the near future on a text which would strike a balance between the intrinsically humanitarian character of such camps and the obligation to refrain from belligerent acts against such camps. Another question which caused his delegation concern was the steady decline in the number of vessels willing to take on refugees in distress at sea. The Belgian Government would therefore give very careful consideration to the proposals of UNHCR on that matter, in particular, the proposal with regard to participation in the so-called RASRO scheme (Rescue at Sea Resettlement Offers).

54. His delegation agreed with the High Commissioner that the best solution to the problem of refugees was still voluntary repatriation. Where that was not feasible, the solution should be local integration or resettlement in third countries. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium had emphasized in his recent statement to the General Assembly, co-operation between neighbouring States was one of the best means of creating conditions conducive to a satisfactory and long-term settlement of the refugee problem. In that connection, the Minister had stressed the importance of development projects to build up the infrastructures of countries of asylum and had pointed out that a regional and subregional approach could be particularly effective since it took into account the particular nature of the problems involved, which were not the same in all parts of the world.

55. There was no doubt that Africa as a region was especially prone to the scourge of refugee flows and population shifts. Accordingly, the second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, to be held in Geneva in July 1984, should provide an opportunity to improve ways of finding lasting solutions. As his Minister for Foreign Affairs had stated, Belgium intended to participate actively in the Conference and its follow-up, either directly or through the European Communities, which could readily base their activities on the Lomé Convention and the basic regulation specifically on co-operation with third world States not associated with the Communities.

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(Mr. Rietjens, Belgium)

56. His country's contributions in cash and in kind to UNHCR programmes for refugees had amounted to \$2,400,000 in 1982. Belgium had some 35,000 refugees on its territory, and its admissions in 1982 had included more than 400 family members of refugees it had previously accepted, a hundred or so boat people picked up by Belgian ships, disabled refugees and some particularly difficult cases. His Government would continue to support the High Commissioner's efforts to protect and assist refugees and to find lasting solutions to the problem.

57. Mrs. ZACHAROPOULOS (Greece) said that her Government attached the utmost importance to the High Commissioner's task and believed that the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the additional 1967 Protocol formed an adequate universal basis for the international protection of refugees. The fundamental rights of all persons forced to leave their homes must be respected, and respect for the principle of non-refoulement proclaimed in the 1951 Convention was absolutely essential.

58. Her Government particularly appreciated the work done by the High Commissioner in co-ordinating aid programmes for displaced persons in Cyprus. Two hundred thousand Greek Cypriots had had to leave their homes in 1974 after the Turkish invasion of the island, and nine years later they were still awaiting a chance to return.

59. Her delegation believed that refugees in Africa, the Middle East and Asia must be protected against acts of violence of any kind and their survival ensured. It hoped that the second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa would improve the lot of the refugees and displaced persons in that region.

60. If lasting solutions to the problem of refugees and displaced persons worldwide were to be reached, international solidarity would have to be relied upon as much as possible. In particular, steps must be taken to allow those who so desired to return to their homes with all necessary guarantees, and allow the remainder to be integrated where they were or resettled in third countries.

61. In the belief that contributions to the UNHCR budget were one of the best ways of guaranteeing the efficacy and continuity of the task in hand, her Government intended to make a contribution of \$90,000 for 1984.

62. Mr. NGUYEN LUONG (Viet Nam) said that broader and more active international co-operation was vital if the refugee problem was to be solved, for most of the countries concerned were having to deal with situations they could not control and difficulties they were ill-equipped to overcome for all their hard work and good intentions. The High Commissioner for Refugees thus had an important role to play by putting to use the experience he had accumulated in fulfilling his apolitical, humanitarian mandate. His delegation also welcomed the fact that, in keeping with General Assembly resolution 37/197, preparations were currently under way for convening a second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, where half of the world's refugees were to be found.

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(Mr. Nguyen Luong, Viet Nam)

63. His country, which because of its history was well acquainted with the problem of refugees, believed that if the problem was to be solved a strictly humanitarian approach and humanitarian measures were needed; the introduction of other considerations only complicated further an already involved problem and delayed any solution. His country's co-operation with UNHCR in that spirit over the years had produced constructive results, as shown by the High Commissioner's report: the programme of regular departures was continuing to the satisfaction of all concerned, and Kampuchean refugees in Viet Nam were receiving UNHCR assistance with the consent of both parties. The joint communiqué published after the October 1983 talks in Geneva between his delegation, UNHCR and the other countries involved had once again highlighted Viet Nam's co-operative attitude and, in that connection, the satisfaction of the parties concerned. Viet Nam had also engaged in a more concrete and a longer-term effort by launching economic reconstruction and accelerated social development programmes and by taking legislative steps to put a halt to the activities of those who secretly organized illegal departures. Unfortunately, its efforts were blocked by the psychological warfare and destabilizing activities being conducted by hegemonist expansionist forces with the complicity of the forces of imperialism.

64. One means of procuring a lasting solution to the problem of refugees was, without doubt, voluntary repatriation. Agreements to that effect had been concluded between his country and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Despite the doubts raised by a supposedly voluntary, but in fact forced, repatriation programme for Kampuchean refugees in Thailand the Kampuchean Government had, on purely humanitarian grounds and without implying any de facto or de jure political or diplomatic recognition on either side, officially proposed contacts between the Kampuchean Red Cross and Thai Red Cross with a view to securing the repatriation of those Kampuchean refugees that wished to return to their homes. The proposal still stood, and UNHCR could play a part in that matter.

65. Armed attacks on refugee camps were another problem about which the international community was justly concerned, and the High Commissioner himself had condemned such attacks while stipulating that he was referring to true refugee camps. The stipulation was important, for reactionary forces often launched attacks against the sovereignty and security of neighbouring States from refugee camps. Such attacks must cease, and reactionary forces must not be given asylum and sanctuary in refugee camps. Then it would be possible to provide better protection for the refugees' interests, and easier to restore peace and stability to the region, especially on the western frontier of the People's Republic of Kampuchea. In that regard his delegation endorsed the opinion, expressed by the High Commissioner in his report, that the strictly humanitarian and civilian nature of the camps and refugee settlement zones must be strictly guaranteed and that camps and zones must be sited at a reasonable distance from frontiers.

66. The resettlement of refugees in third countries was a positive measure, especially when the refugees were former collaborators or people who, for one reason or another, felt unable to share the difficulties that their fellow citizens would have to confront in their struggle to win independence and rebuild their

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(Mr. Nguyen Luong, Viet Nam)

country. His delegation felt that countries which could take in such people, particularly those which were to some extent responsible for their situation, should shoulder their responsibilities by creating conditions conducive to an orderly departure and by ceasing to encourage illegal departures. It should not, on the other hand, be forgotten that refugee flows provoked by a foreign country were often used by the country concerned to recruit mercenaries who were then sent back to their countries of origin to engage in sabotage. The countries of Indo-China were currently suffering from just such illegal dealings. His delegation felt that UNHCR should pay attention to that aspect of the refugee problem in its action to protect refugees.

67. As far as his delegation was concerned, a lasting solution to the refugee problem would require the underlying causes of the exodus to be eradicated, and allowance must be made for the difficulties that the countries of origin - developing countries - faced owing to the loss of human resources they could have used in their economic and social development.

68. He strongly objected to the allegations and defamatory remarks made by the United States delegation against his country, which clearly demonstrated that the United States imperialists had still not been able to swallow the defeat they had suffered in Viet Nam. Those who had devastated Viet Nam and perpetrated innumerable crimes in an inhuman war of genocide and ecocide were in no position to preach to their victims. It was in fact United States leaders who were organizing and encouraging illegal departures of Vietnamese citizens, and it was ironic that those who had engineered the refugee problem should subsequently shed crocodile tears over the fate of their victims. It was outrageous for the United States, which had done its utmost to return Viet Nam to the stone age, to speak of human rights in that country.

69. The Americans were past masters in the art of falsification. They themselves had, moreover, recently admitted that the incident in the Gulf of Tonkin, which had triggered their armed aggression against Viet Nam, had been nothing more than a trumped-up incident to justify that aggression. They had similarly invoked a so-called threat to the safety of a certain number of their nationals to justify their aggression against Grenada. The efforts made by the Americans to prove the existence of the famous "yellow rain" had also foundered since Australian scientists, after having analysed samples, had reached the conclusion that they were not genuine. Indeed the United States would like the world to forget the chemical warfare which it had itself waged in Viet Nam and which was still affecting many Vietnamese and former United States soldiers, so that it could produce still more murderous chemical weapons.

70. Mrs. KOZAKOU-MARCOULLIS (Cyprus) said that one third of the Cypriot population had been forcibly uprooted from its ancestral lands. Turkey, which occupied 40 per cent of Cypriot territory, continued to deny the Cypriot people their right of return, in defiance of repeated demands by the international community. Furthermore Turkey had implanted thousands of settlers in Cyprus from the mainland, and had distributed homes and lands belonging to the indigenous population so as to change the demographic composition of the island and permanently prevent the refugees from returning.

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(Mrs. Kozakou-Marcoullis, Cyprus)

71. The Cypriots were fully determined to continue their just struggle for freedom until the occupation forces left their territory and the 200,000 Cypriot refugees returned home. The Cypriot people were grateful to UNHCR for the international assistance that it had provided, which had greatly contributed towards alleviating their suffering.

72. Mr. SVIRIDOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the reports submitted under item 98 indicated that there were still serious refugee problems in many parts of the world. In the Middle East, 2 million Palestinians expelled by the Israeli aggressors had, since 1948, been living in refugee camps where their tragedy continued, as the massacres at Sabra and Shatila evidenced. In southern Africa the racist Pretoria régime, supported by the West, was forcing Africans, through its policy of massive repression, to seek refuge in neighbouring States, where they were penned by the million in reservations in which they became refugees in their own country. The South African military relentlessly attacked refugee camps situated in the territory of neighbouring countries. In El Salvador, Guatemala and certain other States in Latin America, the growing number of refugees forced to leave their countries by repressive dictatorships supported by the United States was a cause of serious concern.

73. The root causes would have to be tackled if the problems of refugees were to be resolved. They originated in the acts of imperialist circles, but also in the serious economic situation of young States, which was one of the consequences of the colonial yoke and neo-colonialist exploitation.

74. The Soviet Union did not remain aloof with regard to refugee aid. His country provided substantial bilateral assistance in several areas to African and other developing countries, particularly to those countries which were experiencing problems of refugees and displaced persons. Such aid had amounted in 1981 to almost 1.3 per cent of the gross national product of the USSR. The Soviet Union would continue to provide those countries with the aid they needed in their struggle for economic independence.

75. The problem of refugees should be tackled in a constructive spirit. It was intolerable that aid should be provided to refugees for political purposes or to interfere in the internal affairs of States. The United States, lavish with fine words on "human rights", sheltered Nazi war criminals and all kinds of renegades, traitors, and criminal and counter-revolutionary elements, from which it formed bands which it sent to carry out subversive activities in various parts of the world, passing them off as refugees.

76. That was particularly evident in Afghanistan, where counter-revolutionary bands were conducting, at the instigation of the United States, an undeclared war against that country. Afghans who lived abroad and who had been deceived by fallacious propaganda should not be confused with those so-called Afghan refugees. The Afghan Government was encouraging the return of the increasing numbers of Afghans who wished to share in building a new life. His delegation categorically rejected the mendacious and slanderous remarks made by the United States with

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(Mr. Sviridov, USSR)

regard to the so-called Afghan and South-East Asian refugees, the sole aim of which was to divert the world community's attention from the tragedy of the victims of the genocide perpetrated by Israel and the racist South African régime.

77. Mr. HARTLING (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he had been moved by the expressions of gratitude proffered by many delegations to him and his staff. The support given by the members of the Third Committee to the work of the Office of the High Commissioner and the many references which had been made to the purely humanitarian nature of its task were a source of encouragement.

78. He had also noted the appreciation expressed by many countries of the way in which preparations were proceeding for the second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa. He would convey those sentiments to the Steering Committee for the Conference.

79. Mr. RIACHE (Algeria), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of Morocco, in her statement at an earlier meeting, had cast aspersions on Algeria. It should be stressed that his delegation, concerned to respect the apolitical nature of UNHCR's activities and aware of the fact that other forums were competent to consider the question of Western Sahara, had made no reference to Morocco. The question of Western Sahara was, moreover, a classic instance of decolonization. Inhabitants of Western Sahara had sought refuge in Algeria simply because they had been expelled from their territory. Furthermore, his delegation had not spoken on behalf of the Saharan people, but had merely reported on the sufferings of Saharan refugees. If the Moroccan delegation wished to receive additional information on the situation of the Saharan people, it had only to refer to the Organization of African Unity which, on many occasions, had invited Morocco to consider the question with the sole representative of the Saharan people, the Frente POLISARIO. But Morocco's sole concern in the matter seemed to be to provoke new flows of refugees.

80. With regard to the Moroccan delegation's allegations, particularly the offer of repatriation supposedly made to Saharan refugees by the Moroccan Government, the Saharan people themselves were only too well aware of the value of security guarantees offered by Morocco. Furthermore the Saharans did not consider themselves Moroccan subjects, and until they had exercised their inalienable right to self-determination there could be no question of "repatriation" for them.

81. With respect to the Saharan refugee camps in Algeria in which, according to the Moroccan representative, the Saharans were virtually prisoners, he noted that several UNHCR delegations had visited those camps and that the presence of the refugees in Algeria was temporary, and would end once the Saharan people had had an opportunity to freely determine their future.

82. In an agreement concluded with the Government of Algeria, Office of the High Commissioner had itself recognized Saharans in Algeria as refugees. However, the funds allocated to Algeria by the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees were far from sufficient to meet the refugees' needs. Moreover, the Saharan people was determined to exercise its right to independence instead of being dependent on international aid.

(Mr. Riache, Algeria)

83. Algeria had a duty of solidarity with a neighbouring people which rejected domination, and it would continue its assistance to that people as a matter of principle.

84. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that she had given detailed consideration to the Executive Committee's documents on assistance to Saharan refugees. The Algerian authorities claimed to have spent \$300 million on the few dozen thousands of so-called Saharan refugees. It was inconceivable that with such large sums those refugees were not receiving better treatment. Numerous witnesses confirmed that the food situation in the Tindouf camps was disastrous. Children were trained in handling weapons from the age of 13, in violation of the provisions of the Declaration on the Rights of the Child. All able-bodied men were enlisted in the armed forces or given degrading work. The women were assigned to weapons maintenance or to working long hours on building or brick-making. Two members of the Frente POLISARIO who had fled to Europe and whose evidence was reliable had stated that there was plenty of money for weapons at Tindouf but little for dealing with epidemics and providing enough food for the Saharan population. A Netherlands parliamentary delegation had confirmed that situation in 1981 during an eventful tour of the camps at Tindouf and the so-called liberated territories. Following that visit, a Netherlands journal had reported that the delegation had returned from its mission with serious doubts about the nature and operations of the Frente POLISARIO and had been shocked to find that the Frente POLISARIO was using Netherlands taxpayers' money to falsify facts.

85. In conclusion, she renewed the recent appeal of the Government of His Majesty King Hassan II to the inhabitants of Tindouf and the former Spanish Sahara. Her Government had decided to do everything possible, in close collaboration with the High Commissioner, to ensure the repatriation of persons of established Saharan origin who had voluntarily expressed their wish to return. King Hassan II had appealed to his brothers of former Spanish Sahara to inform the representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that they wished to return home and regain possession of their property. The best way of putting an end to Algeria's accusations would be to take a census.

86. Mr. NABIL (Afghanistan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that on 24 August 1981, his Government, in an effort to settle the so-called Afghan refugee problem once and for all, had reaffirmed the general amnesty for persons who for various reasons were living outside the country. The amnesty ensured full freedom and immunity on their return home for all Afghans who were temporarily living in the territory of Pakistan or other neighbouring countries. Thousands of Afghans had already returned home under those provisions, and the number returning to Afghanistan was constantly increasing.

87. Contrary to the claims of the Islamabad military rulers, the fugitives from Afghanistan were living in deplorable conditions in Pakistan, and the help given to them by Pakistan was derisory. According to the report prepared by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the Afghan refugees occasionally

(Mr. Nabil, Afghanistan)

received an allowance from the Government of Pakistan of 350 rupees per family per month, which was less than \$20. The report also revealed that village authorities exploited the refugees' situation, even selling off part of their food rations. As a result of oppression, relations between the refugees and local populations were marked by friction. Finally, the report also expressed doubts about the real number of refugees, since there appeared to have been cases of double registration. That was not surprising in view of the semi-nomad character of the Afghan people. What could be more convincing than the evidence of some of those so-called refugees who had recently returned to Afghanistan? If they were to be believed, Afghan fugitives in Pakistan were living in the worst material conditions imaginable, and what was more the areas surrounding the camps had been mined so that anyone trying to escape would be killed. The position of the Government of Afghanistan on the question of the so-called Afghan refugees was set forth clearly in document A/38/559.

88. Mr. HUSAIN (Pakistan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, categorically refuted the allegations of the Afghan delegation. Three million people had sought refuge in Pakistan, fleeing from the vast prison that Afghanistan had become under a régime which subjected the inhabitants of the country to the most brutal repression. The situation in Afghanistan had been denounced by the United Nations General Assembly, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. All the Afghan delegation's lies would not stop the facts from emerging or persuade the international community to reconsider its verdict in face of the flagrant aggression against a country by a foreign Power and the millions of refugees that had resulted.

89. Ms. JONES (United States of America), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of the Soviet Union had tried to divert the attention of the members of the Committee by repeating the absurd accusations that he made against the United States year after year. His description of the situation in Afghanistan was shown to be false by the millions of people who had fled their country and by all the Afghans who were fighting for their freedom. For his part, the representative of Viet Nam was trying to make people forget the policies of a régime that had forced millions of Vietnamese to flee, regardless of the dangers that faced them. Those two representatives seemed to have forgotten that their Governments were by themselves responsible for half the world refugee population because of the policies they pursued.

90. The United States was justly proud of its assistance to refugees in all parts of the world, including its assistance to UNRWA in the Middle East, and of its contribution of one third of the funds needed by the international community to alleviate the sufferings of displaced persons. That figure was more eloquent than the mere words - and only words - that certain countries had to offer.

91. Mr. SVIRIDOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the facts spoke for themselves, and since it could not refute the facts, the United States delegation had once again resorted to slanderous allegations which the USSR delegation categorically rejected. However,

(Mr. Sviridov, USSR)

slandorous and hypocritical inventions could not affect the fact that the reason why there were so many refugees in the world was the United States policy of interference in the affairs of other countries.

92. To illustrate the hypocritical attitude of the United States in that respect, it was sufficient to point out that in the United States Haitian refugees were put in prison and refugees from El Salvador were forcibly returned to their country.

93. Ms. JONES (United States of America), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that on one point at least she was in complete agreement with the representative of the USSR: constant repetition of a lie did not turn that lie into a truth. Where her views differed from those of the representative of the USSR was on the question of who was speaking the truth and who was lying.

The meeting rose at 7.30 p.m.