

ADDENDUM
TO THE
REPORT
OF THE
UNITED NATIONS
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-NINTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 12A (A/39/12/Add.1)



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NOTE

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[5 November 1984]

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the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on
the work of its thirty-fifth session

(Geneva, 8-18 October 1984)

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REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PROGRAMME OF
THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES ON
THE WORK OF ITS THIRTY-FIFTH SESSION*

(Geneva, 8-18 October 1984)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The thirty-fifth session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme was held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva from 8 to 18 October 1984.
2. The outgoing Chairman, Ambassador H. Ewerlöf of Sweden, opened the proceedings. In his introductory statement, he paid tribute to the work of the High Commissioner and his staff, as well as to that of non-governmental organizations, in dealing with refugee problems in the field. He described how he had had the opportunity to observe some of these problems at first hand during his term of office, and underlined the debt of gratitude owed to countries, often among the world's poorest, which shoulder the burden of large numbers of refugees. In the course of his field visits, his own direct observation had reinforced his conviction that relief assistance must be complemented by the promotion of self-sufficiency and the active pursuit of durable solutions. Where the delivery of assistance was concerned, he also pointed to the need to ensure maximum efficiency and full co-ordination of efforts. Ambassador Ewerlöf further stressed the particular importance of the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa. 1/ The recognition accorded by the Conference to the importance of development assistance in refugee affected areas could, he felt, be a vital step towards durable solutions.
3. With respect to international protection, Ambassador Ewerlöf drew particular attention to the question of armed attacks on refugee camps and settlements. Although the Executive Committee had not reached consensus on the precise wording of a conclusion on this subject, there was general agreement that such attacks must be condemned. He emphasized the need for the international community, and most particularly the Executive Committee, to give full support to the High Commissioner in promoting the security of refugees. Finally, the Ambassador thanked the bureau and members of the Committee for the support received during his term of office.

A. Election of officers

4. Under rule 10 of the rules of procedure, which provides that officers shall be elected for the whole year, the Committee elected the following officers by acclamation:

<u>Chairman</u>	Mr. F. Mebazaa (Tunisia)
<u>Vice-Chairman</u>	Mr. K. Chiba (Japan)
<u>Rapporteur</u>	Mr. I. Uusitalo (Finland)

* Previously issued under the symbol A/AC.96/651.

B. Representation on the Committee

5. The following members of the Committee were represented at the session:

Algeria	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Switzerland
Argentina	Israel	Thailand
Australia	Italy	Tunisia
Austria	Japan	Turkey
Belgium	Lebanon	Uganda
Brazil	Lesotho	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Canada	Morocco	United Republic of Tanzania
China	Namibia (represented by the United Nations Council for Namibia)	United States of America
Colombia	Netherlands	Venezuela
Denmark	Nicaragua	Yugoslavia
Finland	Nigeria	Zaire
France	Norway	
Germany, Federal Republic of	Sudan	
Greece	Sweden	
Holy See		

6. The Governments of the following States were represented by observers:

Afghanistan	Egypt	Panama
Angola	El Salvador	Peru
Bolivia	Ethiopia	Philippines
Botswana	Guatemala	Portugal
Burundi	Honduras	Rwanda
Cameroon	Iraq	Senegal
Central African Republic	Iceland	Somalia
Chile	Indonesia	Spain
Conqo	Ireland	Sri Lanka
Costa Rica	Kenya	Syrian Arab Republic
Cuba	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Viet Nam
Cyprus	Malaysia	Yemen
Democratic Kampuchea	Mexico	Zambia
Djibouti	New Zealand	
	Pakistan	

The Sovereign Order of Malta was also represented by an observer.

7. The United Nations system was represented as follows: the United Nations Secretariat, Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia, Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO), United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (HABITAT), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Volunteers (UNV), International Labour Organisation (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank.

8. The Commission of the European Communities and the following intergovernmental organizations were represented by observers: Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM), League of Arab States (LAS) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

9. Seventy-nine non-governmental organizations were represented by observers, including the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the League of Red Cross Societies (LRCS).

10. The African National Congress (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) were also represented at the meeting.

C. Adoption of the agenda

11. The Executive Committee decided to adopt the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
4. General debate.
5. Action taken on decisions by the Executive Committee.
6. International protection.
7. Refugee aid and development.
8. UNHCR assistance activities.
9. Role of UNHCR in promoting durable solutions.
10. Administrative and financial matters.
11. Status of contributions and overall financial requirements for 1984 and 1985.
12. Field affairs.
13. Proposed introduction of additional languages.
14. Consideration of the provisional agenda for the thirty-sixth session of the Executive Committee.
15. Any other business.
16. Adoption of the draft report of the thirty-fifth session.

D. Opening statement by the Chairman of the Executive Committee

12. In taking the chair, the newly elected Chairman, Ambassador F. Mebazaa of Tunisia, thanked members for their expression of confidence in electing him as Chairman of the thirty-fifth session of the Executive Committee. He drew attention to the difficult international situation, particularly the current economic crisis,

and to the complicating effect that this had upon the work of the Committee. The agenda of the session reflected both this complexity and the desire of the international community and the High Commissioner to respond to the challenge it posed.

13. The Chairman noted that in recent years UNHCR had been called upon to adapt in the face of escalating refugee numbers. One positive aspect of the new orientation which had emerged was the promotion of durable solutions in Africa through the linkage of refugee aid and development assistance. At its present session, the Committee would be called upon to make a first assessment of this new approach. In the field of assistance, other important matters under consideration would be self-evaluation of UNHCR programmes and the devolution of authority to the field - both vital elements of good programme delivery.

14. With respect to international protection, the Chairman underlined the importance of the issues to be considered by the Executive Committee. He particularly stressed the need for the Committee to reach positive agreement concerning rescue at sea and the prevention of armed attacks on refugee camps and settlements, thus ensuring that considerable numbers of lives were saved. He also welcomed the recent accessions of Haiti and Mozambique to the international refugee instruments as further progress in strengthening the legal framework for international action on behalf of refugees.

15. The Chairman also pointed to the need to ensure the efficiency of the UNHCR administration, particularly in view of the prevailing economic climate and related budgetary restrictions. He noted that it was in this context that the Executive Committee had been called upon to consider the UNHCR professional job classification exercise, as well as to weigh the need for staff reinforcement on the one hand against the desire for zero growth on the other.

16. The attention of the Executive Committee was also drawn by the Chairman to the importance of the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, and he welcomed the international solidarity that had been demonstrated at the Conference. He also expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Steering Committee and appealed to the international community to ensure successful follow-up action.

17. The Chairman concluded by paying tribute to the High Commissioner, the Deputy High Commissioner and the staff of UNHCR for their dedication in carrying out the mandate of the Office and to non-governmental organizations for their role in assisting refugees.

II. GENERAL DEBATE

(Item 4 of the agenda)

18. All speakers paid tribute to the outgoing bureau for its leadership of the Executive Committee over the past year, and extended their warm congratulations to the newly elected members of the bureau of the thirty-fifth session.

19. In replying to the High Commissioner's statement, which appears as an annex to this report, speakers commended the High Commissioner and his staff for their dedication in extending protection and assistance to refugees. They stressed the need for the international community, and particularly members of the Executive Committee, to extend full support to the High Commissioner in carrying out his mandate in situations that were often of increasing complexity.

20. While the absence of new large-scale refugee influxes was generally welcomed, many speakers pointed to the continuing severity and increasing complexity of refugee problems in many parts of the world. In the face of such problems, there was an emphatic agreement that the purely humanitarian and non-political character of the High Commissioner's Office had to be vigorously maintained in order to ensure the effective delivery of international protection and assistance. A number of speakers, however, also stressed the need for the international community to address root causes of refugee problems more effectively in the appropriate forums. Realistic and imaginative efforts were required at the political level, including continued initiatives in the United Nations General Assembly, to prevent further massive exodus of refugees. One speaker pointed out that the importance of such preventive measures had recently been underlined in the declaration of the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (A/39/402, annex, sect. I). Disappointment was expressed by several delegations at the fact that the international community had so far been unable to formulate concrete proposals and measures which would be effective in addressing the root causes of refugee flows.

21. The refugee situation continued to be profoundly disturbing, particularly in Africa, Asia and Central America. Despite the overall decline in the number of refugees on the African continent and positive developments which had occurred with respect to voluntary repatriation and local settlement in the Horn of Africa and the Sudan, the continued existence of large refugee populations in countries frequently suffering from severe economic and climatic crises was a source of great concern, as was the plight of Namibian and South African refugees in the southern part of the continent. In western Asia, there continued to be no sign of a durable solution for the largest refugee population in the world, namely Afghan refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, and the attention of the meeting was drawn to the great burden shouldered by asylum countries in that region. The observer of Afghanistan disputed the number of refugees in these countries, asserting that it had been greatly exaggerated to increase the flow of international aid, and that groups of Afghans outside their country had been manipulated for political purposes. The continued existence of a large refugee population in countries of first asylum in South-East Asia was also a cause for concern, particularly in view of the decline in resettlement rates and the failure to achieve a significant breakthrough in voluntary repatriation or local settlement. One representative suggested that the High Commissioner might wish to appoint a personal representative in the region to co-ordinate the search for

durable solutions. Several delegations also noted the High Commissioner's account of the arrangements to provide assistance to the people who have sought sanctuary on Papua New Guinea's border with Irian Jaya. With respect to the situation in Latin America, recent voluntary repatriation movements were welcomed as a positive development, but the continuing severity of refugee problems in Central America continued to be profoundly disturbing. One speaker laid particular emphasis on the need to promote local solutions, including the local settlement of displaced persons. Several other participants applauded the efforts of the Contadora Group to promote peaceful solutions to conflicts in the area and thus eliminate some of the major causes of refugee flows.

22. In the course of the debate, many speakers paid tribute to asylum countries, particularly the least developed among them, for their contribution in shouldering the burden imposed upon them by the presence of refugees. The international community was urged to assist these countries in a spirit of international solidarity and burden sharing.

23. Deep concern was expressed by all the speakers at the situation outlined in the High Commissioner's note on international protection (A/AC.96/643), notably with respect to the erosion of the institution of asylum. Several delegations welcomed the ever-growing number of accessions to the international refugee instruments. They noted, however, that there had at the same time been a renewed upsurge of violations of the physical safety of refugees and asylum-seekers, growing xenophobic tendencies and increasing instances of refoulement and denial of asylum. There was general agreement on the need for vigorous action by the international community and the High Commissioner to combat the deterioration in the situation with respect to the international protection refugees. Several proposals were made with regard to the most appropriate steps which could be taken to assist the High Commissioner in the exercise of his international protection function. The High Commissioner's plans to hold in 1985 a seminar on protection issues in Europe were welcomed by several speakers. One participant drew attention to the lack of universality in the approach to refugee protection due to the complexities of contemporary refugee situations, and the need to have recourse to universal standards for the protection of refugees. Another delegation emphasized the need to revive the spirit of existing rules, norms and principles concerning international protection and underlined the responsibility of the Executive Committee in this respect. Yet another speaker regretted the lack of a system which would permit the international community to deal effectively with violations of accepted principles or mandatory obligations.

24. Particularly great concern was voiced by a number of speakers at cases of refoulement which had recently occurred within the context of bilateral agreements between States governing the exchange of their respective nationals. Two delegations expressed deep regret at recent instances of refoulement in Africa and concern that a recurrence of such events could prejudice international support for the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa. One speaker stressed that refoulement could not be justified in terms of a desire to preserve good relations with neighbouring States and, in this context, drew attention to article II of the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa 2/ which describes the grant of asylum as a peaceful and friendly act. While fully subscribing to the principle of non-refoulement, other speakers drew attention to the political and economic pressures sometimes applied to countries of asylum and called on the international community to give full support to those countries in resisting such pressures.

25. Several speakers drew attention to problems stemming from irregular movements of refugees to second countries of asylum and to the complicating effect this could have on the determination of refugee status. One delegation pointed out that restrictive measures in some countries increased the burden on those with more liberal asylum policies. International co-operation was needed in the face of this problem and it was hoped that the High Commissioner would soon be in a position to elaborate further upon the ideas he had already put forward on this subject.

26. A number of participants stressed the need to distinguish more clearly between refugees and migrants, notably in situations of mass influx. One delegation drew attention to the fact that abusive requests for asylum harmed requests for refugee status from those whose applications were well-founded. Another speaker pointed out that indiscriminate extension of refugee status weakened support from the international community, undermined the role of the High Commissioner and jeopardized the position of genuine refugees. In this context, one delegation perceived a need for a more general United Nations response to the problems of mass exodus which often go beyond the competence of the High Commissioner. Conversely, one delegation expressed concern over the protection of persons falling outside the mandate of the High Commissioner in the grey area between displaced persons and refugees, and supported expansion of the High Commissioner's role in such cases. With specific reference to the refugee situation in South-East Asia, two further speakers felt that the introduction of determination procedures could assist receiving countries in dealing with this problem.

27. Many speakers expressed regret that, despite two years of discussion, no consensus had yet been reached by the Executive Committee on a statement of principles aiming to prevent military or armed attacks on refugee camps and settlements. It was hoped that agreement could still be reached in the course of the present session. As the physical safety of refugees was a key element in international protection, one delegation felt the Executive Committee to be under an obligation to formulate a position on this question. Several other speakers pointed out that, while the precise wording of an Executive Committee conclusion had not been agreed upon, there was nevertheless general agreement that attacks upon genuine refugee camps and settlements should be unreservedly condemned as a violation of international law and humanitarian principles. A number of delegations expressed support for the draft statement proposed by Ambassador Ewerlöf, Chairman of the thirty-fourth session of the Executive Committee and of the Sub-Committee of the Whole on International Protection, which they found to be a balanced reflection of the responsibilities of countries of asylum and of origin. It was the opinion of one speaker, however, that a statement of principles had no meaning if countries ignored their basic obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. The same speaker also drew attention to the impact that such attacks could have upon local populations in countries of asylum. Several delegations saw the prevention of military attacks as being the unequivocal responsibility of the attacking State, and one of them particularly emphasized that there was no question of balanced responsibilities. Several other speakers, however, strongly emphasized the responsibility of asylum countries to ensure that refugee camps were exclusively civilian in nature, located suitably far from sensitive border areas and separated from combatants. One delegation referred to the obligation of asylum countries to ensure that refugees did not engage in military activities. He further stressed that international protection involved not only rights but also duties. Many delegations stressed the importance of a UNHCR presence in refugee camps and settlements in vulnerable areas, feeling that experience had shown this to reduce the likelihood of attack.

28. There was also deep general concern at the brutality of pirate attacks on refugees and asylum-seekers in the South China Sea, and the need for effective measures to combat such atrocities was stressed. While instances of piracy had recently become less frequent, several speakers noted that the brutality of such attacks appeared to have increased. The continuation of the anti-piracy arrangement was generally welcomed, although several participants felt that the programme should be more effective and expressed the hope that the improvements proposed following the report of the expert assessment team would enhance its impact. One delegation requested a new evaluation by the High Commissioner in 1985. Another representative felt that proof of determined efforts to eradicate piracy would be required if funding was to continue, while a further delegation stressed the need to avoid incidents that cast doubt on the credibility of the programme. It was pointed out by yet another speaker that the incidence of piracy had in fact significantly declined over the past two years but that the problem was an international one, involving persons of various nationalities, and thus beyond the control of any one Government.

29. The meeting voiced most serious concern at the alarming decline in the numbers of refugees rescued at sea in recent years. Many speakers applauded the award of this year's Nansen Medal to the Captain and two crew members of the United States merchant vessel Rose City as particularly appropriate in a context where the imperative need to rescue those in distress at sea was being all too often ignored and needed to be recalled to the attention of the international community. Extensive support was expressed for initiatives taken by UNHCR to promote rescue at sea, notably by means of the Disembarkation Resettlement Offers (DISERO) and the Rescue at Sea Resettlement Offers (RASRO) schemes. A number of speakers called for the RASRO scheme to be introduced without further delay so as to prevent further loss of life and expressed the hope that the first year target of 4,000 places would soon be attained through additional contributions. Several delegations announced that their Governments had contributions to the scheme under active consideration.

30. In the field of assistance to refugees, the stabilization of the UNHCR budget in recent years was welcomed by many delegations. Many speakers also complimented UNHCR for its efforts to improve its rate of programme implementation, and one participant expressed the view that the standard reached was unique in the United Nations system. The need to sustain the impetus towards further improvements in programme planning and implementation was widely stressed in view of the prevailing climate of economic stringency. Several participants underlined the importance of the access of UNHCR to locations where assistance programmes funded by the High Commissioner were being implemented for the benefit of refugees. In the execution of assistance programmes, the importance of co-ordination with other members of the United Nations system, as well as with intergovernmental and non-governmental agencies, was also underlined by a number of speakers. In this context, one speaker welcomed the regional meetings between UNHCR and the non-governmental organizations, and the inclusion of the latter in the process of assistance planning where their expertise and experience could be of particular value.

31. UNHCR efforts to increase its emergency response capacity through the training of its own staff and that of operational partners were welcomed. One speaker emphasized the importance of UNHCR agreements with emergency bodies in member countries as an important element in emergency preparedness. While applauding the organization's enhanced capacity to respond to emergencies, one delegation wondered if that capacity was in fact used to its full potential and how the Emergency Unit fitted into the overall structure of UNHCR during a crisis.

32. Great emphasis was placed by the meeting on the importance of the search for durable solutions to refugee problems and on the need to promote maximum levels of self-sufficiency pending such solutions. One speaker welcomed the inclusion of durable solutions as a separate item on the agenda of the session, in view of the fact that the achievement of durable solutions constituted the ultimate objective of UNHCR and thus merited special consideration. The need for creative energy and innovative ideas in the pursuit of durable solutions was stressed. Although the increased percentage of UNHCR annual programme resources devoted to such solutions was broadly welcomed, one speaker pointed out that this percentage was still well below that recorded in the early 1970s, and that there had in fact been few breakthroughs in the actual achievement of durable solutions since the thirty-fourth session of the Executive Committee in 1983. The attention of the Committee was drawn by another speaker to the fact that there would be an increasing flow of funds directed towards the promotion of such solutions through channels other than UNHCR. In stressing the need for an even stronger orientation towards durable solutions in UNHCR programmes, another delegation felt that the High Commissioner should report to the Committee on any obstacles encountered in the implementation of such solutions.

33. Many speakers also stressed the importance of the link between refugee aid and development assistance in promoting durable solutions, notably local settlement. Development assistance was required to offset the economic problems faced by developing countries also burdened with the presence of large numbers of refugees. In the course of the debate, a text outlining principles for action in developing countries, submitted for consideration by the session (A/AC.96/645 and Corr.1), was generally welcomed. Many delegations underlined the urgent need for additional resources to strengthen the economic and social infrastructures of asylum countries burdened by large refugee influxes, and it was widely agreed that assistance should not be given to refugees at the expense of local populations or of ongoing development efforts. Several participants emphasized the need to integrate refugee-related development projects into the national development plans of host countries and into bilateral and multilateral assistance programmes. The attention of the Executive Committee was drawn by several participants to the project administered by the World Bank in Pakistan and the possibility that similar projects might be appropriate in self-sufficiency programmes elsewhere. The necessity for full co-ordination between United Nations organizations and non-governmental organizations in the field of refugee-related development assistance was also emphasized by a number of speakers, and the recent issuance of guidelines governing co-operation between UNHCR and UNDP was welcomed. The need was also stressed for UNHCR to play a leading role as catalyst and co-ordinator in the field of refugee-related development projects, without itself becoming a development agency.

34. There was general agreement on the value of the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa and recognition of the important initiative taken by that Conference in addressing the problems created by large-scale movements of populations in Africa and the dire economic situation in many African countries. The Steering Committee was widely complimented on the thoroughness of the preparations for the Conference. Many speakers felt that the main achievement of the Conference was to have established the viability of the concept of refugee-related development assistance. In the opinion of one delegation, the Conference had played a crucial role in helping Governments to define their policies and priorities. There was also general agreement, however, on the need to ensure that the Conference lived up to expectations in terms of

concrete pledges and positive results. The Steering Committee was seen to have a continuing role in ensuring that follow-up and one delegation asked for a report from the Committee on developments since the Conference. Another speaker stressed the need for UNHCR to continue to play an active role in promoting the aims of the Conference even after the disbanding of the Conference unit.

35. Many speakers underlined voluntary repatriation as the preferred durable solution, where conditions permitted it, and there was general agreement that the voluntary nature of any return must be ensured. Many speakers welcomed recent or ongoing repatriations in Africa, Asia and Latin America, but it was recognized that in many cases the prospect of voluntary repatriation continued to be remote. One speaker urged UNHCR to pursue its efforts to bring about voluntary repatriation to Kampuchea, while others expressed concern at the relative lack of voluntary repatriation in Central America and South-East Asia where the problem was compounded by the lack of countries of permanent asylum for large groups of refugees. It was pointed out that, in attempting to promote voluntary repatriation, there was a need for the humanitarian activities of UNHCR to be complemented by initiatives at the diplomatic and political levels in order to find solutions to the root causes of refugee problems and to promote implementation of the decisions of organs competent to pronounce on these questions. One speaker felt that the High Commissioner could play a more assertive role in the promotion of this durable solution by building a climate conducive to voluntary return. In this respect, the role played by the High Commissioner in the repatriation from Djibouti to Ethiopia was cited. Several delegations stressed the importance of the access of UNHCR to refugees returning to their countries of origin, so as to monitor the voluntary character of such movements. One speaker emphasized the need for this access, even in cases where the security of the returnees was guaranteed by bilateral agreements between countries of asylum and origin. Another delegation pointed to the need for voluntary repatriation to be accompanied by reasonable guarantees of personal safety and of respect for fundamental human rights.

36. Many speakers were of the opinion that resettlement in third countries, while sometimes being the only solution available, was the least satisfactory of the three major durable solutions. It was pointed out by one participant that poorly balanced resettlement programmes could be an element in perpetuating refugee flows. Other speakers, however, underlined the importance of renewed efforts with respect to the resettlement of Indo-Chinese refugees from South-East Asia and Hong Kong. In this regard one delegation drew attention to the problems created for countries of first asylum by falling resettlement rates and stricter application of immigration criteria in resettlement programmes. The same delegation pointed out that high resettlement expectations among refugees militated against the possibility of successfully promoting voluntary repatriation. The problem posed for countries of transit by insufficient resettlement quotas and lengthy procedures was also pointed out by one speaker. Yet another perceived a need for resettlement to be applied in a more generous and systematic way and for more States to participate in the resettlement effort which should not be confined to traditional immigration countries. In the opinion of this speaker the granting of temporary asylum was in the long term an insufficient contribution to the international effort to solve refugee problems. The relationship between resettlement and protection was underlined by two speakers with particular reference to Central America and southern Africa.

37. Many delegations welcomed the increase in the numbers of those leaving Viet Nam under the Orderly Departure Programme and expressed the hope that this would help reduce the burden on countries of first asylum in the South-East Asian region.

38. In the field of administration and management, the meeting expressed support for the continued efforts of the High Commissioner to bring about improvements in response to the complex challenges of recent years. One speaker particularly commended the work of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters in this respect and expressed satisfaction at the clarity with which issues had been presented. It was suggested by another participant that the High Commissioner consider adding to the 1985 agenda of the Sub-Committee an item under which assistance programmes and budgets for the following year could be reviewed in detail. Another delegation welcomed the statement before the Sub-Committee by one of the UNHCR staff representatives and considered it a useful innovation further reinforcing the dialogue between UNHCR and the Executive Committee on matters relating to administration.

39. Many speakers, in referring to the professional job classification exercise recommended by the Administrative Management Service and endorsed by the Executive Committee, expressed their support of the principles underlying the exercise and commended the High Commissioner and his Office for the way in which it had been carried out. It was felt by one speaker, however, that the results of the exercise could have been better attuned to the goals of increased professionalism, rotation of staff and devolution of authority to the field. A number of other speakers nevertheless endorsed implementation of the results summarized in tables 7 and 12 of document A/AC.96/639/Add.1, considering that they would lead to the strengthening of the field establishment and of the lower professional grades at headquarters. Some participants expressed their concern over the financial implications of the exercise at a time of budgetary restraint. One speaker particularly stressed the need to ensure that a maximum percentage of UNHCR expenditure was devoted to refugee programmes at a time of declining financial resources. Another voiced surprise at the fact that the number of upgradings recommended accounted for some 25 per cent of all professional posts. Reservations were expressed by many delegations over the proposed upgrading of certain high-level posts at headquarters and several stated their inability to give their agreement in principle to the upgrading of those posts at the present stage. One speaker suggested that the High Commissioner's final recommendations on all posts should be reviewed by the Executive Committee before a decision was taken, and that consideration of the issue should therefore be postponed until the thirty-sixth session, in 1985. While supporting implementation of the results of the exercise, including upgrading of the high-level posts, another speaker expressed the view that the proposed ASG posts should be divided equally between headquarters and the field so as further to strengthen the field establishment and increase possibilities of rotation.

40. With respect to the High Commissioner's request for 11 new posts in the field, a number of speakers again voiced reservations about staff increases during a period of budgetary austerity. While recognizing the importance of strengthening certain field operations, several speakers would have preferred any additional needs to be covered through redeployment. In this respect, one delegation wondered if the further streamlining of UNHCR Offices in Europe was possible. Other speakers drew attention to the need to strengthen UNHCR field capacity in response to urgent protection and assistance problems, as agreed at the thirty-fourth session of the Executive Committee. ^{3/} Some delegations were therefore in agreement with the High Commissioner's proposal to create the new field posts. In this context, one speaker pointed out that the pursuit of durable solutions required more staff than the provision of care and maintenance, and that effective international protection necessitated the active presence of UNHCR.

41. With respect to the strengthening of the UNHCR field establishment, two speakers welcomed the creation in the High Commissioner's Office of the post of Director for Field Affairs.

42. The broadening of geographical representation on the staff of UNHCR was welcomed by several speakers. One delegation voiced the opinion that wide geographical representation was not so much an end in itself as a positive asset to UNHCR in pursuing its mandate in widely divergent cultural contexts. Another speaker stressed the importance of ensuring a broad range of nationalities not only in the field but also at headquarters, and saw no contradiction between the necessity to recruit on the basis of merit and the need to increase geographical representation on UNHCR staff. Particular reference was made by two other speakers to the need to improve the position of women in the professional and higher grades of the organization.

43. Several speakers commended the quality of the documentation prepared for the session. Two delegations, however, expressed dissatisfaction at the fact that document A/AC.96/642, on action taken on decisions of the Executive Committee, dealt only with decisions of the thirty-fourth session. As a matter of principle, they felt that all previous decisions on matters still requiring action should be reported upon. One speaker also urged the introduction of Arabic as a working language of the Executive Committee, so that all documentation would exist in that language. Another delegation felt, however, that any decision on the introduction of additional languages might have to be postponed in view of budgetary constraints.

44. The meeting welcomed the stabilization of the budgetary requirements of UNHCR since 1981. However, financial projections for 1985, envisaging a deficit of some \$60 million unless contributions were substantially increased, were a source of grave concern. While appreciating that this problem stemmed, inter alia, from improved programme performance by UNHCR, several speakers stressed the need for realistic and careful planning in the face of this shortfall. One participant emphasized that the High Commissioner should avoid any commitments outside his mandate, and ensure the streamlining of programmes and the accurate assessment of numbers of beneficiaries so as to generate maximum savings of existing resources. Several other delegations expressed concern that the projected shortfall should not mean that an increased burden had to be shouldered by developing countries of asylum. In the opinion of one speaker a combination of efforts was required in order to overcome this problem, including increased contributions from traditional donors, a broadening of the spectrum of donor countries and increased economy by UNHCR.

45. The Committee heard a statement by the observer of OAU who drew attention to the fact that the reduction in the total number of refugees in Africa in recent years had been accompanied by a significant decline in the living conditions of refugee populations as a result of economic difficulties, drought and demographic explosion. He pointed to the failure of traditional emergency relief efforts to provide an adequate response to this situation and welcomed the new approach taken by the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, with its emphasis on refugee-related development projects. While vigorously condemning the policies of South Africa, which generate large numbers of refugees in the southern part of the continent, the speaker also pointed out that some 95 per cent of present-day refugees in Africa originate from independent African countries.

46. The observers of PAC and of SWAPO also made statements, drawing the attention of the meeting to the intense disruption and suffering caused by the South African Government's policies of apartheid and military aggression and occupation.

47. Statements were also made by the observers of ICM, ICRC and ICVA, in which they outlined their concern for refugee issues and described the activities they undertook either in conjunction with or complementing those of the High Commissioner. The representative of the World Muslim Conference also made a statement.

48. In response to the debate, the High Commissioner thanked the Chairman for the spirit in which he had presided over the proceedings. He expressed his appreciation of the Executive Committee's support for his concern at the erosion of asylum and for his proposal to hold a seminar on protection issues in Europe in 1985. He also welcomed the Committee's full endorsement of the need to maintain the humanitarian and non-political character of UNHCR, which he viewed as essential to the effective functioning of the organization. Finally, he thanked the Committee for the kind words of encouragement it had addressed both to him as High Commissioner and to the staff of UNHCR.

Decisions of the Committee

49. The Executive Committee:

(a) Expressed appreciation for the introductory statement of the High Commissioner which stressed, inter alia, the need for an energetic, solution-oriented approach to refugee problems, as well as the urgent need to ensure that the entirely humanitarian character of UNHCR activities continues to be accorded full recognition;

(b) Reaffirmed the purely humanitarian nature of the activities of the High Commissioner and stressed the importance of maintaining their non-political character so as to ensure the effective delivery of protection and assistance to refugees;

(c) Expressed satisfaction at the absence of new large-scale outflows of refugees but noted the continuing severity of refugee problems in various parts of the world, particularly in Africa, Asia and Central America;

(d) Urged the international community to intensify its efforts to address the root causes of refugee problems in the appropriate international forums;

(e) Welcomed the continued strengthening of the legal framework for international protection through additional accessions to the international refugee instruments and removal of reservations;

(f) Expressed, nevertheless, most serious concern at a deterioration in the protection situation and serious threats to and violations of the physical safety of refugees, and urged the international community to give full support to the High Commissioner in carrying out his international protection function. The adoption of less liberal asylum practices and falling standards in the treatment of asylum seekers were also deeply regretted;

(g) Welcomed the award of the Nansen Medal to the Captain and two crew members of the United States merchant vessel Rose City as a deserved tribute both to the individuals concerned and, through them, to all those who had come to the assistance of asylum seekers in distress at sea;

(h) Urged the High Commissioner to continue and further strengthen his pursuit of durable solutions, notably voluntary repatriation, as well as local settlement and resettlement in cases where voluntary repatriation is not feasible;

(i) Strongly emphasized the importance of promoting durable solutions and self-sufficiency pending such solutions, noted with appreciation the further increase in the percentage of programme resources devoted to the pursuit of durable solutions and stressed the need for continued efforts in this respect;

(j) Commended the High Commissioner for initiatives taken in developing the concept of development-oriented assistance to refugees and welcomed the principles for action in developing countries contained in document A/AC.96/645 and Corr.1 as a basis for further consideration;

(k) Applauded the positive spirit in which the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa had been held and urged Governments to ensure that the support expressed at the Conference was translated into concrete commitments to assist African countries acting as host to large refugee and returnee populations to cope with their additional economic burden; also called upon the Steering Committee and the High Commissioner to continue to play an active role in following up the results of the Conference;

(l) Expressed appreciation to asylum countries for their humanitarian response in granting asylum to large numbers of refugees and called upon other Governments to assist those countries in a spirit of international solidarity and burden sharing;

(m) Urged the High Commissioner to continue his efforts to improve project planning and implementation so as to make maximum use of existing financial resources, and called upon the international community to do its utmost to ensure that the pressing needs of refugees are met;

(n) Welcomed the important contributions made by the Sub-Committee on International Protection and the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters to the work of the Executive Committee;

(o) Welcomed the progress already made by the High Commissioner in improving the management of his Office and urged him to pursue his efforts in this direction;

(p) Paid tribute to other United Nations agencies, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for their co-operation with the High Commissioner in bringing humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced persons, and urged that this co-operation and co-ordination be further strengthened.

III. ACTION TAKEN ON DECISIONS BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(Item 5 of the agenda)

50. The item was introduced by the Secretary of the Executive Committee. In presenting document A/AC.96/642 for consideration by the Committee, he noted comments made by several speakers in the course of the general debate. He assured the Committee that, in accordance with its wishes, UNHCR would report to future sessions on action taken or in progress on all prior decisions of the Executive Committee with respect to which action had not been fully completed, rather than confining itself to the decisions of the previous session.

51. With reference to the pursuit of durable solutions by UNHCR, one speaker referred to paragraph 120 and the decision contained in paragraph 122 (q) of the report on the thirty-fourth session of the Executive Committee. ^{3/} He inquired what action had been taken on the suggestion that UNHCR establish a separate unit to deal with the promotion of durable solutions and on the Committee's request that the High Commissioner report to it annually on his efforts to promote such solutions. The same speaker asked for clarification of follow-up by UNHCR on the decisions of previous sessions of the Executive Committee concerning the pursuit of durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation and local settlement, for persons in the Tindouf region. Another speaker underlined the importance of the document under consideration and expressed her regret that it did not exist in Spanish.

52. The Director of Administration and Management stressed the High Commissioner's concern to give full effect to the pursuit of durable solutions. He pointed out that the suggestion to create a separate unit, though recorded in the text of last year's report, was not a decision of the Executive Committee. In any event, in view of economic constraints and the desire to maintain zero growth at headquarters, it had not been found advisable to create a new unit for this purpose. Nevertheless, additional emphasis had been given to the search for durable solutions which was always one of the main preoccupations of the Office. The Director of Assistance stressed the orientation towards durable solutions in UNHCR assistance activities, as reflected in document A/AC.96/639 and Corr.1 and 3. He drew the attention of the meeting to the fact that one of the two deputy directors of Assistance was specifically entrusted with the question of durable solutions. Concerning assistance to refugees in the Tindouf region, the Director recalled recent UNHCR missions to discuss the subject of durable solutions for refugees and the opening of a UNHCR Branch Office in Algeria. More details of these initiatives would be given under the relevant agenda items, as would a report on the High Commissioner's pursuit of durable solutions in general.

Decision of the Committee

53. The Executive Committee:

Noted the report submitted by the High Commissioner on Action taken on Decisions by the Executive Committee and requested that future reports cover all prior decisions of the Committee with respect to which action had not been completed, rather than just the decisions of the previous session.

IV. INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

(Item 6 of the agenda)

54. Opening the debate on this item, Mr. Hans Ewerlöf (Sweden), Chairman of the Sub-Committee of the Whole on International Protection, introduced the report of the ninth meeting of the Sub-Committee (A/AC.96/649 and Add.1). The subject of military and armed attacks on refugee camps and settlements had proved to be extremely complex, and despite the effort and good will which had characterized the discussions of this issue, it had so far not been possible to reach a consensus on a text. A new set of draft conclusions had been prepared which were the subject of ongoing consultations, and the Sub-Committee would be meeting again on this matter. He expressed the hope that it would be possible to reach a positive result before the end of the thirty-fifth session.

55. The Sub-Committee had also been deeply concerned at the decrease in the number of rescues of asylum-seekers in distress at sea, and considered that there was an urgent need to promote measures to facilitate rescue. It urged that RASRO be implemented on a trial basis as soon as possible, and that additional resettlement places be provided as a matter of urgency. Continued support was also needed for DISERO. With regard to the question of identity documents for refugees, the Sub-Committee had recognized the need for refugees to be provided with documents establishing their identity and their refugee status, and also for asylum applicants to be given provisional documentation sufficient to ensure that they were not subjected to expulsion or to refoulement. The value of the registration and documentation of refugees in large-scale influx situations was also recognized. It was hoped that the Executive Committee would adopt as its own the conclusions recommended by the Sub-Committee on these matters.

56. The Director of International Protection, introducing document A/AC.96/643, stated that a review of the international protection of refugees in the world during the past year had given rise to three general observations. First, the response of the international community to refugee problems continued to be impressive and reflected a desire to develop humanitarian traditions in a spirit of international solidarity. Second, the majority of refugee situations now existed in the Third World, which carried the heaviest burden of the refugee problem. Third, the magnitude of refugee problems and the increasing difficulties in implementing traditional solutions to them had been compounded by many factors, including demographic pressures, migratory movements from developing countries and economic recession, which led to tendencies in many countries towards isolation and the general rejection of aliens.

57. The consequence of this situation was a continuation of the restrictive tendencies noted last year. Strict controls imposed by various countries on the admission of all foreigners, including asylum applicants, had been followed by the unwillingness of neighbouring States to bear an increased burden. Statistics showed, however, that the number of refugees in terms of total foreign populations was very small. While UNHCR shared the legitimate concern of States to prevent the abuse of their traditions of hospitality, the solution was not to be found in restrictive practices and disregard of the principles of international protection, but rather through respect for the basic moral values of these societies.

58. As a first step, it was necessary to undertake a systematic and responsible information campaign to present the refugee problem in its true dimensions and to distinguish it clearly from the immigration question. The necessary resources should be provided to the competent national authorities to make asylum procedures speedier and more efficient, so that asylum applicants did not wait indefinitely for a decision. Assistance also needed to be provided to countries in refugees' regions of origin. Finally, political solutions should be sought for the causes of refugee flows.

59. The Director of International Protection gave several examples illustrating the difficulties encountered in different areas of the world with regard to the admission and treatment of refugees. These included the return of recognized refugees by neighbouring countries, the adoption by States of policies against admitting "dissidents" from neighbouring countries, and the uprooting and sometimes massacre of refugees who had been long resident in their countries of reception. Refugees had also been returned to countries of origin without UNHCR being given the opportunity to verify the voluntary nature of the return. Certain countries had also resorted to measures of deterrence, sometimes with the avowed objective of discouraging further arrivals.

60. Identifying measures to ensure the physical safety of refugees, whether victims of military attacks, piracy or failure to rescue on the high seas, was one of the greatest challenges confronting States in the field of international protection. Appreciation was due to the many Governments that had assisted in this task. The participation of a number of countries in RASRO was also greatly appreciated. Special recognition was due to those States which courageously provided asylum to refugees who had been the victims of military or armed attacks.

61. With regard to the development of refugee law, there were now in effect two refugee concepts: the widened refugee concept derived from successive General Assembly resolutions, which included persons compelled to flee from "man-made disasters"; and the "traditional" definition, as contained in the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the status of refugees, 4/ the 1967 Protocol, 5/ and the UNHCR Statute. The Executive Committee had recognized that, in large-scale influx situations, persons covered by the broader concept should be protected and assisted according to the basic principles of international protection. Problems arose, however, when refugees falling under the wider concept requested asylum in countries which apply the definition contained in the 1951 Convention. Many States had amended their legislation to permit such persons to remain on a humanitarian basis until it became possible for them to return to their homes without danger. It was hoped that other countries would adopt measures of this kind.

62. In order for the international community to preserve the positive achievements of the past, certain essential conditions had to be fulfilled. UNHCR needed to be able to rely on the full support of the Executive Committee. The Office also had to remain a vigilant organ of the international community and not fail to take bold initiatives when required. A UNHCR presence had to be secured wherever refugees might find themselves, since this was the most effective means of ensuring their protection. Attention also had to be paid to the promotion of a broad understanding of the problems of refugees and to dissemination of refugee law.

63. In conclusion, the Director of International Protection paid particular tribute to the non-governmental organizations and to their defence of the rights of refugees. Through their widespread network of contacts in parliaments,

governments, the public and the media, non-governmental organizations provided unfailing support to the Office in its efforts in favour of refugees.

64. In the ensuing discussion, gratitude was expressed for the work of Ambassador Ewerlöf as Chairman of the Sub-Committee of the Whole on International Protection, and in particular for his continuing efforts to reach a consensus on a statement of principles condemning military and armed attacks on refugee camps and settlements. Several speakers expressed their appreciation for the forthright and lucid analysis in the statement of the Director of International Protection, as well as for the comprehensive review of current protection problems contained in the High Commissioner's note on international protection (A/AC.96/643). The importance of the High Commissioner's international protection function was stressed by many speakers, and attention was drawn to the gravity and increasing complexity of the problems confronting the international community in this field.

65. Many speakers expressed their concern at continuing threats to the physical safety of refugees and asylum-seekers, including physical assaults, vicious acts of piracy, the failure of passing ships to rescue those in distress at sea and the unjustified detention and imprisonment of asylum-seekers and refugees. Several representatives emphasized that, in order for UNHCR to carry out its international protection tasks effectively, it was essential that the Office be given access to refugees and asylum-seekers.

66. The fervent hope was expressed by many representatives that it would be possible before the conclusion of the current session of the Executive Committee to reach a consensus on a statement of principles condemning and prohibiting military and armed attacks on refugee camps and settlements. Several representatives considered it essential that the Executive Committee should: (a) unreservedly and unequivocally condemn attacks against all refugee camps and settlements; and (b) stress that such attacks could not under any circumstances be justified and that they constituted a grave violation of international law. It was also important that the text to be adopted should not place undue burdens on asylum countries which were most directly affected by military attacks and whose representative had already made significant concessions in an effort to reach a consensus. One speaker recalled that the Executive Committee, in previous conclusions on international protection adopted at its thirtieth, thirty-first, thirty-second and thirty-third sessions, had expressed its deep concern about and strong condemnation of military and armed attacks on refugee camps and settlements and had referred to the need for measures to protect refugees against such attacks. The fear was expressed by a number of speakers that failure to reach agreement on a text condemning attacks of this nature might encourage their recurrence.

67. The representative of China reiterated the concerns expressed by his delegation in the general debate, where reference had been made to repeated incidents of military attacks on refugee camps and settlements, including instances in which camps and settlements had been subjected to bombing and artillery attacks, causing heavy loss of life and serious injury to innocent people. Such attacks, in violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country of refuge, had been condemned by international public opinion. His country supported the decision of the Executive Committee to draft a document condemning and prohibiting such attacks. Responsibility for such attacks lay with the attacking State. There should be no question of a balanced responsibility, and still less of placing the onus on the country of refuge. The document should unequivocally condemn the

attacking State, prohibiting attacks against refugee camps wherever they might be located, and under whatever pretext. No distinction should be made between refugee camps, as this would leave some camps unprotected. It was natural that there should be divergent views on this matter which involved a number of important principles. Full discussions were therefore required, and particular attention should be paid to the views of States that had received large number of refugees and lived under the threat of military attacks. It was to be hoped that consultations on an equal footing would lead to agreement on a document acceptable to all parties, and would help to end this international atrocity.

68. Many speakers stressed that there could be no doubt that all members of the Executive Committee were in full agreement with the humanitarian objective of protecting refugees against armed attacks, which had already caused great suffering in many parts of the world. Certain representatives noted, however, that the draft text involved important political questions relating to the maintenance of peace and security which were also being considered in other forums and which required careful examination. Several speakers emphasized the importance of maintaining the exclusively civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, of locating refugee camps and settlements at a reasonable distance from the frontiers of countries from which military or armed attacks might emanate, and of UNHCR being granted access to such camps and settlements. Some of these speakers expressed the view that countries of refuge had a responsibility to ensure that refugees were not involved in activities that might lead to military or armed attacks by way of reprisals, and noted that refugees not only had rights but also duties. One speaker referred to the principle that the grant of asylum by a State is a peaceful and humanitarian act which cannot be regarded as unfriendly by any other State, and stressed the need for the fundamental character of this principle to be fully reflected in the text. Another speaker considered that insufficient pressure was being placed by the international community on countries responsible for attacks on refugee camps and settlements.

69. Many representatives expressed grave concern at continuing pirate attacks on asylum-seekers in the South China Sea, and appreciation was voiced for the efforts made by the Royal Thai Government to combat acts of piracy against asylum-seekers. The hope was expressed that the anti-piracy arrangement established between the Royal Thai Government and UNHCR would lead to a further reduction in the number of attacks.

70. Concern was expressed by a number of speakers at the reported further decrease in the number of asylum-seekers being rescued at sea. They welcomed the various initiatives by UNHCR in this field. The view was expressed that the proposed RASRO scheme would help to meet this serious humanitarian problem. A number of speakers confirmed their countries' intended contribution to the scheme and others indicated that the matter was being given serious consideration by their Governments. The majority of speakers expressed general support for the RASRO scheme which, it was hoped, would be implemented on a trial basis in the near future. The view was also expressed that the DISERO scheme was fulfilling a useful function and should continue to receive the support of Governments.

71. Recurring violations of the fundamental principle of non-refoulement were unanimously deplored. A number of speakers emphasized that the vigilance of the High Commissioner and the need for States to be fully responsive to his appeals were essential in order to ensure absolute respect for this peremptory principle, which was at the heart of international protection.

72. The observer speaking on behalf of ICVA drew attention to recent examples of the extradition of asylum applicants who may have been refugees. Voluntary agencies believed that refugees or asylum-seekers should not be extradited to a country where they had reason to fear persecution.

73. Many representatives noted with concern the adoption of restrictive asylum practices and a tendency on the part of a number of States to consider asylum as temporary. Concern was also expressed at the apparent erosion of the concept of asylum, to which the High Commissioner had referred in his introductory statement. Mention was also made of a tendency towards a restrictive application of the refugee definition by certain national authorities and of a blurring in public opinion of the distinction between refugees and other migrants. One speaker stated that, in the opinion of his Government, a judicious - not a restrictive - application of the refugee concept was needed to protect it from erosion.

74. Several speakers referred to the fact that increasing numbers of economic migrants were seeking to misuse asylum procedures. This had had an adverse effect on the interests of genuine asylum applicants and a negative impact on public attitudes towards asylum applicants in general. In this connection, a number of speakers mentioned the need to improve procedures for the determination of refugee status, the importance of which was generally recognized. One representative stressed the desirability for such procedures to conform to the basic requirements identified by the Executive Committee and hoped that, in determining refugee status, national authorities would follow the UNHCR Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status.

75. One representative referred to the procedures applied in his country to deal with manifestly unfounded or abusive applications for refugee status or asylum, which included procedural safeguards in line with the conclusions adopted by the Executive Committee at its thirty-fourth session. 6/ He stressed that methods to remove abusive applications should not be detrimental to genuine asylum applicants.

76. Reference was made by a number of speakers to the changing character of refugee flows in recent years and to the interrelationship between refugee problems and economic factors. Several representatives referred to the problem of irregular movements of refugees from countries of first asylum to other countries. The latter were often left in the position of either accepting a fait accompli and admitting such refugees, or placing them "in orbit", which was undesirable and also involved risk of a refoulement. The view was expressed that situations of this kind required concerted action between countries of "first" and "second" asylum and UNHCR. Several representatives called upon UNHCR to undertake a study of the irregular migration of refugees in its broadest aspects, focusing on identifying flows both at source and at destination. Such a study should also examine questions connected with the fraudulent documentation of refugees forming part of such movements. They suggested that a working group be established and that its findings be presented to the Executive Committee at its thirty-sixth session. Reference was also made by several speakers to the suggestion contained in the note on international protection (A/AC.96/643) for the establishment of consultation mechanisms to examine problems relating to movements of refugees between countries of first and second asylum in the context of international solidarity and burden sharing. One representative considered that such mechanisms should be established on an ad hoc basis within the UNHCR framework, and that arrangements outside this framework should be the exception. Another representative expressed a preference for multilateral consultations on specific issues with all concerned parties, including countries of origin.

77. In the course of the debate, various proposals were made for the establishment of special arrangements which could assist the High Commissioner in the exercise of his international protection function. One speaker, supported by others, reiterated the proposal made by his delegation in the general debate that the High Commissioner appoint an independent personality to assess the current situation in the field of international protection and to propose remedies to combat any erosion of fundamental protection principles. There were also other options, however, such as the appointment of ad hoc groups of experts to prepare discussions of particular issues by the Executive Committee, or the convening of conferences to deal with specific subjects. The importance of regular contacts with parliamentarians was also noted. It was, however, for the High Commissioner to evaluate the usefulness of these various suggestions.

78. The importance of finding appropriate durable solutions for refugee problems was stressed by a number of representatives, and the need for States, in the spirit of international solidarity, to provide such solutions was emphasized. One representative considered that regard should be had to all available solutions avoiding over-emphasis on any single approach. Many representatives noted that the majority of refugee situations arose in the Third World, and it was observed that several of the world's poorest countries were making substantial sacrifices in order to provide assistance and protection to refugees. One speaker considered that the tendency to regard asylum as temporary had to be seen in the context of the difficulties experienced by such countries of first refuge in receiving large numbers of refugees. In underlining the need to seek durable solutions, particularly voluntary repatriation, he observed that there was an advantage in accepting temporary refuge in certain situations and in building upon such acceptance to establish the basic rights which asylum-seekers should enjoy.

79. Voluntary repatriation was mentioned by many representatives as the most desirable solution for refugee problems. A number of representatives pointed to the need for States to co-operate with UNHCR and other competent organizations in efforts to promote this durable solution, notably by helping to create conditions favourable to voluntary repatriation of refugees. One speaker referred to the Document of Objectives adopted by the Contadora Group in 1983, which included a statement to this effect. Another speaker recalled, however, that progress in the area of voluntary repatriation had so far been rather limited and that for many refugees this solution seemed a remote possibility. Another representative expressed concern that in certain instances repatriation had taken place without UNHCR involvement to ascertain its voluntary character.

80. Several speakers welcomed additional accessions to the international refugee instruments and expressed the hope that other States, including those with substantial refugee problems, would find it possible to become parties to the 1951 United Nations Convention and the 1967 Protocol. It was in the interest of all States to strengthen the mechanisms of international solidarity and burden-sharing, of which the Convention and Protocol were an essential part. One representative stated that his country's parliament had approved the withdrawal of the geographical limitation introduced by his country upon acceding the 1951 Convention. Mention was made by a number of representatives of the value of regional instruments as a complement to the standards defined in the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol.

81. A number of representatives referred to the distinction between refugees, as defined in the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of

Refugees 4/ and the UNHCR Statute, and the wider category of persons for whom the High Commissioner is required to provide protection and assistance under successive General Assembly resolutions. Several speakers pointed out that many current refugee situations involved persons falling into the latter category. They also indicated that their national legislation provided for the possibility of permitting such persons to remain in their countries on humanitarian grounds. The desirability of granting asylum, at least on a provisional basis, to persons who, for compelling humanitarian reasons, ought not to be returned to their country of origin was generally acknowledged. Several speakers pointed to the difficulty of accepting this as a legal obligation at the present stage. One representative mentioned the difficulty of evaluating conditions in countries of origin of asylum applicants when these were not in themselves sufficient to justify refugee status under the definition of the 1951 Convention. Another representative, while recognizing that the convergence of the "traditional" and "expanded" refugee concepts was a worthy goal, indicated that practical considerations prevented his Government from adopting this as its policy. The observer representing ICVA expressed concern at the lack of protection of certain groups and stated that voluntary agencies believed that all persons in a refugee-like situation should receive the protection of the international community.

82. Mention was made of the question of identity documents for refugees, which had been examined by the Sub-Committee of the Whole on International Protection. Agreement was expressed with the conclusions of the Sub-Committee on this subject, which was considered to be of some importance. One representative concurred with the statements of certain speakers in the Sub-Committee to the effect that it did not appear necessary to provide identity documents to refugees who were well integrated into their asylum country and who enjoyed rights virtually on a par with nationals. His delegation also considered that the determination of refugee status and the issuance of identity documents was the prerogative and responsibility of the refugee's host country.

83. Several representatives referred to the absence of international protection for Palestinian refugees. They considered that this serious lacuna required the urgent attention of the international community, which should not remain blind to the plight of these refugees. The observer of PLO underlined his deep concern in this regard and expressed the hope that the international community would resolve this question promptly, taking into full account the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Speakers on this question recognized the limits of the UNHCR mandate with respect to the protection of Palestinian refugees. They urged that the grave problem of the protection of Palestinian refugees be dealt with by the competent organs of the United Nations and that an appropriate solution be found.

84. Reference was made by a number of representatives to xenophobic attitudes now existing in a number of countries, which also affected refugees, and sometimes created difficulties for Governments seeking to maintain liberal asylum policies. A number of representatives stressed the need for efforts to counteract these trends and to sensitize public opinion to the special situation of the refugee as distinct from economic migrants and other aliens. The importance of combined efforts in the area of public opinion by Governments, non-governmental organizations and UNHCR was generally recognized.

85. The importance of developing and promoting a broader knowledge and understanding of refugee law was generally recognized, and a number of speakers welcomed the information provided in document A/AC.96/INF.171 describing the

various initiatives taken by the Office in this regard. Particular mention was made of the contribution of the International Institute of Humanitarian Law (San Remo) in promoting international refugee law, and of the value of the courses and seminars given by the Institute. Mention was also made of the co-operation between UNHCR and ICRC in the promotion of refugee law. Several representatives referred to the colloquium on international protection issues in Central America, Mexico and Panama, to be held in November 1984 in Cartagena, Colombia, under the auspices of the Government of Colombia with the co-sponsorship of two academic institutions and UNHCR, and to the proposed seminar on protection issues in Europe, to be held in March 1985, as worthwhile initiatives in this field.

86. At the close of the discussion, the Executive Committee adopted the following conclusions which include those recommended by the Sub-Committee of the Whole on International Protection:

87. Conclusions of the Committee:

(1) General

The Executive Committee:

(a) Noted that while progress had been achieved in the field of international protection since the Committee's thirty-fourth session, the exercise of the High Commissioner's international protection function had become increasingly complex and difficult due to changes in the nature and scope of refugee problems and the emergence of restrictive trends in different areas of the world;

(b) Noted that special international protection problems have arisen due to the changing character of refugee movements, expressed satisfaction at the steps taken by the High Commissioner to address these problems and looked forward to any further initiatives which the High Commissioner might find it appropriate to take in this regard;

(c) Noted with concern that in different parts of the world the fundamental principle of non-refoulement had been violated;

(d) Noted with deep regret that restrictive practices were being followed with respect to the granting of asylum, the determination of refugee status and the treatment of asylum-seekers and refugees;

(e) Noted with particularly grave concern the continuing serious violations or disregard of the physical safety of refugees and asylum-seekers in various regions of the world, including military or armed attacks, acts of piracy and the failure to rescue asylum-seekers in distress at sea;

(f) Expressed satisfaction that despite these disquieting trends, States continue to grant asylum to large numbers of refugees and ensure that they are treated in accordance with recognized international humanitarian standards;

(g) Took note of the discussions in the Sub-Committee of the Whole on International Protection concerning military and armed attacks on refugee camps and settlements and of the addendum to the report of the Sub-Committee's ninth meeting (A/AC.96/649/Add.1), and requested the Chairman to take appropriate action for the continuation of consultations regarding the prohibition of military or

armed attacks on refugee camps and settlements and to report on the results of these consultations to the Executive Committee at its thirty-sixth session;

(h) Stressed the importance of UNHCR being granted access to asylum applicants and refugees in order to enable the Office to carry out its protection functions in an effective manner;

(i) Welcomed the additional accessions to the 1951 United Nations Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the status of refugees which had taken place since the Committee's thirty-fourth session, and expressed the hope that further States - and, in particular, States confronted with large-scale refugee problems - would accede to these basic international refugee instruments in the near future, thereby strengthening the framework of international solidarity and burden sharing of which these instruments are an essential part;

(j) Expressed satisfaction at the continuing efforts of the High Commissioner to promote a greater knowledge and understanding of international refugee law, and recognized the positive contribution made by the International Institute for Humanitarian Law in San Remo in this important area of the High Commissioner's activities;

(k) Reiterated the need for Governments to support the exercise of the High Commissioner's international protection function by granting asylum, by providing durable solutions and by fostering in public opinion a deeper understanding of the special situation and needs of refugees and asylum-seekers.

(2) Problems related to the rescue of asylum-seekers in distress at sea

The Executive Committee:

(a) Noted with concern that rescue of asylum-seekers in distress at sea had decreased significantly in 1983 and again in 1984;

(b) Recalled the conclusion on the rescue of asylum-seekers at sea, adopted by the Executive Committee at its thirty-fourth session, recognizing the need for promoting measures for facilitating the rescue of asylum-seekers in distress at sea;

(c) Welcomed the actions taken by UNHCR to draw attention to the continued need to rescue asylum-seekers in distress at sea and expressed the hope that these actions would receive the widest possible support of Governments;

(d) Strongly recommended that the Rescue at Sea Resettlement Offers (RASRO) scheme be implemented on a trial basis as soon as possible and that additional resettlement places be provided as a matter of urgency;

(e) Recognized the need for continued support for the Disembarkation Resettlement Offers (DISERO) scheme and recommended that States renew their contributions to this scheme.

(3) Identity documents for refugees

The Executive Committee:

(a) Recognized the need for refugees to have documentation enabling them to establish their identity, and noted that article 27 of the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention requires Contracting States to issue identity papers to any refugee in their territory who does not have a valid travel document;

(b) Recalled that, in a conclusion adopted at its twenty-eighth session, 7/ the Executive Committee recommended that recognized refugees should be issued documentation certifying their refugee status;

(c) Noted with approval the general practice of States to provide refugees with documents, in the form prescribed by their national legislation, enabling them to establish their identity and their refugee status, and recommended that States which have not yet done so should ensure that refugees are provided with such documentation;

(d) Recommended that asylum applicants whose applications cannot be decided without delay be provided with provisional documentation sufficient to ensure that they are protected against expulsion or refoulement until a decision has been taken by the competent authorities with regard to their application;

(e) Noted that in countries where there is no provision for the formal recognition of refugee status, it may be necessary for UNHCR, with the consent of the authorities of the asylum country, to certify that a person is considered a refugee within the UNHCR mandate;

(f) Recognized the value of registering and issuing appropriate documentation to refugees in large-scale influx situations, and recommended that States which have not yet done so should undertake such registration and documentation programmes where appropriate, in co-operation with UNHCR.

V. REFUGEE AID AND DEVELOPMENT

(Item 7 of the agenda)

88. The High Commissioner, in introducing the item, said that document A/AC.96/645 and Corr.1 sought to define the role of UNHCR in terms of its traditional activities and the way it could serve as a catalyst in bringing into play other agencies when the time was ripe. The document proposed modalities for co-operation with the specialized development agencies, and suggested possible patterns for refugee development projects in the future and a framework of principles for further action. He assured the Executive Committee that UNHCR had no intention of seeking to expand its activities into areas more fitting to other, better qualified agencies. He believed that the ideas outlined in the paper would have provided food for further thought on a subject which was of great importance to the whole international community, at a time when the best possible use had to be made of the scarce resources available. The results of the debate would, he hoped, be a source of encouragement to those bearing the greatest burden - the host countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America which at considerable sacrifice had given asylum to so many refugees.

89. In the course of the debate, it was emphasized that refugees should not be treated as a group apart. Several delegations from first-asylum countries pointed out that projects benefiting both refugees and nationals also have a beneficial effect on the attitude of nationals, who then no longer perceive the refugees as a burden but rather as a productive factor for the areas where they live, also focusing the attention of the international community on their regions.

90. It was felt that the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa and its preparations had provided concrete teaching material for a learning process about this theme, thanks to which the Executive Committee now better understood the problems and had a clearer view regarding possible solutions. It was stressed that co-ordination on a country basis required special attention, and several delegations agreed that UNDP round-table conferences or World Bank consultative groups could serve as suitable forums to ensure that paragraph 5 (c) projects submitted to the Conference, and other refugee-related development projects, were carefully considered in the context of national development plans. UNHCR, as focal point for durable solutions, should be kept adequately informed of any activities to benefit refugees. The point was made that development aid related to refugees should not become a substitute for normal UNHCR assistance to promote the self-sufficiency of refugees, or for normal development aid. The fact that a consensus had been reached at the Conference on the principle of "additionality" of refugee-related development aid was a source of great satisfaction to several delegations, and was thought to be of particular importance at a time when the concept of asylum was being eroded.

91. Many delegations gave their views on the role the High Commissioner should play in refugee situations where developmental measures were required. It was generally agreed, as suggested in the document A/AC.96/645 and Corr.1, that his role should be limited to that of catalyst, co-ordinator and sometimes fund-raiser. Without expanding his mandate or increasing his staff, the High Commissioner should bring developmental partners to focus their efforts on helping countries to integrate refugees by the identification, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects which would fill the gap between humanitarian

aid and development programmes. The view was expressed that the direct role of UNHCR should cease and that of the development agencies begin when refugees have reached a standard of living comparable to that of the local population.

92. A number of delegations spoke of the responsibilities of both host countries and countries providing assistance with regard to refugee-related development projects. Several financial donor countries were in the process of adapting their administrative structures to facilitate co-ordination between the authorities concerned with refugees and those responsible for development aid. One delegation emphasized the advantage of this kind of assistance in the framework of bilateral development programmes. Already established channels and previous experience in a country tended to facilitate implementation, ensuring better and more efficient use of personnel and other resources. A co-ordinated approach by the national agencies of the host countries involved was also recommended by several delegations - organizational structures dealing with the two aspects often needed to be harmonized, as well as priorities reviewed.

93. The desirability of harmonizing of refugee-related development projects with national development plans was mentioned by several delegations, who recommended consistency with existing and planned schemes for the area, a review of such projects under regular development criteria and adequate provisions for recurrent costs. Although the High Commissioner should promote full integration of refugees into the development process, the primary responsibility for taking action lay with concerned Governments. The development oriented approach to refugee aid was in general favoured as a way of mobilizing additional resources by enlarging the scope of development assistance to include refugees. On the question of funding for such projects, most delegations agreed that modalities would have to be experimented with, and a certain amount of flexibility was called for by all concerned.

94. Many speakers referred with appreciation to the project, administered by the World Bank, to generate income in refugee areas in Pakistan, and suggested that similar projects might be considered in other areas. Two delegations announced new contributions to the Pakistan project.

95. The importance of the High Commissioner's role in the re-establishment of returnees in their countries of origin in a definitive manner was stressed by one speaker. This role was particularly significant where voluntary repatriation took place over an extended period of time in a rural setting, when re-establishment could only be achieved after several years. Another speaker emphasized, however, that the role of UNHCR should be limited to addressing only the first needs of the returnees. Further action by way of developmental investments should be taken by the country of origin in co-operation with UNDP, other developmental organizations and non-governmental organizations.

96. General agreement was expressed with the proposals and principles set out in A/AC.96/645 and Corr.1. It was felt that the Executive Committee, thanks to the August 1983 meeting of experts on refugee aid and development in Mont Pèlerin, Switzerland, and to the documentation prepared by the High Commissioner, had made good progress on this issue in a relatively short time, resulting in a clearer picture with respect to concepts such as "additionality", the distribution of roles between UNHCR and the development agencies and the benefits which could be brought to local populations. The principles proposed in the annex constituted an equitable balance between the different interests involved. They were a logical last step in the Executive Committee's common efforts to explore and define the new

dimension of refugee assistance, even though their practical application would need to take fully into account the particular circumstances of each situation and the intricacies of the relationships between all the parties concerned.

Decisions of the Committee

97. The Executive Committee:

Having considered the High Commissioner's notes on refugee aid and development (A/AC.96/635, 636, 645 and 645/Corr.1) and his oral presentation of the question,

(a) Commended the High Commissioner for the clear and comprehensive documentation submitted and the balanced approach and presentation of the complex problems involved;

(b) Stressed the key importance of development-oriented assistance to refugees and returnees in developing countries and of their full integration into the development process, as the best means of helping them to support themselves and contribute to the economic and social life of the host communities;

(c) Emphasized the need to give a developmental orientation to refugee assistance at the earliest possible stage;

(d) Commended the High Commissioner and the Governments concerned for action already taken in this direction in co-operation with UNDP, the World Bank and other developmental organizations including non-governmental organizations, urged continuing co-operation with those bodies;

(e) Took note with appreciation of document A/AC.96/645 and Corr.1, and encouraged the High Commissioner to continue to intensify his efforts, bearing in mind the principles for action in developing countries listed in the annex to that report and their further refinement.

VI. UNHCR ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES

(Item 8 of the agenda)

98. Introducing the report on UNHCR assistance activities in 1983-1984 and proposed voluntary funds programmes and budget for 1985 (A/AC.96/639 and Corr.1 and 3 and Add.2), the Director of Assistance recalled the recent evolution in the size and nature of UNHCR assistance programmes. He said that the volume of UNHCR assistance activities had grown rapidly since the end of the 1970s, reaching almost \$500 million before stabilizing at some \$400 million in the early 1980s. During that period, massive refugee influxes and the emerging concept of temporary asylum in several regions had caused assistance programmes to concentrate more and more on emergency relief and care and maintenance. However, during the last few years, this situation had also stabilized and the balance of assistance activities had changed in favour of the promotion of durable solutions. For the third consecutive time, revised general programmes for the current year could be reduced while their proposed target of \$385 million for 1985 was only some 6 per cent more than the revised 1984 target.

99. The Director of Assistance appealed to both governmental and non-governmental agencies co-operating with UNHCR in the planning and implementation of projects to continue improving services to refugees, while at the same time bearing in mind the necessity for efficient management of assistance funds. In reviewing recent developments in various parts of the world, the Director mentioned that 58 per cent of programme resources for Africa in 1985 would be devoted to the search for durable solutions and drew attention to recent changes in the orientation of assistance in Honduras and Mexico. He welcomed the decision by the Government of Spain to take over the costs, previously borne partly by UNHCR, of assistance to refugees. In Western Asia, efforts to promote income-generating activities for refugees in Pakistan and the establishment of a UNHCR presence and programme in the Islamic Republic of Iran were recalled, as were the continuing efforts to promote voluntary repatriation and, whenever possible, local integration in South-East Asia.

100. Co-operation between UNHCR, other members of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations continued to be fruitful. The agreement concluded during 1984 between UNDP and UNHCR on the modalities of joint action in refugee areas affected by refugees was particularly important in this regard. The Director also stressed the need for a continuing dialogue on assistance activities with non-governmental organizations.

101. Several delegations again commended the High Commissioner for the quality of the documentation on assistance activities while others applauded improvements in management which have resulted in a high rate of utilization of funds approved for the 1983 general programmes. The project management system - and particularly its evaluation component - were felt to have promoted the efficient utilization of resources and to have assisted in addressing the real needs of refugees. In this respect, one speaker mentioned the need to evaluate action in favour of refugee women, in the framework of the United Nations Decade for Women. Several delegates stressed the importance of assistance activities in fulfilling UNHCR statutory responsibilities. Measures such as rotation of staff, devolution of more authority to field offices and greater emergency preparedness were suggested as means further to improve the efficiency of UNHCR assistance activities. Several speakers paid tribute to non-governmental organizations co-operating with UNHCR as well as UNHCR branch offices and field staff directly involved in helping refugees.

102. One delegation expressed the view that the Executive Committee session did not afford sufficient time for members to examine general programmes budgets, particularly those relating to the following year, and proposed that the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters examine this question at its October 1985 meeting.

103. A number of speakers informed the Executive Committee of their Government's efforts to assist refugees and of the impact of refugees in their respective countries. Several speakers welcomed the positive results of the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa.

104. The representative of Algeria congratulated the High Commissioner on the quality of document A/AC.96/639 and Corr.1 and 3. He welcomed the collaboration of UNHCR in promoting self-sufficiency for Sahrawi refugees through multi-sectoral projects in co-operation with the Red Crescent and the concerned technical ministries of the Algerian Government. He pointed out that UNHCR assistance was a significant contribution, as underlined in the above-mentioned document, in favour of the most vulnerable groups among Sahrawi refugees. It nevertheless fell short of the total needs of these refugees and represented only a tiny part of the costs borne by his country. He mentioned that several technical missions by UNHCR had visited the refugees since the last session of the Executive Committee. He was confident that the opening of a UNHCR Branch Office in Algiers would help reinforce the longstanding co-operation between his country and UNHCR and the co-ordination of efforts in favour of the refugee cause. The representative of Morocco requested clarification from the High Commissioner concerning the number and status of persons at Tindouf. He noted that the section of the document under discussion relating to assistance activities in Algeria mentioned the pursuit of durable solutions and, in this context, asked if voluntary repatriation was still considered a valid goal by UNHCR. Concerning the establishment of a UNHCR Branch Office in Algeria, he sought confirmation that the Office would be responsible for the promotion of durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation. Finally, he referred to an appeal by his Government transmitted to UNHCR on 1 November 1983, and requested confirmation that the High Commissioner would make reference, during the session of the General Assembly, to guarantees offered by his Government. In reply, the Director of Assistance confirmed that, as was the practice elsewhere, figures concerning the number of refugees in Algeria were provided by the authorities of that country. He recalled that the search for durable solutions was one of the main objectives of UNHCR and was a central feature of assistance programmes. Although voluntary repatriation was considered the best possible solution when conditions allowed its implementation, the report on assistance activities mentioned only projects and programmes which could be promoted for this particular group, taking into account present circumstances. He added that the functions and responsibilities of the UNHCR Branch Office in Algeria would be the same as elsewhere, i.e., international protection and material assistance, including the search for durable solutions. The High Commissioner assured the representative of Morocco that he would refer to his Government's appeal and proposals in his statement to the General Assembly. The representative of Morocco expressed the reservation of his delegation on the section of document A/AC.96/639 and Corr.1 and 3 and Add.2 dealing with assistance to persons in the Tindouf area and objected to the way in which the chapter was written. He underlined that his delegation had constantly denounced the utilization of the camps at Tindouf and of their inhabitants for other than humanitarian purposes, as well as the consistent tendency to inflate the number of persons concerned. According to him, the authorities of the neighbouring country did not treat those in the camps as real

refugees and did not observe, where they were concerned, the texts governing refugee status, notably the 1969 OAU Convention. 2/ He judged that the number of original inhabitants of Spanish Sahara at Tindouf was tiny compared with the overall population of the camps, which was in reality made up largely of victims of the Sahel drought. He recalled that the Executive Committee had always linked the provision of assistance to the promotion of durable solutions which, unfortunately, had still not materialized. In reply, the representative of Algeria stressed the necessity of preserving the non-political character of UNHCR and of respecting the terms of its mandate so as to avoid precedents that would hinder its humanitarian work. He considered that the Moroccan statement sought to distort the Western Sahara issue and to cast doubt upon the character and intended purpose of assistance given by UNHCR, an organ of the United Nations. The numerous countries and international organizations which contributed to the programme had not, for their part, expressed any doubt. He recalled that the fundamental question underlying the issue of Sahrawi refugees was on the agenda of the competent political bodies of the United Nations and OAU, which had drawn up the framework for its settlement. He emphasized that the search for durable solutions remained the constant aim of his Government and that obstacles to voluntary repatriation of Sahrawi refugees were due to the failure to put into effect the pertinent decisions of the United Nations and OAU. In reply, the representative of Morocco recalled that his Government had given a solemn undertaking and formal guarantees with respect to the voluntary repatriation of Sahrawis in the camps and in the area of Tindouf. He stressed that these undertakings and guarantees should be brought to the attention of the people involved and that no one was entitled to speak in their name. Only they themselves could express their wishes to representatives of UNHCR, without intermediary, without witnesses and without pressure. Concerning the decisions of the United Nations and OAU, he added that any delay in their implementation was caused by those who, while preaching support for them, in fact multiplied the difficulties and obstacles preventing them from being put into effect.

105. A number of comments were made during discussions on individual chapters. The observer of Ethiopia pointed out that the provision of assistance was at present based either on figures provided by Governments, on UNHCR's own figures or on figures derived from registration, and he proposed that a common standard should be established. He further stated that registration by independent bodies should be applied in the provision of international assistance for refugees and returnees. The observer from Somalia expressed reservations as to programmes being implemented in Ethiopia and reaffirmed the humanitarian attitude of his Government with respect to refugees. The representative of the Sudan commented on local integration measures promoted by his Government and mentioned the heavy burden caused by the presence of urban refugees in particular. Influxes of refugees were said to be continuing and the speaker stressed the need for more consultations before purchases relating to the assistance programme were effected by UNHCR. The representative of Uganda told of efforts by his Government to promote durable solutions and expressed his appreciation of the international support for the special programme for returnees in the West Nile Province. The representative of the United Republic of Tanzania informed the Executive Committee of measures taken by his Government to facilitate the integration of refugees and stressed the heavy financial burden his country had to bear as a result. He confirmed that discussions were being pursued concerning the handing over of the Mishamo refugee settlement and that his Government favoured either voluntary repatriation, in close co-operation with UNHCR, or settlement assistance for refugees settled spontaneously in the Kigoma region and for persons who had come from Uganda.

The observer from Zambia expressed his appreciation for the support of UNHCR in providing identity documents to refugees in his country and stressed the need for assistance to recognized liberation movements.

106. The representative of Venezuela expressed her appreciation to UNHCR and proposed that assistance activities in North America be grouped differently in the assistance documentation.

107. The representative of Austria informed the Committee of an increase in the number of asylum-seekers in 1984 and recalled the continuing need for international solidarity in providing resettlement opportunities for refugees who could not be integrated locally.

108. The representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland described the situation in Hong Kong where large numbers of refugees had been waiting for a durable solution for several years. Hong Kong could absorb only those few refugees with close family links with Hong Kong; for the remainder, resettlement was still urgently required.

109. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran renewed his appreciation for the concrete achievements of UNHCR in assistance and urged the Executive Committee to preserve the non-political character of that work. He described the measures taken by his Government to receive, assist and integrate large numbers of refugees for which it was now compelled to seek international assistance.

110. It was agreed that, rather than amend document A/AC.96/639/Add.2 on the assistance programme in the Islamic Republic of Iran to reflect the position of the Government, as suggested by the representative, his statement would be reproduced in the present report. The statement is as follows:

"The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has informed the High Commissioner that, on the basis of a thorough assessment of the needs of Afghan refugees and taking into account the resources mobilized by the Government itself, it estimated that international assistance at a level of some \$30 million was required during 1985. It is therefore expected that the High Commissioner could provide his good offices in mobilizing or making available the additional international resources required during the revision of the programme in the middle of 1985."

111. The Director of Assistance made a few concluding remarks in reply to comments and questions submitted by members during the course of the debate. He took note of the generally favourable comments relating to documentation on assistance activities and pledged continued efforts to further improve. He confirmed that access to sites was an essential condition for assistance programmes to materialize: all UNHCR project agreements contained provisions to that effect. He also referred to the proposal made by one delegation to request the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters to examine ways and means to improve the process for the review of assistance programmes by the Executive Committee. The Director welcomed this opportunity to discuss the question in more detail. He stated his view that the informal formula introduced a few years ago provided a useful forum for discussions on the more technical aspects of programmes and suggested that this formula be expanded. He also welcomed the support of the Committee for evaluation activities and mentioned ongoing efforts to improve follow-up on project evaluation. He took note of a proposal to initiate a study

on the general question of refugee statistics and recalled his statement on the subject during the thirty-second session of the Executive Committee in October 1981. 8/

112. The Chairman's summing up of agenda item 8 on UNHCR assistance activities appears in a separate section of the present report (see para. 122 below).

113. Taking note of the Chairman's summing up on assistance activities, the Moroccan delegation confirmed its adherence to the principle of consensus that had always governed the proceedings of the Executive Committee. It would, therefore, not oppose adoption of the Algeria chapter. The Moroccan delegation stated that, in taking this attitude, it wished not to deny the UNHCR Branch Office in Algeria the opportunity to commence its work and to have the possibility and means to carry out all its functions without exception. It wished, however, to place on record its reservation as to the inclusion in the proposed 1985 budget of an allocation of \$3,632,000 for multi-purpose assistance in the Tindouf area.

114. Introducing the report on resettlement (A/AC.96/640 and Corr.1), the Director of Assistance stressed that resettlement should be applied only if no other durable solution was available. He expressed his gratitude to those Governments which maintained resettlement programmes, admitted disabled refugees and/or facilitated the transfer of refugees to countries of permanent residence. A meeting to provide general information on refugee resettlement needs had been held in Geneva in 1984 and further meetings and workshops were planned.

115. The need to find solutions for the approximately 700 unaccompanied minors in camps in South-East Asia without any links in resettlement countries was stressed. It was hoped that special initiatives might be taken during the upcoming International Youth Year.

116. Although the number of Indo-Chinese refugees arriving in first-asylum countries seemed now to be within manageable proportions, the resettlement rate had actually decreased and refugees currently in camps in South-East Asia had to wait, on average, twice as long before being resettled as refugees who had arrived prior to 1981.

117. The Director stated that although he was satisfied that vulnerable groups such as children, the disabled and the elderly were being given proper attention, priority should also be given to those who had been longest in camps.

118. The representative of Canada stated that his Government continued to support the UNHCR resettlement programmes but considered that without other solutions, resettlement in itself could not resolve refugee problems. He favoured further meetings and seminars on resettlement planning to ensure the optimum utilization of available resettlement places.

119. The representative of the Federal Republic of Germany welcomed the decrease in boat departures from Viet Nam. He said that his Government would continue its policy towards Indo-Chinese refugees and to accept refugees according to existing criteria. He further indicated that the Federal Republic would contribute 200 places to the DISERO scheme in 1985.

120. The representative of Sweden acknowledged that there was a continuing need for resettlement. Although an increasing number of asylum-seekers who presented

themselves at the border were being accepted as refugees, Sweden would continue to accept refugees for resettlement on the basis of recommendations by UNHCR and would maintain its annual quota at 1,250. She further requested that the presentation of cases of candidates for resettlement be as comprehensive as possible so as to ensure that those refugees in greatest need would be resettled.

121. The representative of the Netherlands agreed that resettlement should only be used as a last resort but that as such there remained a definite need. The Netherlands had consequently established a separate quota for use only by refugees needing resettlement and hoped that other countries would follow its example.

Decisions of the Committee

122. The Executive Committee:

A

(a) Took note with satisfaction of the progress made by the High Commissioner in the implementation of his general and special programmes in 1983 and the first months of 1984, as reported in documents A/AC.96/639 and Corr.1 and 3, particularly in respect of the high level of project implementation achieved;

(b) Noted with appreciation the further improvements in the presentation of the country and area sections as well as the corresponding tables in the above-mentioned document;

(c) Commended the High Commissioner for the periodic reports on developments in assistance provided to members of the Executive Committee twice yearly;

(d) Took note with appreciation of the report on UNHCR evaluation of assistance activities (EC/SC.2/17) and stressed the important role of the evaluation function in efficient programme management;

(e) Having noted a possible reduction in certain sources of funding of the High Commissioner's general programmes in 1985, expressed the wish that governmental and non-governmental agencies implementing assistance projects would do so in the most expedient and efficient way possible;

(f) Took note with satisfaction of the considerable increase in resources devoted by the High Commissioner to durable solutions in Africa, and commended in particular his efforts to promote voluntary repatriation;

(g) Noted the emergence of new prospects for durable solutions in Central America and Mexico through local settlement and voluntary repatriation and requested the High Commissioner and States concerned to continue their co-operation with a view to further exploring and promoting such durable solutions.

B

(a) Took note of the report on resettlement (A/AC.96/640 and Corr.1) and of activities in this field by UNHCR, in co-operation with Governments and the intergovernmental and non-governmental agencies concerned;

(b) Reiterated the importance that Governments continue to admit refugees who, in the absence of any other durable solution, are in need of resettlement;

(c) Noted with appreciation action taken by Governments to facilitate admission of refugees, inter alia, through the establishment of resettlement programmes for refugees;

(d) Recommended that Governments co-operate with UNHCR in establishing appropriate processing mechanisms for the resettlement of refugees, having full regard to the provision of international protection and material assistance and the desirability of avoiding irregular movements of refugees;

(e) Welcomed UNHCR initiatives to arrange meetings and discussion forums on resettlement planning and recommended that efforts to provide updated assessments of resettlement needs and priorities continue with interested Governments;

(f) Called on States to facilitate admission, especially of disabled refugees and of refugees in emergency situations;

(g) Welcomed continuing co-operation between Governments and UNHCR concerning the operation of the Orderly Departure Programme from Viet Nam.

C

(a) Took note of the allocations made by the High Commissioner from his Emergency Fund during the period 1 July 1983 to 30 June 1984;

(b) Took note of the observations made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions submitted in document A/AC.96/646;

(c) Reviewed schedule A of document A/AC.96/639 and approved the following:

(i) Proposals for new and revised allocations under the 1984 general programmes for both operations and programme support and administration, as summarized in table III, column 12 of document A/AC.96/639;

(ii) A revised financial target of \$352,267,300 (not including the \$10 million Emergency Fund) for 1984 general programmes;

(iii) The proposal set out in paragraph (e) of Schedule A of the introduction to document A/AC.96/639;

(iv) The country and area programmes and the overall allocations for 1985 general programmes for both operations and programme support and administration, as summarized in table III, column 13 of document A/AC.96/639, as amended by document A/AC.96/639/Add.2;

(v) The financial target of \$374,288,500 (not including the \$10 million Emergency Fund) for 1985 general programmes, as shown in table III, column 13, and as amended by paragraph 3 of document A/AC.96/639/Add.2.

VII. ROLE OF UNHCR IN PROMOTING DURABLE SOLUTIONS

(Item 9 of the agenda)

123. Introducing agenda item 9, the Director of Assistance referred to the review of assistance activities in various regions and countries made during the debate on assistance activities which dealt in concrete terms with durable solutions. The Director mentioned two specific points of concern to the Office in the pursuit of durable solutions, namely the local integration of refugees in urban areas and the scope, duration and funding of voluntary repatriation assistance.

124. Concerning the local integration of refugees in urban areas of developing countries, the Director mentioned traditional UNHCR activities of providing social counselling, scholarships and vocational training as well as the increasing co-operation with ILO in promoting self-sufficiency among urban refugees. He regretted that urban refugees still had to depend heavily on relief assistance and informed the Executive Committee that a study of refugees in urban areas was at present being conducted which could serve to reorient UNHCR's approach for this category of refugee.

125. Addressing the topic of voluntary repatriation, the Director explained the broad objectives of material assistance within voluntary repatriation programmes and stressed the mutual reinforcement of protection and assistance in the promotion of this durable solution. He recalled that the largest share of costs related to voluntary repatriation assistance was funded from special programmes. There were uncertainties inherent in this method of financing, particularly for smaller groups and individual returnees. He noted the comments made during the general debate concerning the need for UNHCR to play a more assertive role in the promotion of voluntary repatriation and the need to expand the duration of UNHCR assistance and presence in the framework of programmes for returnees. In this respect, the Director wondered whether, at the present time, the scope of UNHCR assistance to returnees was not too restricted, given that voluntary repatriation was universally held to be the most durable solution.

126. Speakers again welcomed the renewed and increasing emphasis on durable solutions. One representative welcomed the inclusion of the promotion of durable solutions as a separate item of the agenda for the second consecutive year and suggested that it be retained as such. He noted the reference made in the introductory remarks of the Director to the necessary link between the functions of international protection and assistance in the promotion of durable solutions; he also suggested that the report to the thirty-sixth session give more information on the percentage of funds devoted to each of the three durable solutions. The same speaker reviewed the developments relating to durable solutions in various parts of the world recalling, in particular, the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa and the proposal to create a UNHCR post in Thailand for the promotion of durable solutions. He felt, however, that this post was to be created at a rather junior level and, in this respect, also noted and supported a suggestion by two other delegations to re-establish the post of Senior Co-ordinator for South-East Asia. He finally urged UNHCR to pursue dialogues with other relevant international and regional bodies in order to delineate a strategy and define its own role more clearly.

127. Another speaker noted the potentially useful input of evaluation, both internal and external, in the implementation of durable solutions. He also welcomed the increased emphasis on vocational training within educational programmes and mentioned the particular needs of women and children.

128. A number of speakers reaffirmed that voluntary repatriation, where feasible, constituted the best durable solution and described efforts by their own Governments in that respect. Two observers insisted on the need for an accurate estimate of the numbers of refugees and/or returnees and pledged their support to allow such an exercise to take place.

Decisions of the Committee

129. The Executive Committee:

(a) Noted with satisfaction the positive trend in the growing proportion of General Programme funds allocated for durable solutions in 1983 and 1984, and requested the High Commissioner to continue to intensify his efforts to increase that proportion and to report on the results to the Executive Committee;

(b) Reaffirmed its full support of efforts made by the High Commissioner to give renewed impetus to the promotion of durable solutions to the problem of refugees, in particular through their voluntary repatriation, but also through their local integration in new communities or resettlement in third countries;

(c) Appealed to Governments to continue providing the necessary support to the High Commissioner and to take concrete measures to create conditions conducive to the voluntary repatriation of refugees, their local integration in new communities or their resettlement;

(d) Noted with satisfaction the increased level and quality of co-operation between the High Commissioner, other members of the United Nations system and relevant agencies, including non-governmental organizations in the promotion of durable solutions, and encouraged further improvement and strengthening of such co-operation.

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

(Item 10 of the agenda)

130. The Chairman introduced the Report of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters (A/AC.96/648). The Sub-Committee had carried out a thorough review of the various items on its agenda. There had been frank exchanges; questions were answered and explanations provided, particularly with respect to the professional job classification exercise and the 11 new posts requested. Concern had been expressed over the financing of General Programmes but it was hoped that this would be allayed by the generosity of the international community. Improvements in programme management and in programme evaluation carried out by UNHCR had been described. The Chairman believed that the report of the Sub-Committee accurately reflected the debate and that, while no firm recommendations were contained therein, the report should serve to guide the members of the Executive Committee in their discussion of the item under consideration.

131. The Director of Administration and Management, in introducing the item, began by illustrating the impossibility of dissociating administrative and financial questions from the context of the refugee problems which the Office had constantly to face. In order to meet the enormous needs of refugee situations with the greatest economy, a stable bureaucratic base coupled with an innovative approach was necessary. The Director proceeded to address four main points of concern: the Professional job classification exercise; the 11 additional posts being requested; the strengthening of UNHCR's management; and progress in financial management and the revolving fund for field staff housing and basic amenities.

132. The Director then referred to document A/AC.96/639/Add.1 which presented the results of the professional job classification exercise, the first such exercise within UNHCR. While the essential objective of the exercise had been to assign the appropriate grade to each Professional post, numerous other benefits should derive from the implementation of its results. Much preparatory work had been undertaken; assistance had been provided by the Office of Personnel Services of the Secretariat in New York, and many other United Nations organs had been consulted. Two committees composed of UNHCR staff members were trained in the Master Standard - the organization-wide classification system used. The results of the exercise had been approved by Office of Personnel Services. Table 1 of A/AC.96/639/Add.1 gave the results for all Professional posts and the overall results for the proposed national officer category appeared in table 10. The Director then explained the dual financing of UNHCR posts. Recalling the historical background, he quoted article 20 of the Statute of the Office. A joint review held between representatives of the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner in 1982 in order to determine the appropriate funding source for each post had resulted in agreement to a net transfer of 20 posts to the regular budget over three bienniums - from 1984 to 1989. All posts established after 1982 which were considered to be a proper charge to the regular budget were to be reviewed jointly by the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for incorporation into the regular budget as at 1990-1991.

133. While the classification committees had not concerned themselves with funding sources, the results had to be analysed in accordance with such sources, so that recommendations for those posts financed from the regular budget could be presented

to the General Assembly, and those financed from voluntary funds, to the Executive Committee. The approval of the Executive Committee was now being sought for the results presented in tables 7 and 12 of A/AC.96/639/Add.1. ACABO had recommended approval of these results by the Executive Committee (A/AC.96/646). No increase in the financial target would be necessary to cover the costs of implementation in 1985, since these costs amounted to only one tenth of 1 per cent of the 1985 General Programmes financial target. Actual costs in 1985 would be below this figure but might reach it in 1986 and possibly exceed it thereafter, as a result of inflation.

134. Implementation would have many positive implications, among them greater equity, rationalization, and improved rotation up to and including the D-2 level. An ongoing classification review system would be put in place to monitor changes in functions; no more than a few cases per year would be expected. In regard to paragraph 27 of document A/AC.96/639/Add.1, it was felt that, given the direction of the debate in the Sub-Committee, this paragraph should be dissociated completely from the rest of the exercise; no approval, even in principle, of the content of this paragraph would be requested of the Executive Committee at this session.

135. Recalling the zero growth policy adopted at headquarters, the Director described the procedure which had concluded in the request for 11 new posts in the field, the net result of a proposed increase of 31 posts, offset by the discontinuation of 20 posts. The continuing need for existing posts had been reviewed and possibilities for redeployment or reorganization of available staffing resources had been fully investigated before any proposals for the creation of new posts had been considered. The High Commissioner had further reviewed each of these proposals before presenting them to the Executive Committee for approval. He went on to explain that although seven of the 11 posts had been identified by the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General as a proper charge to the regular budget, all had to be funded from voluntary funds for the time being. He indicated the related financial implications for 1985.

136. On the strengthening of UNHCR management, the Director gave a resumé of the various improvements and developments which had been discussed by the Sub-Committee, making particular reference to recruitment, staff rotation, the position of women within UNHCR, training and career development and working conditions in the field. He then expanded on the area of delegation of authority, making reference to the prescriptions of the UNHCR Manual and of ad hoc instructions, and to individual job descriptions. The pivotal role of the regional bureaux concerning delegation to the field was stressed, and examples were given of the authority vested in field representatives. It was not enough, however, simply to be a field-oriented organization in order for delegation of authority to be effective. Account had also to be taken of existing posts, their incumbents, and current procedures. Posts were created and abolished as necessary; much had been said about the devotion and motivation of staff in the field, but certainly even more could be done - notably through improving conditions of service in the field - to have the right person at the right place; procedures were constantly being revised. While authority should be delegated, there should also be the will to assume responsibility. There was still progress to be made in this area.

137. The Director outlined recent improvements in financial management, such as the computerization of administrative and budgetary procedures and inventory records, the introduction of zero balance bank accounts and the use of electronic data processing facilities for transfer of funds. With regard to the revolving fund for

field staff housing and basic amenities, he noted its importance for field staff and expressed the hope that the Executive Committee would view its continuation positively after this experimental period of two years. It was felt that the level of the initial appropriation could be reduced to \$2 million.

138. The Director recalled the statement made by a representative of the staff to the Sub-Committee, and the co-operation prevailing between staff representatives and the administration. All the points he had raised were also of concern to the staff representatives; the administration had tried to study with the staff those areas in which progress could still be made.

139. In the course of the ensuing debate, many speakers expressed their appreciation of the detailed introduction given by the Director of Administration and Management. The achievements of the past year in improvement and strengthening of the management of the Office were recognized by several speakers.

140. The professional job classification exercise figured prominently in the interventions of most speakers, several of whom expressed their appreciation of the way in which it had been undertaken. A number of delegations were able to support the recommendations presented in tables 7 and 12 of document A/AC.96/639/Add.1, although two speakers expressed their concern in respect of the upgrading of posts financed under the regular budget; given their delegations' positions on zero growth in the regular budget, they would not be in a position to approve any budgetary increase. Another two delegations could accept the recommendations in respect of posts in the field, while reserving their position on those at headquarters. One speaker thought that this would be inappropriate vis-à-vis those staff members who worked at headquarters. A number of delegations, however, called for postponement of consideration of the classification proposals until either the informal meeting of the Executive Committee, to be held in January 1985, or to the thirty-sixth session of the Committee. This would enable a more careful and detailed study of all proposals. Many delegations referred to the Director's announcement that paragraph 27 of document A/AC.96/639/Add.1, concerning the upgrading of nine high-level posts at headquarters, should be dissociated completely from the other results of the exercise; in most cases they would not have been able to give the agreement in principle originally requested. One speaker did, however, speak in favour of approving both table 7 and paragraph 27, proposing that there be two posts at ASG level at headquarters and two in the field. Geographical distribution should also be taken into account with respect to these posts. Another speaker expressed the hope that action on the results of the classification exercise would not be unduly delayed. One speaker called on the High Commissioner to make a negative recommendation to the Secretary-General regarding the upgrading of the nine positions referred to in paragraph 27 of document A/AC.96/639/Add.1.

141. Certain speakers emphasized that the exercise, and the resulting proposals, were closely linked to more general managerial objectives, increased professionalism, delegation of authority and facilitation of staff rotation between headquarters and the field. The proposed upgradings in the field should enable increased rotation at the D-1 and D-2 levels. One speaker had hoped for more information on progress made so far in rotation policy, and was looking forward to receiving it next year. He said that reduction of the number of specialist posts at headquarters would contribute to the flexibility of the job rotation system. Another speaker accepted the results of the classification exercise with the reservation that there be increased rotation between headquarters and the field.

142. Two speakers expressed support for the additional 11 posts requested for 1985, in view of the assurances given that all possibilities of redeployment had been exhausted. Several delegations noted that UNHCR might face financial difficulties next year owing to the unlikelihood of additional contributions; in view of these budgetary constraints and the overall restrictive recruitment policies of the United Nations system, doubts were expressed as to whether it would be appropriate to create 11 new posts in 1985. Many speakers called for greater efforts to meet the additional needs by means of redeployment of existing staff; further streamlining at headquarters and in field locations with no significant refugee case-loads might be possible. One speaker referred to the staffing situation of European offices in particular, which in his view allowed for redeployment to other areas. Another delegation could not agree to the singling out of such offices. Some speakers were not fully satisfied with the explanations of the efforts made to redeploy existing staff and the priority nature of the additional posts. One speaker wondered whether the presentation of these posts could be simplified by omitting any reference to discontinuations. A number of delegations asked that this matter be deferred to the next informal meeting of the Executive Committee or to its thirty-sixth session when more detailed documentation should be made available for consideration.

143. Two speakers made specific reference to the situation of women within UNHCR. While the numbers of professional women had increased considerably there were only 83 women out of a total professional staff complement of 395 as at 30 June 1984. Women should be recruited at a higher rate. Moreover, at levels P-4 to D-2 there were only 12 women out of a total of 175, as most women occupied more junior posts. A certain flexibility was called for in the rotation and promotion of women.

144. Several delegations welcomed the opportunity given to a representative of the staff to address the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters and expressed the hope that this would become a tradition. The views of the staff were essential in personnel and administrative matters.

145. The trainee scheme, which was to be expanded in 1985, was referred to by one speaker. He recalled that the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) scheme was already in existence, with the objective of training both future government officials and future UNHCR staff. Expansion of the trainee scheme might reduce the possibility of continued employment for JPOs by UNHCR. He requested that an evaluation document on the results of the trainee scheme and its relationship to the JPO programme be provided for the thirty-sixth session of the Executive Committee.

146. One speaker expressed concern that the level of the proposed new post in Thailand with responsibility for durable solutions might not be high enough in grade for the governmental contacts and decision-making required.

147. One delegation voiced its appreciation of the use of electronic data processing facilities, which appeared to have contributed greatly to the improvement of management practices.

148. Several speakers noted the progress which had been made in programme delivery, in the quality of programme management and in the effectiveness of programme evaluation. One speaker urged that access to refugees be made a major condition for the provision of assistance. Another speaker mentioned the need to establish an accurate data base and asked whether UNHCR could conduct a technical study on methods of registering refugees and evaluating their needs.

149. The Director of Administration and Management, in taking the floor to respond to questions raised, assured the delegations that the High Commissioner and his staff were acutely sensitive to all expressions of concern over budgetary matters and constraints. The Director then touched on the many points which had been raised regarding the professional job classification exercise, singling out its purposes, the benefits that would stem from it, the difficulty of giving accurate costing figures for the future, the facilitation of staff rotation at the D-1 and D-2 levels which it would entail and the rationale behind the method of presentation of the results. He added that, within the regular budget, all endeavours would be made to absorb additional costs within existing appropriations. Regarding paragraph 27 of document A/AC.96/639/Add.1, he assured the Executive Committee that the High Commissioner would convey the contents of the debate which had taken place in the Committee to the Secretary-General. He reiterated that the High Commissioner's wish, after having listened to the debate, was to dissociate paragraph 27 from the rest of the exercise. The implications, both financial and in terms of grade distribution, of the whole exercise, including paragraph 27, had been described in the Sub-Committee, but were not repeated in the Executive Committee since for the time being paragraph 27 was being withdrawn.

150. The Director then outlined the difficulty of assigning priorities among the 11 new posts proposed, since they were all the result of a careful screening. There was not necessarily a direct correlation between the number of refugees or volume of assistance programmes in a given country and the number of posts required, and the net total increase of 11 posts was indeed necessary in the present circumstances. As for redeployment, he noted that many efforts had already been made and that a study was under way to identify further possibilities at headquarters, although it was not an easy exercise. Neither had redeployment between field offices been overlooked. It had to be borne in mind, however, that adequately staffed offices in Europe fulfilled very useful functions in countries that received refugees and asylum seekers from all continents, and were highly supportive of UNHCR at a time of economic difficulties and financial constraints. He explained the difference between redeployment and discontinuation of posts; for the sake of clarity and completeness all new posts and discontinuations had been identified in the documentation submitted.

151. The Director then responded to doubts expressed with regard to the adequacy of the level of the proposed new post in Thailand with responsibility for durable solutions. He stressed that the main responsibility for the promotion and implementation of such solutions would remain with the representative in Thailand and his deputy and with the UNHCR Regional Bureau supported by the relevant divisions at headquarters. The proposed new post was justified by the need for additional strength at a more technical level. Regarding the status of women within UNHCR, the Director confirmed that this was a subject requiring constant attention. The Director recognized that there could be some competition between the trainee scheme and the JPO programme but pointed out that there was only a limited number of participants in the former. He would continue to pay attention to this question.

152. The Chairman's summing-up of item 10 of the agenda on administrative and financial matters is reproduced in a separate section of the present report (see paras. 154-161 below).

Decisions of the Committee

153. The Executive Committee:

A

(a) Took note with appreciation of the Report of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters (A/AC.96/648).

B

(a) Took note of the administrative and programme support sections of the Report on UNHCR assistance activities in 1983-84 and proposed voluntary funds programme and budget for 1985 (A/AC.96/639 and Corr.1 and 3 and Add.1 and 2);

(b) Noted further the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/AC.96/646) and the comments contained therein;

- (i) Expressed its general appreciation for the level and quality of the documentation on administrative issues provided to members of the Executive Committee and urged that the constructive dialogue between the High Commissioner and members of the Executive Committee on these questions be maintained both informally and through the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters;
- (ii) Stressed the importance of continuing efforts to meet additional staffing needs through the redeployment of posts, particularly in the light of budgetary constraints.

C

(a) Also took note of the note on major developments affecting staffing level and financing of UNHCR administrative costs (EC/SC.2/22), and

- (i) Decided to defer until January 1985 consideration of the creation of 11 additional posts in 1985.

D

(a) Recalled the proposals of the Executive Committee for strengthening UNHCR management policy (EC/SC.2/15);

(b) Took note of the note on the strengthening of UNHCR management policy (EC/SC.2/18), the note on current developments and initiatives relating to the management of UNHCR (EC/SC.2/20) and the High Commissioner's continuing efforts to strengthen the management of his Office;

- (i) Expressed its appreciation for the efforts made by the High Commissioner to strengthen and improve the management of his Office;
- (ii) Requested the High Commissioner to persist in his efforts designed to give full effect to the proposals of the Executive Committee and to continue to report at informal meetings and to report in writing at formal sessions of the Executive Committee on the proposals contained in document EC/SC.2/15, with particular attention being given to devolution of authority, staffing policy, the status of women within UNHCR, rotation of staff and recruitment.

E

- (a) Acknowledged the note on the professional job classification exercise (A/AC.96/639/Add.1);
- (b) Noted the recommendations on professional job classification contained in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/AC.96/646), and
 - (i) Expressed its appreciation of the thoroughness and professionalism with which the exercise had been carried out;
 - (ii) Took note of the High Commissioner's intention to discuss proposals for reclassification of nine high-level posts at UNHCR headquarters with the Secretary-General and asked the High Commissioner to convey to the Secretary-General the views expressed by the Executive Committee regarding these proposals;
 - (iii) Requested the High Commissioner to present to the Executive Committee in January 1985 a consolidated proposal incorporating all the recommendations resulting from the exercise, and decided to defer its decision on this proposal until then.

F

- (a) Decided to conclude its consideration of agenda item 10 at a meeting in January 1985. The decisions of that meeting would be issued as an addendum to the report of the thirty-fifth session of the Executive Committee.

G

- (a) Took note of the note on the use of the revolving fund for field staff housing and basic amenities (EC/SC.2/21), and
 - (i) Decided to extend the duration of the Fund beyond the experimental period of two years;
 - (ii) Requested the High Commissioner to report annually on its functioning through the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters;
 - (iii) Decided to reduce the initial allocation under the Fund to \$2 million as at 1 January 1985.

H

- (a) Took note of the accounts for the year 1983 and the report of the United Nations Board of Auditors thereon (A/AC.96/637);
- (b) Noted the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in respect of the report of the United Nations Board of Auditors on the audit of the accounts of the voluntary funds administered by UNHCR for the year 1983 (A/AC.96/637/Add.1);
- (c) Noted further with appreciation current efforts to improve financial planning and control.

IX. SUMMING UP BY THE CHAIRMAN ON ITEMS 8 AND 10

154. We have just completed our examination of point 8 of the agenda, UNHCR assistance activities, as well as point 10 on Administrative and financial questions. The time has now come to approve document A/AC.96/639 and Corr.1 and 3, "Report on UNHCR assistance activities in 1983-1984 and proposed voluntary funds programmes and budget for 1985", as well as its addenda 1 and 2.

155. Concerning the reclassification exercise and the creation of new posts, as you know I have followed part of the debate myself although Ambassador Chiba was in the Chair yesterday afternoon and this morning. After consulting with Ambassador Chiba, it appears to me that the positions of individual members of the Executive Committee on both these questions range from one extreme to the other. In seeking a compromise, I feel I am correctly interpreting that it is the sense of the Committee that the results of the reclassification exercise should receive further and more detailed study and be submitted thereafter to the Committee for its approval. With respect to paragraph 27, the High Commissioner should present a report to the Committee in January.

156. Turning to the subject of the 11 additional posts, some delegations felt that the High Commissioner's request should be endorsed. Other delegations were opposed, largely on the basis of instructions from their respective capitals which would doubtless like to have had more detailed information. In order to respect the views of the Executive Committee, I feel that UNHCR should be asked to elaborate further on Sub-Committee document EC/SC.2/22 entitled "Note on major developments affecting staffing levels". The resulting analysis should also be submitted by the High Commissioner to the informal meeting of the Committee in January 1985. Pending submission of this paper, I recommend that temporary arrangements be made by the High Commissioner in respect of the most urgently needed additional posts. If the Committee agrees to this formula, then the overall 1985 target submitted for approval by the Committee would be reduced by the figure corresponding to the cost of the 11 posts under consideration.

157. We are happy to note certain positive developments which can only facilitate the activities of UNHCR in favour of refugees. First, there is the establishment of a branch office in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the appointment of a chief of mission who has just assumed his functions in Tehran. There is also the signing of a Branch Office Agreement between UNHCR and Algeria concerning the opening of a UNHCR Branch Office in Algeria where a representative is shortly to be assigned. As in all other similar situations, the principal tasks of these UNHCR representatives will be to assure the international protection of refugees as well as the promotion of durable solutions, in conformity with the mandate of the High Commissioner as it is defined in the Statute of his Office. It goes without saying that voluntary repatriation is the most desirable durable solution. The UNHCR representatives will be in a position to promote this solution, in collaboration with the Governments concerned, provided that the voluntary nature of the repatriation is guaranteed.

158. The High Commissioner will present a detailed report, in writing, to the Executive Committee at its thirty-sixth session on the efforts undertaken to promote durable solutions and the results obtained.

159. Having heard the views of the participants on these questions, I am firmly convinced that the Executive Committee wishes to adopt the revised 1984 financial target of \$352,267,300 and the initial 1985 target of \$374,288,500. The latter figure, which does not include the usual \$10 million for the Emergency Fund, comprises the financial target of \$363,085,000, as contained in Schedule A (page xxxvii of the English version of document A/AC.96/639) plus the allocation of \$12,089,000 proposed for 1985 for the Islamic Republic of Iran, contained in document A/AC.96/639/Add.2, less the \$885,500 corresponding to the 11 posts which were not approved by the Committee. The statements of certain delegations on individual chapters or specific points have been noted and will be reflected in the report, as will my present statement.

160. As there is no formal objection to the contents of this statement, I consider that it is so decided.

161. It is so decided.

X. STATUS OF CONTRIBUTIONS AND OVERALL FINANCIAL
REQUIREMENTS FOR 1984 AND 1985

(Item 11 of the agenda)

162. The Director of External Affairs introduced the item by thanking all donors to UNHCR whose support had been significant in the face of budgetary difficulties. Particular thanks were due to those donors who had appreciably increased the level of national currency contributions announced recently.

163. Further funds were still needed to cover 1984 requirements but, if UNHCR projections proved accurate, the 1984 general programmes would be funded and, on that basis, total voluntary fund expenditure in 1984 would reach the level of some \$410 million.

164. The major problem was the funding of the 1985 programmes. Total voluntary fund requirements in 1985 might be in the region of \$430 million but the funding of the 1985 general programmes requirement of \$384 million caused the greatest concern.

165. UNHCR general programmes were costed and planned on the basis of identified need, not on the basis of what was merely desirable. The result of such planning became the general programmes funding requirement.

166. The various potential sources of income to UNHCR were in sharp decline. Given the total dependence of UNHCR on voluntary contributions for the financing of refugee assistance, it would have to receive some \$60 million more in contributions in 1985 than in 1984. The problem was very serious but should not be regarded as impossible to overcome.

167. Referring to comments made in the general debate, the Director of External Affairs said that everyone was now fully aware of the gravity of the problem and of the need for determined joint efforts to resolve it. On behalf of UNHCR, he pledged maximum budgetary restraint and strict priorities in programme control and review. If UNHCR could count on increased levels of national currency contributions in 1985 and particularly if the value of the United States dollar changed to the benefit of other currencies, then the solution of the problem could become possible.

168. The Director therefore appealed to all Governments to take account of the situation in planning contributions to UNHCR 1985 programmes. He hoped that as many Governments as possible would announce substantial and firm contributions to UNHCR at the Pledging Conference in New York on 16 November 1984. UNHCR needed to have available on 1 January 1985 a significant amount of contributions to be able to start the 1985 general programmes as approved by the Executive Committee.

169. In conclusion, the Director expressed gratitude for the support given to UNHCR by donors in recent years. This gave reason for hope that by a realistic appreciation of the situation coupled with a determination to succeed, all concerned could do their best to overcome the difficult, but not impossible, funding situation to be faced in 1985.

170. The Executive Committee:

(a) Took note of the report submitted by the High Commissioner on the status of contributions to UNHCR voluntary funds and the overall financial requirements for 1984 and 1985 (A/AC.96/641 and Corr.1);

(b) Expressed appreciation of the generosity of all Governments and non-governmental organizations which had responded to the financial requirements of the High Commissioner's programme and expressed the hope that the additional funds required would be made available to ensure the full financing of the 1984 programmes;

(c) Reaffirmed the universal character of the refugee problem in the world and the need for more equitable and widespread financial support within the international community for the programmes undertaken by the High Commissioner;

(d) In view of the perceived difficulty concerning programme funding, urged all Governments and other donors to make substantial and, if possible, increased contributions to the 1985 general programmes at as early a date as possible to enable the High Commissioner to implement those programmes as approved by the Executive Committee;

(e) Recognized also that the effective implementation of the 1985 general programmes required that a substantial proportion of the total funds required, which amount to \$384,288,500, should be available to the High Commissioner at the beginning of the programme year in January 1985 and, to that end, urged Governments to announce firm and significant contributions for the implementation of the UNHCR general programmes for 1985, either at the Pledging Conference to be held in New York in November 1984, or as additional contributions in 1984 and 1985;

(f) Requested and encouraged the High Commissioner to pursue all appropriate means such as appeals and the negotiation of contributions to obtain the necessary resources to ensure full financing of the 1985 programmes.

XI. FIELD AFFAIRS

(Item 12 of the agenda)

171. The Director for Field Affairs recalled the establishment of the function of field affairs in the Executive Office of the High Commissioner in January 1984 in order to strengthen and streamline policy aspects of the UNHCR field establishment. (A detailed description of his responsibilities is provided in document A/AC.96/639, paras. (lxiv)-(lxvi).) In outlining the activities undertaken by himself and his staff to examine and enhance the effectiveness of UNHCR field operations and management, the Director described the methodology employed, including discussions with representatives of host country Governments, of other United Nations agencies and of non-governmental organizations. He conveyed to the Executive Committee some of his observations in the areas of delegation of authority, working methods, complexity of the refugee caseload, staffing issues and conditions of service.

172. The Director also drew attention to the recommendations of the International Conference on Population, held at Mexico City from 6 to 14 August 1984, particularly those of relevance to refugees. 9/

173. In general, the Director found the reaction of UNHCR colleagues and of the Governments of the countries visited to be positive. The creation of his post was seen as a strengthening of the field establishment. The text of the Director's oral statement was later circulated to delegates.

174. In the course of the debate on this item, several delegations commented favourably on the establishment of the field affairs function in the High Commissioner's Executive Office as an important initiative in enhancing the effectiveness of UNHCR field operations. While welcoming the oral report of the Director they suggested that, in future, a written report on the activities undertaken by the Director for Field Affairs should be submitted to the Executive Committee. One speaker also suggested that the Director might, in the future, be invited to brief the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters on his activities.

175. Responding to the debate, the High Commissioner thanked speakers for their encouraging remarks. The position of Director for Field Affairs had already proved its value. He agreed with the suggestion that a written report be submitted to the Executive Committee at its thirty-sixth session.

Decisions of the Committee

176. The Executive Committee:

(a) Welcomed the establishment of the field affairs function in the High Commissioner's Executive Office, as described in document A/AC.96/639, paragraphs (lxiv) to (lxvi);

(b) Took note of the oral report presented by the Director for Field Affairs;

(c) Requested the High Commissioner to submit to the Executive Committee at its thirty-sixth session a document reporting on the activities undertaken by the Director for Field Affairs.

(Item 13 of the agenda)

177. The Executive Committee had before it a proposal, first presented at its thirty-third session, to include Arabic, Chinese and Spanish as official and working languages of the Committee. In introducing item 11 and document A/AC.96/638 on the practical and financial implications of the proposal, the Director of External Affairs reminded the Committee that should it be adopted, the necessary budgetary allocations would have to be approved by the General Assembly. The Committee also had to keep in mind technical implications, including changing the reporting schedule for the assistance and programme budget document to end on 31 May.

178. It was also necessary to consider whether the languages should in fact be adopted as both working and official languages or as official languages only. In either case, all official Executive Committee documents, with the exception of summary records which are produced in working languages only, would be affected. The Director cautioned that adoption of the proposal would inevitably lead to delays in the Committee's proceedings and could necessitate the continuation of the plenary into a third week, unless in-session documents were specifically excluded. He reminded the Committee that only official documents were in question, and that all communications within the flow of information arrangements would continue to be in English and French.

179. In the ensuing discussion, the sentiments of the 20 member States who took the floor were virtually equally divided between those who believed that the availability of UNHCR documentation in the additional languages, by exposing a wider audience to information concerning refugees, was in the best interests of UNHCR, and those who, while appreciating these advantages, felt that they were outweighed by the need to observe budgetary restraint and the need to avoid delays both in the production of documentation and in the proceedings of the Executive Committee.

180. While all the speakers expressed appreciation for document A/AC.96/638, several expressed regret that it contained no mention of the positive effects to be derived from introducing the additional languages. Many speakers recalled that all three languages were official and working languages of the General Assembly and should enjoy the same status in UNHCR. They felt that the work of the Executive Committee would be greatly facilitated thereby, and that more Governments would be encouraged to participate. A larger number of government officials and others involved in refugee programmes would have access to important information, and many more people around the world would be alerted to the problems of refugees. Several observers also took the floor in support of these arguments.

181. The attention of the Executive Committee was drawn by one delegation to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the implications of adding additional languages in the United Nations system (A/32/237) and to the comments of ACC on that report (A/33/340). JIU had recommended, inter alia, that new languages should be introduced only if judged indispensable to the proper functioning of the organ concerned, that expenditure should be kept to the lowest level compatible with the needs and interests of member States and that member States consider a system of payment by users to cover increased costs. It further recommended that new

languages be applied selectively. A number of delegations subsequently voiced their approval of the recommendations contained in the two reports and one speaker asked to what extent they had been taken into account in preparing document A/AC.96/638.

182. The Director of External Affairs replied that without reiterating the recommendations contained in those reports, their major thrust had been reflected, i.e. that in providing language services a balance had to be struck between the need for economy and the need to ensure the proper functioning of the Executive Committee. It was up to the members, however, to decide which languages were indispensable and in what capacity they should be used.

183. There was general agreement as to the validity of the arguments in favour of introducing the new languages. Several delegations referred to the option contained in paragraph 10 (i) of document A/AC.96/638 - adoption of the additional languages as official languages only - and suggested that this might be an appropriate solution. They also suggested that in-session documents be exempted from translation into the proposed new languages.

184. The Chairman, taking note of the views expressed, suggested that the option contained in paragraph 10 (i) be adopted and that the proposed new languages be introduced as official languages of the Executive Committee. In-session documents as well as summary records, however, would only be produced in the two working languages.

Decisions of the Committee

185. The Executive Committee:

(a) Decided upon the introduction of Arabic, Chinese and Spanish as official languages of the Executive Committee and to recommend to the General Assembly that the appropriate budgetary allocations be approved;

(b) Exempted from this decision all in-session papers and reports until such time as these were approved, thereby becoming official Executive Committee documents;

(c) Decided, subject to budgetary approval by the General Assembly, that section VIII of the rules of procedure be amended accordingly.

XIII. PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE THIRTY-SIXTH
SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(Item 14 of the agenda)

186. The following provisional agenda was adopted by the Executive Committee for its thirty-sixth session:

DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
4. General debate.
5. Action taken on decisions by the Executive Committee.
6. International protection.
7. Refugee aid and development.
8. UNHCR assistance activities.
9. UNHCR role in promoting durable solutions.
10. Administrative and financial matters.
11. Status of contributions and overall financial requirements for 1985 and 1986.
12. Field affairs.
13. Consideration of provisional agenda of the thirty-seventh session of the Executive Committee.
14. Any other business.
15. Adoption of the draft report of the thirty-sixth session.

Notes

- 1/ For the report of the Conference, see document A/39/402.
- 2/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1001, No. 14691, p. 45.
- 3/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 12 A (A/38/12/Add.1).
- 4/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 189, No. 2545, p. 137.
- 5/ Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791, p. 267.
- 6/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 12 A (A/38/12/Add.1), para. 97.
- 7/ Ibid., Twenty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 12 A (A/32/12/Add.1), para. 53 (6) (e).
- 8/ Ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 12 A (A/36/12/Add.1).
- 9/ See E/CONF.76/19, chap. III. D. 5.

Opening statement by the High Commissioner for Refugees to the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme at its thirty-fifth session, on 8 October 1984

1. Mr. Chairman, at the outset please accept my warmest congratulations on your election. I am looking forward to our co-operation in this session and throughout the coming year and I am convinced that under your enlightened and skilful guidance the Executive Committee will have a truly constructive session. My deep gratitude is also due to the outgoing Chairman whose friendship and wise counsel have been so highly appreciated by us all over the past year. This goes equally for his colleagues in the Bureau. I would also like to extend warm words of welcome and congratulations to our new Vice Chairman and Rapporteur.

2. It had been a long-standing tradition that the High Commissioner, in his opening statement to the Executive Committee, presented a detailed round-up of events of the 12 months which had intervened since the previous session. For the past two years I have broken with that tradition because I had the feeling that we had made great strides in improving the regular flow of information to Governments. I believe I can safely say that we have even further improved this information flow in the past year, so it is not my intention today to give you an exhaustive report on developments and facts which, I trust, you can find in our documents, periodic letters and other printed material, and particularly in what we have got in the habit of referring to as "the book" - my annual report on the past and present years and proposals for the incoming year. I am happy to point out in passing that the "book" has been on a diet and has lost a little weight this year. Following this Committee's most helpful suggestions, we have been able to affect certain refinements which we hope have made it easier to study and comprehend. It is nonetheless a weighty document which is in itself a sad demonstration of the volume of refugee problems around the world and the needs we - UNHCR, the host countries, indeed the whole international community - are called upon to face together. I would welcome your comments on this modified presentation of our report. I know that "the book" has given rise to a number of questions of a technical nature, and we were very happy to host a few days ago an "open house" for permanent missions of member States at which my staff was able to give answers which I hope were satisfactory. Our two sub-committees have now also met and, again, I trust that these meetings have provided Executive Committee members with an opportunity to debate in some detail questions which would have otherwise absorbed too much of the time of the Committee as a whole.

3. It is my intention today, therefore, to concentrate on some special problems which are a source of preoccupation for us in the Office, and also refer to a few new developments which have arisen since we last met informally in June. I would be happy to have the views of the Executive Committee on these developments and concerns, some of which are a cause of worry to me and my colleagues in UNHCR as we look ahead. They touch both the areas of protection and assistance and affect, some positively, some unfortunately negatively, our ability to find truly lasting solutions to refugee problems.

4. Perhaps my greatest concern, one I have referred to on several recent occasions, has been the manifest erosion in many parts of the world of the fundamental concept of asylum, coupled with a tendency to "look the other way"

when we talk of durable solutions. Are we suffering "compassion fatigue"? Have the number, magnitude and duration of major refugee situations in the world led to a disaffection, perhaps even a certain cynicism, in the international community which has for so long staunchly upheld the humanitarian principles of protection and assistance which are the foundations of our common endeavour? I sincerely hope not. Yet I cannot help wondering whether, with a little additional imagination, a modicum of patience, some wise investments in the future, many of the seemingly inextricable situations we are currently facing could not be put on the path to a solution. Of course there are obstacles, too often of a political nature. I am sure I do not need to elaborate. They have no place in our debates here. But may I be permitted to say that "where there is a will there is a way"?

5. The Executive Committee has before it a note on international protection (A/AC.96/643) which points to disturbing trends which, I am convinced, we all must deplore. For example, we live in an age when asylum-seekers are no longer only border crossers, but arrive by sea and by air in increasingly large numbers in countries far away from their homelands, in Europe, in North America and elsewhere. Their very presence and the problems resulting from the dimensions of this new phenomenon are exploited by xenophobic tendencies in public opinion. I well understand the dilemma facing many host countries, but I fear that these difficulties might tempt some Governments to consider adopting restrictive practices and deterrent measures which in my view should never be resorted to in dealing with refugees. I can propose no easy solution to this growing problem of intercontinental jet-age asylum-seekers and "refugees in orbit". But I would welcome your views on how the international community could come to grips with these problems in a positive way. For our part, we are planning to organize next year a seminar on protection issues in Europe, bringing together Governments and voluntary agencies, as was recommended by the Seminar on Integration of Refugees in Europe, held in September 1983.

6. I am equally troubled by the many different forms of violence of which refugees are the helpless victims, whether it be on land or at sea and the relatively modest efforts being made by the international community to tackle this heart-breaking problem. I would welcome the views of the Executive Committee, on this subject, in the hopes that it can give the lead for more energetic action.

7. On the brighter side, one of the most encouraging events of the past year was the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa. The Conference was motivated, among other things, by a need to adjust to new realities in the refugee situation in the developing world. Governments were asked to endorse a new strategy linking aid to refugees with development aid, to strengthen national infrastructures and also to promote or consolidate the durable solutions achieved through the UNHCR programmes. The response of the Conference to those goals was overwhelmingly positive. What we need to see now is the translation of the principles agreed upon into action. It is hoped that the first concrete results in this regard can be reported to the General Assembly when it debates the Conference next month. Clearly, we must not rest on the achievements of the Conference but must use them as the foundation for further action.

8. UNHCR was actively involved in the preparation for the Conference and will continue to play its role in the follow-up process. The Deputy High Commissioner will remain a member of the Conference Steering Committee, which is composed of the Secretary-General's representative, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), UNHCR and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and which, at the request of

the Secretary-General, will continue to co-ordinate and provide policy guidance on ICARA activities. The small UNHCR Conference Unit, which I established to be responsible for the co-ordination of UNHCR's input to the Conference itself, will cease to operate by the end of the year; however, this does not diminish the importance we attach to the Conference and its results. Through existing mechanisms, notably the Bureau for Africa, UNHCR will contribute, within its competence, towards the realization of the Declaration and Programme of Action endorsed by acclamation at the Conference.

9. I do hope that the very positive atmosphere of the Conference will not be dissipated by any lack of energy in giving concrete expression to the commitments made. If the momentum is lost, I fear this could have the most unfortunate, even dangerous result of contributing to the disaffection I referred to earlier. I should also stress in this context that I fully support the concept of additionality. If host Governments in low-income countries have to bear an additional burden through receiving refugees with a consequent negative effect on their development, then, in all fairness, not only should that burden be shared, but help to those countries should also be additional to that aimed directly at the refugees. In passing, I commend to the Executive Committee's attention the paper on refugee aid and development (A/AC.96/645 and Corr.1) which is among the documents before you.

10. A High Commissioner for Refugees must, almost by definition, be a professional optimist. I am confident that we can move ahead and build on the foundations we have laid, not only in Africa but elsewhere in the third world where similar problems exist. I am nevertheless concerned. I have often said that refugees we were assisting five years ago are not on our books today, and that those we are assisting today hopefully will be off the books five years hence. Unfortunately a number of situations exist - in Africa, in Asia, in Latin America - where I could be proven wrong if we do not energetically and imaginatively seek more solution-oriented action than simple care and maintenance.

11. I do not mean by this to imply that nothing today is being done in this direction. Indeed, it should not be forgotten that UNHCR has always sought first and foremost to initiate durable solutions and has many success stories to its credit. Almost 42 per cent of next year's budget is devoted to durable solutions. Nevertheless, we would like that percentage to be much higher. Models such as the World Bank project in Pakistan which, according to the most recent reports, is now well under way, should be imitated elsewhere. We would like to see more projects which, while helping refugees to settle and become self-sufficient, also are of benefit to the surrounding population, and which engage partners who are not necessarily the classic relief agencies. I believe we are making some modest headway in this area, as distinguished representatives will see in the relevant chapters of our "book" - both the country chapters and the section of the introduction on inter-agency co-operation. We even have hopes of developing this type of approach in certain countries where it has not been possible until now to envisage such projects to any great extent. In Thailand, for instance, we are in the process of concluding arrangements for an assistance programme aimed at local integration and eventual naturalization of a group of ethnic Thai refugees from Kampuchea, the so-called "Koh Kong group", which should also provide benefits to neighbouring Thai villagers.

12. While on the subject of durable solutions, I should like to take a moment or two to reflect with members of the Executive Committee on the subject of voluntary

repatriation. As you know, we have over the past years seen notable progress in this regard, both in the Horn of Africa (I refer to the return of refugees from Djibouti to Ethiopia) and in the voluntary return of large numbers of refugees to Uganda from Zaire and the Sudan. Refugees are also returning to certain countries in Latin America, notably Argentina. Elsewhere, however, there has been little progress in promoting voluntary repatriation, particularly if we think of South-East Asia. Of course there are certain sine qua non conditions for any organized movement of repatriation: first and foremost it must be voluntary. We always stress this repeatedly in our talks with government officials and others concerned. Second, there must be clear and unequivocal agreement between the host country and the country of origin both on the modalities of the movement and the conditions of reception including certain minimal guarantees of security and well-being. Third, in my view, it is vitally important that returnees be allowed to return to their places of origin - ideally to their own former homes, their villages, their land. Given these conditions, and on the request of the Governments concerned, UNHCR can help, both in the host country and the country of origin. We have done so in many instances as you well know. But unless these conditions are met, the office could never be associated with any organized repatriation, whether it be of individuals or groups.

13. On my recent missions to Thailand and Viet Nam I raised the matter of voluntary repatriation with the authorities. I am pleased to report that in the former country I met with full identity of views on the basic conditions I have outlined above, and was given assurances that, in so far as refugees are concerned, there would be full consultation with UNHCR before any plans for movement are implemented. I regret, however, to report that there are still obstacles in the path of any major organized voluntary repatriation to Kampuchea - obstacles which it is not within my province to remove. Voluntary repatriation to the Lao People's Democratic Republic, which has been going on with our assistance in a modest way for some time, has also recently encountered certain obstacles. We are doing our best to encourage the authorities concerned to continue this small but important effort at providing a durable solution for refugees for whom no other solution is in sight, and who have waited too long in camps. In Viet Nam, where I also raised again the subject at the highest level, I was informed that conditions in the country do not at the present time permit the authorities to envisage the return of significant numbers of refugees but that they would study individual applications on a case-by-case basis.

14. There have also recently been discussions in some quarters of the possibilities of voluntary repatriation in Central America, notably as regards Salvadorian refugees in Honduras and Guatemalan refugees in Mexico. In all our contacts, whether they were with the authorities of the countries concerned or voluntary agencies, we repeatedly stressed the basic conditions for UNHCR involvement. In Honduras, the authorities have reversed an earlier decision to move Salvadorian refugees away from the border area; the authorities would like them to be repatriated. We have strongly insisted that any repatriation must be voluntary. In the meantime, UNHCR will not abandon the refugees and its responsibility to carry out its mandate of protection and assistance. I am happy to note that the Mexican authorities have initiated activities towards the local integration of the Guatemalan refugees in the provinces of Campeche and Quintana Roo. My fondest hope, however, would be that in Central America and Mexico, as in Asia and in Africa, the dream of all refugees, wherever they may be, to return home, can become a reality. All I can add is that when that day comes, UNHCR stands ready to be of any assistance required, and will not shirk the duty to

assist the refugees, the countries which have so generously given them asylum, and those which are prepared to welcome them back.

15. I have referred earlier at some length to one aspect of the refugee situation in South-East Asia. Allow me to complete the picture as I see it with some additional thoughts on problems in that region. In a letter which I addressed to interested Governments on 5 July 1984 I outlined these thoughts in some detail. Several Governments have replied, and I would very much welcome further comments. It seems quite clear that the situation in that part of the world has reached much more manageable proportions than in former years, largely due to resettlement and a gradual reduction in the numbers of asylum-seekers. But it would be unfortunate if the reduced numbers gave rise to any complacency. Resettlement alone, quite obviously, cannot provide a durable solution for all. Voluntary repatriation, as I have just said, remains a desirable but so far elusive solution for many, and UNHCR will continue to do whatever it can to promote it. I do very much hope, however, that other alternatives can be further explored for certain categories of refugees for whom neither voluntary repatriation nor resettlement are viable options.

16. In this context, I was particularly encouraged during my visit to Viet Nam to witness first-hand the success of the Orderly Departure Programme and to hear from the highest authorities their commitment to continue and even further expand this humanitarian endeavour which, as His Excellency Pham Van Dong, the President of the Council of Ministers said to me, "transcends all political, ideological and geographical considerations". Surely to take a plane from Ho Chi Minh City to Bangkok, as I was able to do with more than 180 persons leaving to join relatives aboard, is a better solution than to run the appalling risks of taking to the high seas in fragile and unseaworthy boats. If the numbers of those leaving in this orderly way, now averaging 500 a week, can be further increased, UNHCR, in its role as intermediary, stands ready to provide whatever additional assistance is needed in terms of staff and other facilities.

17. I was also very much encouraged by the conclusion with the Thai authorities of a new arrangement to extend the Anti-Piracy Programme for a further year and most grateful to those countries which have continued or renewed their support for this programme. I am happy to inform the Executive Committee that I was heartened, when I was in Bangkok, by the renewed commitment of the authorities to do all in their power to combat this evil and bring to justice those who prey on helpless refugees.

18. While on the subject of "boat people", I do hope that our appeals, made jointly with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to shipowners and masters not to turn a blind eye when they encounter a refugee boat in distress, will continue to be heard. I would also urge countries that have not yet done so to commit themselves to our Rescue at Sea Resettlement Offers (RASRO) scheme which, I believe, goes a long way to relieving the misgivings of the shipping community when it comes to rescuing refugees. In this respect. I am delighted with the very appropriate choice of the Nansen Award Committee in honouring this year a Captain and two heroic seamen. Through them tribute is paid to all the many who have given succour to refugees on the high seas. I look forward to seeing you, Mr. Chairman, and all the distinguished members of this committee at the award ceremony this afternoon.

19. The past few months have also been marked by new refugee situations or influxes. One in particular has been the focus of considerable international attention not only because it has had its dramatic side in terms of hunger and

tragic deaths, but also because of the nature of both the people involved and the terrain where they have sought refuge. I am referring to the influx of some 10,000 asylum-seekers into Papua New Guinea from the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya. We have followed this situation closely with the Papua New Guinea authorities, both from the international protection point of view and as regards needs for emergency assistance. Upon a request from the Government of Papua New Guinea, I have made available the sum of \$875,000 to cover food, medical and other needs, and the transportation of relief supplies, until the end of this year. I make special mention of transportation because the refugees are located in mountainous jungle areas which are of extremely difficult access except by air or on foot. Relief supplies must either be air-lifted or carried by porters. The Chief of our Emergency Unit, who recently visited the areas on an assessment mission, made a two-day trek on foot through dense jungle to visit one camp. The refugees normally live in small groups, subsisting through hunting and fishing, but when concentrated in larger groups, as is now the case, the delicate balance between man and nature is upset and they are no longer in a position to fend for themselves. Furthermore, the land tenure system of these tribal peoples, even though they are related ethnically to the host populations, is such that measures leading to self-sufficiency may be difficult to arrange quickly. Needs beyond the end of this year will therefore have to be assessed at a later stage, but it is likely that some additional assistance will be required in 1985. Here again, voluntary repatriation would obviously be the best solution once conditions permit.

20. There have also been a number of new developments in Africa since we last met informally in June. First, allow me to refer briefly to the return of hundreds of thousands of former exiles to Guinea following the change of government there. At the request of the Government, and based on the findings of two UNHCR missions to the country, which is facing enormous difficulties on a number of fronts, I have agreed to mount a limited assistance programme valued at \$1.1 million, to cover the immediate needs of up to 100,000 rural returnees until the end of this year.

21. Then I would like to mention the emergency programmes we have had to launch following new influxes of refugees into the Shaba province of Zaire, to Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe, as well as to increasing numbers in the Gambela/Itang area of Ethiopia. Growing numbers of newly arrived refugees in both the Sudan and Somalia have also been reported, and their needs are also being assessed as a matter of urgency, as are those of recent border crossers from Chad in the Central African Republic. Details of these and other new programmes and developments are provided in the most recent periodic letter to delegations (EA/COM.17/83-84) just issued by my Director of Assistance who will certainly elaborate further when he presents his report to the Executive Committee. It is an unfortunate fact of our times that such new refugee situations, happily sometimes offset by voluntary repatriation and successful durable solutions, are an all-too-familiar feature on the troubled African continent. It is clear that in some instances the reasons for these movements go beyond those contained in the refugee definitions in the international instruments. The critical economic and social situation, the severe droughts which are affecting many African countries, have also undoubtedly been a contributing factor in some of these new population movements. I have pledged to the Secretary-General of the United Nations the fullest support of UNHCR, within the limitations of its mandate, in the system-wide response of the United Nations to this emergency facing the African continent.

22. In this respect I should like to stress that our preparedness for refugee emergencies and the quality of our response to them are an area to which I continue

to attribute considerable importance. Clearly effectiveness in the initial stages has a strong, even a determinant bearing on subsequent phases of a given operation. Sound information, quick and professional assessment, ongoing training of UNHCR staff and operational partners, as well as a realistic ability to learn lessons and apply new experience from one situation to the next are basic ingredients of overall effectiveness in refugee emergency situations. We are grateful to the many Governments and institutions which have been actively working with us in this area, a field of co-operation I look forward to developing further. I also wish to thank the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its recent help in producing the Spanish-language version of the UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies which I am pleased to inform the Executive Committee has just become available.

23. We have made strides in developing our co-operation with other agencies whether they be intergovernmental, members of the United Nations system or non-governmental. I am particularly happy to note the climate of mutual confidence which exists and is being even further strengthened in many different ways with our traditional partners, the voluntary agencies. There have been a number of meetings, both in Geneva and in the field where information and ideas have been exchanged, on such important emerging concepts as refugee aid and development, an area where new forms of co-operation are being explored, as for example at the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa where the voluntary agencies played a very active role. Through the warmth of their humanitarian sentiments, their imagination and creativity, their increasing specialization (which should in no case lead to the creation of new international bureaucracies), they are indispensable to the work of the Office both in emergencies and as partners working towards a common goal of durable solutions to refugee problems.

24. Turning for a moment to UNHCR management, a number of matters have been discussed in detail at last week's meeting of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters and I do not intend to repeat them here. In my opening statement to the Sub-Committee on Monday, 1 October, I referred particularly to the job classification exercise and I trust all delegations fully understand our approach to this issue and its practical implications. We intend to start implementing the results on 1 January 1985 if the Executive Committee agrees. As regards our proposals for additional staff, all in the field, I hope the Committee will agree with me that these are absolute minimum requirements if we are to carry out our mandate effectively. I should point out here that developments in the field, if they sometimes allow for reductions in staffing levels, also at times dictate increases if we are to fulfil our duties and responsibilities both to the refugees and to this Committee. And I cannot help mentioning that several of the Committee member States again and again have urged us to strengthen our presence in different refugee areas. In the past weeks, and following long, detailed and very positive negotiations, I have been able to appoint a representative in Algeria, and conclude a Branch Office agreement with the authorities there. This, you will recall, was requested by the Executive Committee at its previous session. Likewise, I have appointed a chargé de mission in Tehran, following the conclusion of satisfactory arrangements for implementation of a modest but very necessary programme for Afghan refugees, as outlined in an addendum to our 1984-85 programme (A/AC.96/639/Add.2). Let me add that the financial implications of both the classification exercise and the staff proposals are within the target for 1985.

25. Among our efforts to improve UNHCR management over the past two years, the Executive Committee might be interested in some of the following initiatives or reforms: (a) in the field of assistance we have published handbooks on emergencies and procurement which are now standard tools both at headquarters and in the field; (b) we have improved our programme management system, particularly in the area of reporting on projects, through introduction of the self-evaluation system; (c) we have made progress on obligation rates and in moving from care and maintenance to durable solutions; (d) we have strengthened our special support unit with more experts to look into the feasibility of projects; and (e) we have issued guidelines on the use of non-governmental organizations as implementing partners. In the areas of administration and staffing, we have issued a UNHCR manual defining responsibilities at all levels at headquarters and in the field, revised our field office administrative and financial instructions, prepared job descriptions and, as you know, classified all professional posts at headquarters and in the field, introduced standard assignment lengths for all duty stations to permit more systematic rotation of staff, paid more systematic attention to career development and training, and made a number of improvements in conditions of field service (an area in which, I might add, UNHCR has been somewhat of a pioneer). I have also, as mentioned in our informal Executive Committee Meeting in January 1984, appointed a Director for Field Affairs. His report is one of the items on the Agenda.

26. I should like now to turn briefly to our financial situation. The funding of UNHCR programmes has become more difficult in 1984 and the prospects for 1985 are even more problematic. I know that this situation has been dealt with in detail in the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters.

27. I should like to emphasize our very great appreciation of the positive helpfulness and understanding support which donors have given to UNHCR in the past, particularly in 1984. Despite budgetary and other problems, many donors have made very significant increases in the level of their national currency contributions to UNHCR this year, although this has been offset by the strong dollar.

28. This tremendous proof of support and generosity gives us hope for the future and provides a basis on which we can work together to solve the serious funding problems we face. To meet the 1984 General Programme requirements further contributions are needed. For the 1985 general programmes the funding problem will be more difficult. Due to a progressive decline in the different sources of income, and although the target in dollars is only slightly higher in 1985 than in 1984, considerable extra contributions will without doubt be needed.

29. While I fully appreciate the great problems we face jointly in funding refugee assistance in 1984 and 1985, I refuse to be a pessimist. If we work closely together, the problem can be solved and refugees will be able to receive the help they need and deserve.

30. To conclude: the United Nations has throughout the years been able to help millions of refugees to begin a new life. That has been possible because UNHCR has been kept humanitarian and non-political. This was decided already when the statute was adopted 33 years ago, but it is to the credit of the United Nations Member States and especially to you - the member States of the Executive Committee, that this line has been maintained through the years. That is why the decisions on our programme in the Executive Committee have always been taken by consensus; that is why we in this Committee have always agreed to approach the humanitarian task before us without allowing ourselves to be blinded by political considerations;

that is why the same spirit has prevailed in the Third Committee of the General Assembly in New York, so that the report of the High Commissioner has been approved year after year without a vote.

31. In my opinion it is absolutely indispensable that we stick to that line. At the same time, it is difficult to do so, because everything in the United Nations, where so many States have to work together, is politicized, and because all refugee problems certainly reflect political problems.

32. Nevertheless, I am sure that you all agree that we must remain humanitarian. If we begin to politicize the problems and try to compromise and bargain between States or groupings of States, we will lose our ability to act, we will bind our hands with many ties of a political nature - and the refugees will be the victims. They will suffer. They are waiting for solutions - they will have to wait for years on end if they must wait for a politicized compromise. It is the honour, the spirit, the soul of UNHCR work for the refugees, that it is acknowledged to be purely humanitarian. It is like a precious jewel. Let us not tarnish it.

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