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## Third Committee

### Summary record of the 41st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 4 November 2010, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Tommo Monthe . . . . . (Cameroon)

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

#### **Address by the President of the General Assembly**

1. **Mr. Deiss** (President of the General Assembly) said that he appreciated the opportunity to address the Committee and welcomed its contribution to the work of the General Assembly, which helped to alleviate the workload of the plenary. If the Committees of the General Assembly were its kitchens, the Third Committee was the busiest kitchen of all, judging by the number of meetings.

2. He noted that many delegates in the Third Committee had come from Geneva, which helped to bring the two offices closer together and increased understanding of the work being carried out in both New York and Geneva, particularly in light of the Human Rights Council five-year review.

3. He welcomed the extensive debates that the Committee had held with the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the special procedures mandate holders and commended the work being done to prepare and adopt the draft resolutions. The constructive atmosphere that prevailed in the Committee was confirmed by the fact that over 500 speakers had taken the floor during the current session.

#### **Agenda item 28: Advancement of women (continued)**

##### **(b) Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (continued)**

*Draft resolution A/C.3/65/L.55: Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly*

4. **Ms. Melon** (Argentina), introducing the draft resolution, said that 2010 would be remembered as an important year for the advancement of gender equality as it marked the fifteenth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and, more importantly, the inauguration of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the appointment of Ms. Bachelet as Under-Secretary-General for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. The draft

resolution contained a number of updates in reference to those important events and also to significant documents produced in the last year. It also called on Member States to provide the necessary financing to ensure that UN Women could begin its work without delay.

5. *Draft resolution A/C.3/65/L.55 was adopted.*

#### **Agenda item 61: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions (continued)**

*Draft resolution A/C.3/65/L.24: Enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*

6. **Mr. Atayev** (Turkmenistan) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of Bulgaria, Cameroon, Croatia and Togo as well as his own delegation.

7. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Albania, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Montenegro, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

*Draft resolution A/C.3/65/L.58: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*

8. **Mr. Kirst** (Sweden), introducing the draft resolution, said that the main change to the draft resolution before the Committee was the reference to the sixtieth anniversary of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the preamble. Paragraphs 3 and 6, referring to the conclusions adopted by the Executive Committee during its sixty-first session and drawing attention to the commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the fiftieth anniversary of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, respectively, had been added as well. Paragraph 13 had been amended to reflect the importance placed by delegations on collaborative work in relation to common needs assessments. Paragraph 14 had been adjusted to underline the fact that the High Commissioner's reform initiatives had entered the consolidation phase and paragraph 33 had been amended to reflect the evolution of the situation of persons displaced from Iraq.

9. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Afghanistan, Albania, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, the Central African Republic, the Republic of the Congo, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, France, Georgia, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Peru, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

10. **Mr. Abulhasan** (Kuwait) said that the international community must renew its commitment to humanitarian work in view of the challenges that lay ahead. To illustrate, there were currently 11.6 million internally displaced persons in Africa, representing over 40 per cent of the world total.

11. Valuing the work of UNHCR as it did, Kuwait was continuing to provide voluntary contributions: the current year had seen a fivefold increase in those contributions, from \$200,000 to \$1 million. Kuwait also hosted a UNCHR office.

12. In addition, Kuwait provided humanitarian assistance and support for Palestinian refugees, who currently numbered nearly 4,700,000, funding many infrastructure projects through international institutions and providing voluntary support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Such support was particularly essential in view of the criminal siege that Israel had imposed on Gaza and its continuing refusal to implement legally binding United Nations resolutions.

13. Internally displaced persons in Iraq were also urgently in need of humanitarian assistance. That was a responsibility shared by the entire international community, but Kuwait had shown the way with a \$1 million voluntary contribution to UNHCR.

14. **Ms. Belskaya** (Belarus) said that the humanitarian problems posed by the forcible displacement of more than 40 million persons around the world demanded, over and above the response efforts already mounted by the national Governments concerned, strengthened cooperation and coordination between UNHCR, the United Nations peacekeeping forces, other United Nations agencies, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and non-governmental organizations. Stressing the need for

strengthened international solidarity in tackling the refugee problem, she called on UNHCR to seek new partnerships and new donor funding. At the same time, the steady increase in refugee flows made the need to develop standard criteria for granting refugee status more urgent. The migration of UNHCR to a needs-based budget approach necessitated tighter control of its expenditure and the avoidance of duplication with other organizations.

15. Reviewing the refugee situation in Belarus, where, since 1997, more than 3,000 people from 48 different countries had sought refugee status, she reaffirmed her Government's commitment to productive cooperation with UNHCR and drew attention, in particular, to the conclusion of an agreement between Belarus and UNHCR on cooperation and the legal status of the UNHCR office and its staff in Belarus. The Government favoured the expansion and diversification of UNHCR project activities in its country and, to that end, offered the training resources of the Minsk International Training Centre on Migration and Combating Human Trafficking.

16. **Mr. Šćepanović** (Montenegro) said that, as a member of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, his country was working to mitigate and resolve refugee situations. His Government would also be organizing a round table on asylum and statelessness in November 2010 and a celebration of World Refugee Day in 2011 as part of the events to mark the anniversaries of the Convention relating to the status of refugees and the Convention on the reduction of statelessness.

17. During the events that had taken place in the Balkans in the 1990s, Montenegro had accepted thousands of displaced persons. In order to find a sustainable solution for those persons his Government had adopted several policies, including the National Strategy for a durable solution for refugees and internally displaced persons in Montenegro and the Action Plan to resolve the status of displaced persons from the former Yugoslav republics and internally displaced persons from Kosovo residing in Montenegro. The new Asylum Act had initiated a procedure to re-examine the status of all displaced persons in Montenegro and a responsible and non-discriminatory policy had been adopted in an effort to provide those persons with the same rights as

citizens. Refugees and internally displaced persons could be granted permanent residence in Montenegro or full citizenship. Voluntary return was also another possible solution foreseen in the Action Plan. Efforts were being made to ensure that the necessary conditions were in place and to encourage displaced persons to return to Kosovo, but assistance from the international community was sorely needed.

18. Regional cooperation as well as the support and assistance of the international community, in particular the European Commission, UNHCR, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe, would be needed to resolve the problems in the Balkans. His country was actively engaged in bilateral and regional initiatives, in particular the Sarajevo Declaration and the commitments made at the International Conference on Durable Solutions held in Belgrade in March 2010. He reiterated his country's commitment to further strengthen stability and improve cooperation in the region and appealed to Governments and other donors for sustained support for those joint efforts.

19. **Mr. Starčević** (Serbia) said that, as a country with a large number of refugees and displaced persons, Serbia agreed that addressing their humanitarian needs was the core task in situations of conflict and natural disasters. Full protection of the human rights of those displaced, such as the right to freedom of movement and property rights, was crucial for achieving sustainable solutions.

20. In 2008, Serbia had been identified as one of the five countries in the world with a protracted refugee situation. It was fully committed to finding just and sustainable solutions for the displaced population and, in 2010, had hosted a regional conference on the issue in Belgrade with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as representatives of relevant international organizations. Participants undertook to intensify regional cooperation in order to resolve the problem of displacement in the region. One of the most relevant actions taken was consolidation of the data on refugees and returnees according to a matrix prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner, a crucial element in the preparation of regional projects. A joint regional project was being developed to address the needs of the most vulnerable people still living in collective centres.

21. The UNHCR Global Plan of Action on protracted situations underlined the need to provide assistance and find durable solutions emphasizing solidarity and burden-sharing. As a follow-up to the Belgrade conference, an international donor conference was envisaged to discuss the establishment of a multi-donor fund to assist the process of return or local integration of refugees. Serbia was aware that the main responsibility for the scope of the refugee problem lay with the countries of the region and only by addressing all outstanding issues appropriately could a just and durable solution be achieved.

22. Another issue of great concern for Serbia was the problem of internally displaced persons from Kosovo, mainly Serbs and Roma, who were forced to leave the province in 1999 and had been unable to return. In addition to security concerns, there were serious legal and socio-economic obstacles to their return, and creating a safe and sustainable environment for that return remained a challenge for all stakeholders. However, Serbia remained committed to improving the situation through special projects in cooperation with UNHCR, following a needs assessment that was currently under way.

23. **Mr. Barimani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that recent international conflicts had created millions of refugees and neighbouring countries, often from the developing world, had to bear the heavy burden of international responsibility to alleviate the plight of refugees. That was particularly true of the Middle East where, over the past 30 years, Iran had hosted one of the largest and most protracted refugee populations in the world.

24. That situation had imposed considerable socio-economic pressure on the country's capacities in areas such as employment, shelter, education and health care. The voluntary repatriation process, which was the more preferable and durable solution, was extremely slow. Local integration was not an acceptable solution, especially for countries where protracted refugee situations existed.

25. In the case of Afghan refugees, socio-economic factors in their own country adversely affected voluntary repatriation, and the international community should accept greater responsibility for returnees and provide them with more assistance for employment, shelter, health care and education, under the auspices of the Afghan authorities. Their future depended, above

all, on capacity-building, empowerment and skills upgrading and Iran provided extensive employment, vocational and technical training opportunities for Afghan refugees to enable them to assist in the reconstruction of their homeland.

26. Iran had far exceeded its international commitments regarding the assistance it had provided to refugees and displaced persons, in terms of job opportunities and subsidies for essential commodities. However, implementation of the Targeted Subsidies Law and price actualization would affect everyone in the country. Iran hoped that the international community would recognize the new economic situation and help to address it.

27. Instead of focusing on the first host country and providing the option of local integration, the international community should strengthen international cooperation with the country of origin, host and third countries.

28. **Mr. Mikec** (Croatia) said that UNHCR should continue to rely on comprehensive needs assessments to address gaps in protection and ensure that scarce resources were allocated to the most vulnerable in the search for durable solutions.

29. At the March 2010 Belgrade conference the countries of south-eastern Europe had agreed to strengthen regional cooperation in order to end the refugee situation in the region by focusing on the real needs of the most vulnerable so as to offer needs-adjusted solutions. The situation of people living in collective centres had been singled out as a priority project for cooperation among the four countries concerned and a donor event was planned for 2011 in order to secure a durable solution for their housing.

30. Nevertheless, national measures aimed at creating conditions conducive to durable solutions were required and Croatia had been implementing a number of measures in the area of housing and infrastructure. Moreover, it had often stressed that the issue of so-called former tenancy rights holders should be part of the durable solution process, and had introduced a housing programme that enabled such individuals to find housing in Croatia. A new action plan provided for measurable targets and increased transparency; furthermore, the Government had adopted a decision allowing refugees to purchase rented accommodation under advantageous conditions. However, to complete the plan, similar housing support should be provided

by all host countries in the region for those who wished to integrate locally.

31. Every refugee situation was unique and required a sensitive and creative approach. In view of the humanitarian and pragmatic spirit existing among many of the countries in the region, Croatia hoped that their refugee situation would soon be resolved.

32. **Ms. Sunderland** (Canada) said that Canada was committed to supporting the mandate of UNHCR and remained focused on efforts to secure durable solutions, particularly to protracted refugee situations. However, enhanced cooperation was required to respond to evolving challenges such as the exploitation of vulnerable migrants and asylum-seekers, and the abuse of national asylum-seekers by unscrupulous human smugglers.

33. Canada was extremely concerned by the problem of human smuggling, which undermined public support for immigration and refugee protection, while endangering vulnerable people and exploiting national asylum systems. The Government was introducing tough but balanced legislation to restore fairness to Canada's immigration system for legal immigrants and refugees.

34. Too many refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons remained trapped for years in situations of limbo and dependency. Canada welcomed the efforts of UNHCR to increase the focus on resolving protracted situations and was pleased to contribute to the process. Its resettlement programme was one of the most generous in the developed world; each year it resettled an average of around 11,000 refugees through government-assisted and privately sponsored refugee programmes. With the new legislation, the number of refugees resettled would increase by 20 per cent.

35. Canada welcomed initiatives to improve the speed, predictability and coordination of the international humanitarian response and encouraged further discussions to determine how UNHCR could best contribute to the response, including protection activities in the case of natural disasters. Such activities could only be carried out when the necessary conditions were present. The global humanitarian space should be preserved and expanded.

36. Canada strongly supported UNHCR efforts to improve its efficiency and effectiveness and placed a

high priority on age, gender and diversity mainstreaming in order to address the individual vulnerabilities of persons of concern.

37. A comprehensive approach was required to resolve the problems of forced displacement and Canada encouraged partnerships between development, peace and security, and humanitarian actors to promote consideration of displacement issues in non-traditional forums. It also encouraged increased international cooperation to strengthen rules in areas of emerging concern, such as irregular migration and human smuggling.

38. **Ms. Boiko** (Ukraine) said that Ukraine supported the structural and administrative reform processes that UNHCR had undertaken. Furthermore, UNHCR actions to assist Governments with voluntary repatriation of refugees or their integration into host country societies should not be underestimated.

39. The protection of refugees and the prevention and reduction of statelessness were primarily the responsibility of States, in cooperation with the international community and in compliance with international law. With technical assistance from UNHCR, Ukraine had adopted specific laws on refugees and nationality in which the prevention and reduction of statelessness was one of the guiding principles. In addition, several temporary accommodation centres for asylum-seekers were operating, and it was implementing an action plan to integrate those who had been granted refugee status into Ukrainian society.

40. **Mr. Borg** (Malta) said that illegal immigration was having a serious impact on Malta. Malta was the most densely populated European Union member State, with nearly 1,300 persons per square kilometre, and the huge influx of illegal immigrants had led to an unsustainable situation. Malta's absorption capacity was very limited, and its small labour market was prone to saturation. Many of the immigrants were eligible for international protection, and integration programmes were being implemented, but there could be no evading the country's demographic and geographic characteristics.

41. Fortunately, UNHCR and other organizations, such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), recognized Malta's difficulty and were contributing to a pilot project for resettlement of some beneficiaries of international protection in other

member States of the European Union. However, it would be desirable for more States to participate in the project, as the number of persons resettled was far below the target level aimed at by Malta. Other beneficiaries of international protection were being resettled in the United States.

42. The European Union had recently established an Asylum Support Office in Malta that was designed to harmonize different countries' asylum procedures in the interests of consistency. It was to be hoped that the Office would work closely with UNHCR and authorities responsible for asylum matters in EU Member States. It would also be desirable for other Member States to agree to resettle beneficiaries of international protection from Malta.

43. Malta continued to be committed to its international protection obligations, and fully supported ongoing efforts to combat illegal immigration. However, more could be done, particularly by countries of origin, to improve the situation and reduce immigrant flows.

44. **Ms. Al-Moflehi** (Yemen) said that the care of refugees had been recognized as a collective responsibility of the international community ever since the founding of the United Nations in 1945. The refugee issue was one that continued to grow, despite all efforts to address it.

45. Yemen, like other States, had taken in waves of refugees beginning in the 1970s with the conflicts taking place in the Horn of Africa. Those early refugees had not been very numerous, and had been satisfactorily integrated into Yemeni society, thanks to Yemen's fulfilment of its humanitarian duty under the various human rights instruments to which it had acceded, its customs, and its Islamic and Arab traditions.

46. The initial refugees had been followed by hundreds of thousands more over the past two decades. Yemen had received them, established camps for them, and provided support and care in cooperation with United Nations organizations, including UNHCR in particular, despite the country's socio-economic and security-related difficulties and the heavy financial burden that the refugee issue entailed. Government departments and agencies had been established to deal with refugees, and they were one of the main issues considered by the Parliamentary Commission on Human Rights.

47. Her delegation believed that the best way of addressing the problem was to find solutions to its root causes. Yemen was therefore working for a solution to the crisis in Somalia that had resulted in massive emigration from that country. In the meantime, increased support from the international community was required in order to deal adequately with a growing problem.

48. **Mr. Al-Obaidi** (Iraq) said that paragraph 22 of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees stated that the deteriorating security situation before the March 2010 elections had prevented many Iraqi emigrants from returning home. In point of fact, those elections had been held in an atmosphere of security and had marked a new step forward in Iraq's continuing progress towards democracy.

49. Iraqi emigrants were returning with the help of the Government, which had initiated a series of measures aimed at helping and encouraging them, including cash allowances to make their lives easier until such time as they could return, action to provide them with the necessary documents, and exemption from the taxes to which they would otherwise be liable upon their return. Officials who had left their posts were deemed to be on leave without pay, and students who had abandoned university places would be allowed to return to them. The Government paid all moving and travel costs for returning Iraqis, and compensated them for any property losses they had sustained.

50. His delegation deeply appreciated the work of UNHCR. The Government of Iraq would continue to cooperate with United Nations bodies to safeguard human rights in general and the rights of displaced persons and refugees in particular.

51. **Ms. Yu Jeong-a** (Republic of Korea) said that new forms of forced displacement were emerging and, in that regard, her delegation stressed that fundamental principles such as non-refoulement must be respected. It was deplorable that, in many parts of the world, refugees and asylum-seekers were subjected to forced return despite the serious risk of prosecution awaiting them.

52. Her delegation shared a number of the concerns expressed by UNHCR in the report of the Secretary-General on the situation of Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (A/65/391),

especially in relation to the continued reports of violation of the principle of non-refoulement. It called on all States to recognize the threat to the lives and freedom of those fleeing that country in case of forced return.

53. In keeping with its advocacy of rights-based approaches to humanitarian assistance, her Government supported UNHCR involvement in matters relating to internally displaced persons, and had taken note of the discussions on its intended role in the wake of natural disasters. UNHCR should remain in close communication with Member States on the issue until a consensus could be reached.

54. Increasing emphasis was being placed on comprehensive solutions to protracted refugee situations. Her Government was taking steps to create a better environment for refugees and asylum-seekers. The first cases of naturalization of refugees in the Republic of Korea had occurred earlier in the year; furthermore, a support centre for refugees and asylum-seekers was expected to become operational in 2012.

55. The challenges of coordinating protection could only be resolved on the basis of a common understanding among stakeholders. The commemoration of the anniversaries of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness in 2011 would provide excellent opportunities to renew commitments and forge ahead in new directions if necessary.

56. **Mr. Kapambwe** (Zambia) said that despite the steady decrease in refugee numbers worldwide, insecurity and human rights violations still complicated responses to displacements. Sadly, the number of people internally displaced as a result of conflict had reached an estimated 27.1 million; of those, an estimated 11.6 million were in sub-Saharan Africa. His delegation had therefore welcomed the adoption of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention). He also drew attention to the appointment of Dr. Chaloka Beyani of Zambia as the first Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons and appealed to the international community to support his mandate.

57. Refugees in camps and settlements in Zambia were being given electronic identity cards, to ensure that credible data was maintained. Repatriation programmes involving Rwanda, Angola and the

Democratic Republic of the Congo had gone well thus far. The conducive political situation in Rwanda had justified the recent launch by UNHCR of a road map for ending the Rwandan refugee problem. That approach would ensure that only those who met the criteria continued to benefit from international protection after December 2011.

58. Zambia commended the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the safe and dignified return of its people and UNHCR on providing the necessary assistance, thus enabling two refugee camps in Zambia to close. The re-registration and re-verification exercise conducted in the Mayukwayukwa camp had revealed that over 4,000 Angolan refugees were eager to return home. Zambia would continue to focus on voluntary repatriation and to consult with UNHCR on the other options, including local integration.

59. He called on the international community to resolve the issues that led to displacement, both internally and beyond borders. Zambia would continue to support UNHCR in its efforts to protect refugees and other persons of concern.

60. **Mr. Tsiskarashvili** (Georgia) said that the inability of hundreds of thousands of Georgia's forcibly displaced persons to return to their homes was among his country's most appalling humanitarian issues. Since the early 1990s, hundreds of thousands of Georgians had been driven from the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which were currently under foreign military occupation. Despite numerous calls by the international community and tireless efforts by the Government, those people had been prevented from returning to their homes. A shocking 75 per cent of the pre-war population of those occupied regions had been either killed or expelled.

61. More than 400,000 displaced persons of various ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural backgrounds had been victims of brutal ethnic cleansing, which had been condemned by international bodies including the United Nations. Those few who had managed to return to their homes near the occupation line suffered from insecurity and discrimination and had been deprived of their right to free movement across the administrative border line, which had become the occupation line.

62. The General Assembly had stressed the right of return of Georgia's internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees to their homes; the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on the Human

Rights of Internally Displaced Persons had said in October 2010 that the refusal to let the IDPs and refugees return to their homes was "purely political"; and the Secretary-General himself had emphasized the inadmissibility of linking political problems to the realization of right of return.

63. Georgia called on its opponents to engage constructively in international efforts to allow the hundreds of thousands of Georgia's displaced persons to return to their homes and communities.

64. He underscored the importance his Government attached to the discussions underway in Geneva to address matters of security and stability in occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali and the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees. However, the negative position of its counterparts was hindering progress.

65. In order to provide adequate living conditions for internally displaced persons, his Government had adopted a strategy which established transparent and fair criteria for access to social assistance, and regularly updated the national action plan. Public buildings had been converted into temporary shelters and new settlements had been built. Furthermore, social welfare, education and health programmes had been extended to include or to provide coverage for internally displaced persons, and a community development project had been approved to enhance their social and economic reintegration.

66. **Mr. Momen** (Bangladesh) said that UNHCR had accomplished a great deal, despite its limited resources, but strategies must be developed to address the new challenges facing refugees and displaced persons resulting from an increase in conflicts, violence, persecution and deprivation, as well as natural disasters.

67. The experience of the Bangladesh Liberation War had helped his Government to empathize with, and so provide shelter, safety and relief for, refugees from Myanmar, despite limited resources.

68. Although his country was not party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees or its Protocol, it had addressed the basic needs of refugees, protected them and fully respected the principle of non-refoulement. His Government considered voluntary repatriation as the only viable option for the return of refugees to their homeland. It was regrettable,



however, that no refugees from Myanmar had been repatriated since 2005. As many countries hosting refugees were either developing or least developed countries, including Bangladesh, integrating refugees locally was not a solution. It would therefore be beneficial if the remaining Myanmar refugees could be repatriated as soon as possible with the cooperation of UNHCR. The resumption of repatriations would demonstrate that the right to return was available to those refugees and provide a durable solution to the problem, rather than complicated, piecemeal third-country resettlement. He called on all Member States, international donors, civil society and non-governmental organizations to increase support to UNHCR, as it was their collective and moral obligation to ensure the well-being of the 36.5 million refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide.

69. **Mr. Garayev** (Azerbaijan) said that in light of the blatant violations of international humanitarian and human rights law during recent armed conflicts, all parties should adhere to their international, legal obligations. Population growth, urbanization, food and energy insecurity, water scarcity and climate change were also directly or indirectly responsible for new forms of population displacement.

70. He called on UNHCR to do its utmost to provide support to those in protracted refugee situations and to facilitate voluntary repatriation as a durable solution to that problem. His Government considered that, as a human rights issue, the right to return had priority over other related issues. Within Azerbaijan, since the beginning of the conflict, significant numbers of settlers had been encouraged to move into occupied areas, thus undermining the right to return of those internally displaced persons.

71. His Government took refugees and internally displaced persons into account in its regional poverty reduction and economic development strategies and projects. However, more must be done to raise awareness among the international community of such ongoing, protracted situations once the emergency phase had passed. Therefore, he called on all relevant United Nations bodies and specialized agencies to focus on specific cases and provide solutions.

72. **Ms. Klein Solomon** (International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that the fact that other entities such as UNHCR had specific mandates on aspects of human mobility made collaboration and

cooperation between all relevant agencies critical. Moreover, the policies that Governments developed to address migratory phenomena would also have a direct impact on the protection of refugees. Major tasks that drew on the complementary mandates of UNHCR and IOM included resettlement and emergency response. In the aftermath of the catastrophic natural disasters of 2010, for instance, both organizations had worked through the humanitarian response coordinated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to assist and protect those in need. In particular, as IOM was increasingly called to provide assistance to persons internally displaced by natural disasters, it appreciated the leading role assumed by UNHCR, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in such situations.

73. Preparation was crucial, given predictions that the frequency of natural disasters was likely to increase and result in increased population movements in the years to come. In that connection, IOM attached great importance to the nexus between migration, climate change and the environment and would explore the role that migration could play as a survival strategy.

74. In line with the organization's comprehensive approach to migration, a wide range of policy, research and programmatic activities had been developed. The complexity of issues surrounding migration, climate change and the environment could not be addressed effectively without interagency cooperation and common and complementary approaches. IOM looked forward to continuing its productive collaboration with UNHCR and recognized that more needed to be done in order to respond in time and adequately to the needs of refugees, displaced persons and vulnerable migrants.

75. **Mr. Dorbes** (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that situations of violence were among the primary — and the most distressing — causes of displacement. Other causes could also be traumatizing, as demonstrated by recent natural disasters in Haiti and Pakistan. The International Committee of the Red Cross worked primarily in situations of armed conflict and other situations of violence. A policy had been adopted by the Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to strengthen protection and improve assistance provided to persons affected by internal displacement.

76. In situations of armed conflict, internally displaced persons were mainly civilians; taking effective measures to limit deliberate attacks on them reduced successive displacements and improved prospects for safe and dignified return. ICRC therefore constantly reminded the parties to conflict of their obligations under international law to protect the civilian population.

77. Focusing only on the needs of IDPs in camps might lead to neglect of host families and communities, who shouldered the burden of large population displacements, hence the need for a rights-based approach that allowed the Movement to deliver humanitarian assistance and services fairly and impartially to communities affected by displacement, to people at risk of displacement and to those who had found shelter outside IDP camps.

78. Ending displacement was often difficult, as political considerations or other significant obstacles, such as lack of housing or absence of public services, could result in the displaced being left in limbo. States must address such important issues and exert commensurate efforts to find successful and sustainable solutions to displacement. In that regard, the ICRC welcomed the recently adopted Kampala Convention, which was in the process of being ratified.

79. ICRC and the International Federation were engaged in dialogue with United Nations agencies on cooperation agreements between them, so as to ensure that national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies were able to assist displaced persons in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of the Movement when cooperating with the United Nations system.

80. **Ms. Christensen** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) said that the increasing frequency of natural disasters was inflicting greater damage, loss and dislocation on vulnerable people worldwide as well as increasing the number of people vulnerable to such disasters. In responding to them, the Federation adopted a needs-based approach to ensure that the most vulnerable received assistance, regardless of any legal entitlements.

81. While preventing displacement due to natural disasters should be a priority for the humanitarian community, it was essential to provide immediate relief and care to the displaced and their host communities and to work towards early recovery when displacement did occur. As local first responders, Red Cross and Red

Crescent national societies carried out prevention and response work through a range of initiatives.

82. Turning to food insecurity, she pointed out that without adequate interventions, the approximately 1 billion people who were undernourished and lacking access to sufficient food might be prompted to migrate to the outskirts of towns in search of better conditions. Challenges awaited vulnerable migrants in urban settings, as for the first time in human history, more people lived in an urban environment than in a rural one. Moreover, many urban dwellers found themselves in precarious conditions created by rapid urbanization, population growth, poor health services, poor local governance, and in many cases, the rising tide of urban violence. Collectively, it was necessary to do much more to keep pace with such development and to build safer and more resilient communities in rural and urban settings alike. In the coming years, the Federation would work with relevant partners to improve its preparedness to respond in complex urban environments, drawing on lessons learned from recent disasters.

83. **Mr. Chir** (Algeria), speaking in exercise of the right to reply to statements made by the Moroccan delegation, said that his Government had consistently indicated its readiness to resume the census process so that voluntarily repatriated Sahrawi refugees could exercise their inalienable right to self-determination in a referendum organized by the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). If Morocco was ready to have a referendum held soon under international control and free of all administrative or military pressures, the voter data gathered by the MINURSO Identification Commission were available at the United Nations.

84. As for the supposed human rights violations in the refugee camps in Tindouf, the best way to verify the truth of that Moroccan allegation would be to extend the MINURSO mandate to human rights monitoring, something which Morocco had consistently opposed. His delegation knew nothing about hundreds of Sahrawi refugees fleeing the Tindouf camps to return to Morocco; on the other hand, it did know that thousands of Sahrawis were leaving cities in the Territory and forming protest camps in the desert to attract world attention to the repeated, serious violations of their rights by Morocco. Shockingly, a young Sahrawi seeking to bring provisions to such a camp east of Laayoune had been

gunned down in late October 2010. Both the Sahrawi refugees and the Sahrawis living in the Non-Self-Governing Territory of Western Sahara had the right to international protection, which Moroccan intransigence on human rights monitoring was denying them.

85. Furthermore, without giving credence to Morocco's unfounded accusations of the misappropriation of humanitarian aid, the donor community had the means to ascertain whether assistance had indeed reached its final destination. Both Algeria and UNHCR had always been satisfied with the aid distribution, a conclusion confirmed by the joint World Food Programme (WFP)-UNHCR mission to the Sahrawi refugee camps conducted in October 2009.

86. Algeria wished full success to the two parties to the conflict — Morocco and the Frente Polisario — in the informal talks they would soon resume in an attempt to reach a mutually acceptable political solution that would allow the Sahrawi people to exercise their right to self-determination. The humanitarian aspects were simply the dramatic consequence of the absence of a just, lasting and definitive settlement.

*The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.*