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### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

Fortieth session

#### SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 446th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Wednesday, 11 October 1989, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. DANNENBRING (Federal Republic  
of Germany)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL QUESTIONS

- (a) STATUS OF CONTRIBUTIONS AND OVERALL FINANCIAL NEEDS FOR 1989 AND 1990
- (b) ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT (agenda item 8) (continued) (A/AC.96/726, EC/SC2/40, A/AC.96/724, A/AC.96/729, A/AC.96/730, A/AC.96/735 and Corr.1)

1. Mr. DEWEY (Deputy High Commissioner) said that at the previous session he had referred to the basic principles underlying UNHCR's management priorities. Those principles had not changed. The attempt to streamline staffing and administration was aimed at more effective delivery of protection and assistance to refugees in the field. To that end, UNHCR needed qualified, motivated staff operating within a flexible and cost-efficient structure. Substantial progress had been made towards those objectives, as had been noted by the Board of Auditors. The Audit Contact Group, whose establishment had thus been announced to the Executive Committee in 1988, had thus been encouraged in its work.

2. UNHCR had worked on improving its contingency planning and emergency preparedness. New emergency management teams and refugee registration teams had been established. The Evaluation Unit and Technical Support Services had time and again proved their worth, not only by improving services to refugees, but also by making considerable cost savings in relation to previous work methods. UNHCR had proved its effectiveness in responding to emergencies in Rwanda/Burundi, Senegal/Mauritania, South-East Asia and Central America. Most analysts agreed that UNHCR had been particularly successful in establishing a presence in Namibia, developing and implementing a plan of operations and repatriating 41,000 refugees in an astonishingly short span of time.

3. At the same time, the High Commissioner had introduced a range of austerity measures that had slashed expenditure on communications, official travel, temporary assistance, consultancies, overtime, contractual services, the acquisition of furniture and equipment, and staff costs. Posts were being frozen, cut or redeployed; despite a number of unexpected new situations, staffing levels were expected to return to those of 1 January 1986 before the end of 1990. UNHCR was also actively engaged in a further downward revision of programme support costs for 1990.

4. The Chairman of the Staff Council had spoken to the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters of the spirit of dialogue and conciliation that characterized relations between staff and management at UNHCR. Management was committed to working in partnership with the staff for the benefit of refugees, something which also meant it was committed to ensuring that the staff benefited from the best possible conditions of work and life, training and career development. Training in particular had been a success story and, with the encouragement of the Executive Committee, could continue to set an example to the rest of the United Nations system.

5. In the interests of UNHCR's mission, staff had to demonstrate a conscientious approach to their work, while the Executive Committee had to provide encouragement and constructive guidance.

6. Mr. UTKAN (Chairman of the Staff Council) said that, in his address to the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters, he had referred to a wide range of topics of immediate interest to all staff in their day-to-day work and legitimate career aspirations. He believed that it had provided an objective account of the current position reached through consultations. He had highlighted areas of agreement as well as further action required to ensure transparency and fairness in the implementation of administrative and personnel policies. He had expressed the hope that the new approach to problems would open the way to a more objective and open dialogue. But he had also emphasized that the effectiveness of the process which had recently been initiated would ultimately depend on concrete results and, above all, their follow-up.

7. There were three fundamental issues of concern to the staff: staff morale, the organizational structure of UNHCR and staff/management consultative processes. Staff morale was, regrettably, a troubling matter. It was vital that morale should be restored, in view of the humanitarian and social responsibilities borne by the staff, often with harsh physical, political and psychological consequences. Those difficulties were attributable to a number of factors, including the organizational climate and the financial constraints in the form of increased responsibilities without increased funds. As far as organizational matters were concerned, there was a lack of objectivity and transparency in career advancement, weaknesses in performance review and job recognition, unequal job opportunities and an absence of fairness in administrative action. There should be more staff participation in management and there was a need to create an environment in which staff would identify their own interests with those of UNHCR, so that both might flourish. A systematic study of the root causes of those problems was needed. A process of consultation had been initiated, but it was now necessary for commitment to be turned into concrete action.

8. The financial crisis also had serious repercussions on staff morale. Having over the past few years undergone a number of organizational changes, having had to adjust to related restructuring and having acquired new management tools, staff now faced the painful reality of curtailment in their efforts effectively to assist refugees. The staff of UNHCR were trying to fulfil their responsibilities to the best of their abilities, with dignity and dedication. But field staff were faced day after day with the job of ensuring the very survival of refugees, a situation that placed them in the untenable and frustrating position of being unable to meet vital refugee needs. It was even more difficult for them to understand why and how UNHCR had reached that point: the staff were seriously concerned about the prospect of further programme curtailments and staff reductions and hoped that UNHCR's ability to fulfil its objectives would soon be restored.

9. As to the observations by some delegates during the Sub-Committee meeting on the Staff Council's position regarding the proposed restructuring and the involvement of the Staff Council in that exercise, the Council had been informed at a very late date of that decision and, therefore, had not been in a position to comment. Without the benefit of extensive consultations with management, the staff were unable to comment on the substance of the proposals. However, it was worth recalling that over the previous few years UNHCR had undergone a number of organizational changes. Each time the staff had demonstrated considerable resilience and the capacity to adjust. An

organizational chart was essentially a static tool that identified a chain of people and functions, and it was vital that changes should enable the staff to work together constructively so that UNHCR should function as a single team determined to fulfil its mandate. Such a goal could only be achieved through joint staff/management consultations.

10. The joint staff/management initiatives regarding rotation, promotion, the situation of women, training and performance review should be actively pursued. Likewise, a Staff/Management Group had been established in late 1987. However, under the existing framework, in which advisory bodies and working groups operated independently, objectives were not always met nor were efforts co-ordinated to ensure the most effective outcome.

11. The staff believed that the solutions to numerous problems faced in UNHCR could be found in the Staff Rules and Regulations promulgated by the General Assembly, which gave all United Nations organizations the means to achieve their goals in a staff/management co-operative framework. He had in mind article 8 of the Staff Regulations, which called for the establishment of a joint staff/management machinery, and Staff Rule 108.2, which provided for a joint advisory committee which would answer many of the current needs in UNHCR. The Staff Council therefore proposed that such a committee should be established as soon as possible. The body should be given the necessary mandate and authority to address fundamental issues systematically. It could also be given the current limited functions of the Staff/Management Group.

12. A course of action to give the best possible assistance to refugees should be agreed on right away. That required a climate characterized by financial and managerial stability, a sense of justice, solidarity, achievement and recognition. It called for improved participative management, functional responsibility, equitable job rotation and career development.

13. Mr. KELLEY (United States of America) said that he intended to talk about trends being felt in a number of areas: support costs, staffing, supplies and food aid services, training and automation. In the first of those areas, UNHCR had recorded a slight drop in the percentage of costs linked to support activities in 1988 and 1989, but a marked increase in support costs had been projected under the proposed budget for 1990. According to the annex to the Sub-Committee's report, which contained the conclusions and decisions on assistance activities, the Executive Committee was simply taking note of the proposed budget, and hence there was an opportunity to reorganize support costs in order to reverse the projected trend and reduce the percentage of the total budget accounted for by support costs. UNHCR should make every effort to that end.

14. As far as staffing was concerned, his delegation had observed that the average grade level of posts was continually rising and, although the upward trend was more marked in the field than at Headquarters, it was unjustified, particularly in the case of Headquarters, where the average grade level should be falling. At a time when austerity was affecting the United Nations as a whole, and bearing in mind particularly UNHCR's financial crisis, his delegation, unlike others, was of the opinion that there should be no moves to upgrade senior management posts at Headquarters.

15. His delegation had learned from a reliable source that in 1988 UNHCR had procured goods and services worth roughly \$77 million. It wished to encourage the trend for better management, particularly concerning improved collections on insurance claims, requisitioning and reporting of receipt of goods in the field, etc. It urged UNHCR management to ensure that, when appointing staff, it selected people who were best able to reinforce that trend.

16. It was gratifying to see that more and more staff members were engaging in training activities and that the range of training courses available was broadening. It was a low-cost investment that paid high dividends and it should not suffer as a result of the financial crisis.

17. Lastly, his delegation supported the trend towards automated data-processing, since word processing made for a direct reduction in the number of secretaries and clerks and since automated administration allowed further post reductions. However, UNHCR should take care to ensure that current equipment was being used to the maximum and to see that purchases of computer equipment and the development of software packages were really saving money. Such an approach was essential.

18. Mr. HOMANN-HERIMBERG (Austria), referring to the annex to the Sub-Committee's report, said that the Sub-Committee's deliberations on the subject of assistance programmes and their funding in 1989 were of even more importance in view of the current financial crisis. A balance had to be found between the needs of refugees and the means to meet them. His delegation would emphasize that the arrangement proposed by the High Commissioner and recommended by the Sub-Committee was not a satisfactory solution for UNHCR, countries of asylum, donor countries, or for the refugees themselves. However, such a state of affairs should make for a more sustained partnership over the months ahead in order to solve the financial problem and establish a more solid base for the future. All the parties involved and UNHCR more than ever would have a role to play within the framework of the package of joint measures.

19. Another matter of concern was the evolution of staffing levels and administrative costs. Admittedly, austerity measures had already been taken, but he did not think they were sufficient and believed that the particularly serious financial situation made further sacrifices vital.

20. His delegation had already made clear its position concerning the apportionment of administrative costs between voluntary funds and the regular budget. The question should be put on the agenda again and the best place to do so was in the General Assembly.

21. Mrs. SCHELLING (Switzerland) said that her country had already contributed more than SwF 15 million to UNHCR, with an additional SwF 2 million for the implementation of the overall plan of action for South-East Asia and SwF 1 million reserved for a programme for Iraqi nationals who had taken refuge in Turkey. The Swiss authorities were also looking into the possibility of making further contributions to specific programmes as part of a special effort to help refugees, displaced persons and other victims of conflicts. However, it was a special effort and one that Switzerland could not repeat year after year. For that reason she welcomed UNHCR's proposal set forth in the draft decision on assistance activities, which would open the way

to longer lasting solutions. Her country was prepared to participate in that action and hoped, like Belgium, that a true dialogue between the parties involved would be established.

22. There had been much deliberation over the various possible sources of income for UNHCR and the need to diversify them. However, the possibility of making the available means even more cost-effective should not be ignored, for example, by improving UNHCR access to refugee centres so that it could identify the exact needs, and also by improved monitoring of the activities of its implementing partners. It would also be helpful if the host countries offered UNHCR more favourable exchange rates, so that, in the interest of refugees, UNHCR could benefit as fully as possible from the resources at its disposal.

23. Mr. BARKER (Australia) said it was necessary to recall what had been said during the general debate and within the Sub-Committee, in view of the importance of administrative and financial matters.

24. As far as support costs were concerned, there was a need for greater transparency by providing, if possible, a single figure. The projected increase for 1990 was disturbing and the trend must be reversed; only by reducing support costs was it possible to increase the funding of operational programmes.

25. Staffing costs constituted the largest area of support costs. There again, a single figure was needed covering all UNHCR staff. It was regrettable that the level of 2,074 posts could not be reached by 31 March 1990; in his opinion, a target date of 1 January 1991 was a realistic time-limit for accomplishing this task. The introduction of new management techniques could probably prove useful in that regard. Naturally, reductions in staffing levels should not lead to greater use of outside consultancies or non-governmental organizations.

26. Australia had supported the proposals on reclassification, but was concerned that matters were not proceeding as the Executive Committee wished, and that the upgrading of field staff had not been balanced by some downgrading, particularly at Headquarters. Hence there was a need for greater discipline in that area. Since UNHCR was a body concerned with work in the field, the conditions of service of field staff, who carried out their work with admirable dedication, should be improved. Accordingly, the proposal to establish a Joint Advisory Committee merited further study.

27. Australia was anxious to read the explanatory statement on the implications of reorganization and favoured the creation of a post of comptroller, although it was surprised at the location proposed for the Resettlement and NGO Liaison Units.

28. The current financial crisis was the result not of a drop in contributions, but of more complex causes. Australia supported the search for durable solutions and for new sources of funding, both from Governments and the private sector. To help ease the present crisis, it had already brought forward part of its 1990 contribution. Naturally, it gave its whole-hearted support to the "package" solution, which it saw as the only way of saving UNHCR from a financial disaster. Australia hoped that many delegations would participate in the activities of the Working Group with a sense of common interest.

29. Mr. EBIRERI (Nigeria) said that the streamlining of the structure at Headquarters, as proposed by the Sub-Committee, would certainly increase the effectiveness of UNHCR at a critical time. Since streamlining was within the prerogative of the High Commissioner as the organization's executive authority, it was for him to determine the appropriate action.

30. Nigeria approved the creation of the Division of Human Resources Management and Support Services and also the addition of the word "Protection" to the name of the Division of Refugee Law and Doctrine.

31. His country sympathized with the High Commissioner in his efforts to solve the financial crisis and would see that its budgetary allocations to UNHCR were paid. It recommended that conclusions concerning assistance activities should not be adopted until administrative and financial matters had been settled.

32. Mr. JEBARI (Morocco) said that, given UNHCR's alarming financial position, alternative solutions needed to be considered to solve the problem at its source, while stressing the values of solidarity and humanity. If UNHCR was to have adequate financial resources, funding should be sought from other donors, so as to diversify the donor base and reduce the burden on traditional donors.

33. Morocco had taken note of the initial estimate for the 1990 General Programmes, the financial target for which was \$414 million, and was gratified to see that, in establishing its General Programmes, UNHCR had taken into consideration the needs of new and emergency programmes and ongoing activities. In that regard, UNHCR had made commendable efforts to revise its programmes, and should seek to make adjustments in all its areas of activity.

34. The new approach as outlined in the most recent organizational chart, should be underpinned by a genuine desire to find methods suited to the needs of rational management. The proposal for the classification of certain posts and project personnel financed from voluntary funds, as contained in note EC/SC.2/41, merited approval in accordance with the recommendation by ACABQ. Recognized standards should be observed in such matters, particularly those of the International Civil Service Commission.

35. He paid tribute to the UNHCR field staff's dedication to the cause of refugees and considered that the Chairman of the Staff Council's comments in the Sub-Committee properly reflected the concerns of the staff in that category. Morocco also thought that further consideration should be given to the question of equitable representation of women, in accordance with resolution 40/258 B of the General Assembly.

36. His country had taken note of the report of the Board of Auditors and expressed its satisfaction at UNHCR's financial position, which was in conformity with the Financial Rules. The recommendations and conclusions of the Board of Auditors did justice to the unstinting efforts of UNHCR to improve its operational and financial management systems, and also had a positive feedback on the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of programmes.

37. The climate of dialogue in the work of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters was an encouraging sign for the future work of the Executive Committee. Morocco fully supported the Sub-Committee's proposal to create a working group for a thorough review of the content of the General Programmes.

38. Mr. KOOLJMANS (Netherlands) said he endorsed the comments made by the representatives of the Federal Republic of Germany, the United States and Austria, and agreed in particular on the need to ensure that support costs were reduced, to return to 1 January 1986 staff levels by 31 March 1990, not to ignore the resolution taken the previous year by the Executive Committee with regard to reducing average grade levels at Headquarters and not to create any further senior level posts at Headquarters during its reorganization.

39. Mr. BURTON (United Kingdom), referring to the question of restructuring, said that he was still waiting for further clarification on some technical points and on grading levels. He did, however, welcome the appointment of a comptroller.

40. It was his hope that, with the new staff management directives, the right officials would be appointed to the right posts. Noting Mr. Utkan's comments, he agreed that the morale of field staff was crucial to their effectiveness and thought that, although the structures for improving staff-management relations seemed to be in place, it would be interesting to hear comments on the possible establishment of a joint advisory committee. However, continued efforts were needed from both staff and management to maximize UNHCR's effectiveness.

41. On the question of the balance of D.2 posts between Headquarters and the field, his country stressed the need to take account of the Executive Committee's resolution of the previous year.

42. He supported the reductions in established posts and appreciated the need for flexibility on contingency posts, but was concerned about the escalation of the latter, which was preventing a return to 1 January 1986 staffing levels. That target should be met no later than 1 January 1991.

43. With regard to training, the United Kingdom endorsed the point of view of the United States of America and supported the efforts being made in that area. It was important to keep support costs to a minimum and greater transparency was needed. It did appear, however, that UNHCR was on the right track. Improvements had been made in the evaluation of staff training, but it would be interesting to have some information on the impact of training on operational activities. Streamlining, as the Deputy High Commissioner had reiterated, should aim primarily at improving field operations.

44. The so-called financial "package", with the efforts to widen the donor base, could and must resolve the financial crisis facing UNHCR, but new measures would need to be taken in 1990 to curb costs.

45. Mr. STUB (Norway) said he fully supported the conclusions and decisions on assistance activities contained in the Sub-Committee's report and saw the so-called "package" as an extraordinary measure dictated by extraordinary



circumstances, something which did not do away with the need for improved priority setting and greater cost-effectiveness. In all cases, it was the actual needs of real refugees that had to determine the activities of UNHCR.

46. Mrs. RUESTA (Venezuela) said that the idea of changing the title of the Division of Refugee Law and Doctrine to "Division of Protection, Refugee Law and Doctrine" seemed a perfectly good one, but she would like to know if the Division would be studying legal doctrine alone or whether it would also deal with other social principles of the general doctrine of the Office of the High Commissioner, in particular with regard to assistance (A/AC.96/735, para. 4). Her delegation also favoured the establishment of Regional Bureaux and the appointment of a Comptroller for programme co-ordination, budget and finance. While it especially welcomed the title given to the new Division of Human Resource Management and Support Services, which, in its view should bring about important changes, it did wonder about the real functions and powers of that Division. The Division should one day take responsibility for human resources, staff training, social policy, including relations with the NGOs closely involved in the activities of UNHCR social policy, and support services, which were necessary to the application of that social policy. The new initiative was none the less a step in the right direction.

47. With regard to the main aims of UNHCR assistance activity, Venezuela welcomed the particular interest displayed in refugee women and children (A/AC.96/735 paras. 62-67) and thought it could lead to improved social policy planning in the future. Lastly, her delegation wished to pay tribute to the morale of the staff, who continued to fulfil their duties in the current climate of crisis in UNHCR.

48. Mr. TRAN VAN-THINH (Commission of the European Communities) said that, at a time when UNHCR was going through a budget crisis, the Community was ready to display solidarity and was looking into all possible means of strengthening its contribution, without forgetting the usual channels, namely WFP, UNRWA, ICRC, and particularly the NGOs. The Commission's contribution in 1989 would substantially exceed that of 1988, and the level would be maintained in 1990. The Commission simply hoped that UNHCR would be able to submit projects that answered to its own aid criteria.

49. It was thus through ever-increasing practical efforts that the Community would heed the call of human solidarity, until such time as an effective solution could be found, over and above emergency action for immediate needs, to cope with flows of refugees. The sole guiding principle behind the Commission's action was the respect to which the refugees were entitled.

50. The crisis was not adverse in each and every respect, for it provided the opportunity for a critical examination of the ways and means of surmounting it. The loss and waste of energy, good will, know-how and experience could be overcome through genuine co-ordination of UNHCR activities with those of other United Nations organizations.

51. He paid tribute to the achievements of the High Commissioner and took the view that, at a time when the Office he headed was undergoing an upheaval, staff issues should be relegated to the background, as staff solidarity at all levels was essential if UNHCR was to continue to serve refugees.

52. Mr. BLAVO (Observer for Ghana) said he saw the restructuring of the Office of the High Commissioner as an initiative to enable it better to fulfil its difficult task of providing protection and assistance to refugees throughout the world, without additional expenditure. It had already been said that, while the number of refugees continued to increase, the resources available to UNHCR continued to decrease. The initiative that the High Commissioner had just taken to promote greater efficiency therefore deserved support. Ghana also welcomed the appointment, to the head of the new Division of Human Resource Management and Support Services, of an experienced and respected international civil servant, who would be able to steer the Division in the right direction.

53. Mr. MPANDA (Observer for Malawi) said he supported the measures taken by the High Commissioner to streamline the structure of the Office, in order to improve the efficiency of an organization which was already doing a commendable job. As a country of first asylum with over 700,000 refugees, Malawi welcomed any measures to bring about more efficient management of financial resources. It particularly welcomed the establishment of the Division of Human Resource Management and Support Services.

54. Malawi was aware that UNHCR was going through a period of financial crisis and was in need of support; it therefore strongly urged all those who had been generous in the past to continue to provide the Office with the means to carry out its good work. His own country would continue to do everything in its power to relieve the suffering of those who sought refuge within its borders.

55. Mr. MIGUIL (Observer for Djibouti) said that, in the context of the restructuring of the Office of the High Commissioner, the Republic of Djibouti welcomed the establishment of a Division of Human Resource Management and Support Services, to be headed by an international civil servant who had long been dedicated to the cause of refugees. That should facilitate the search for durable solutions to the problem of African refugees, in terms both of aid to refugees and of development. It was a known fact that the great majority of African countries of asylum were less developed countries which, without UNHCR's aid, could not shoulder the burden that the millions of refugees represented. Aid to refugees and development went hand in hand with emergency aid, just as the role of UNDP and the other multilateral organizations should complement that of UNHCR, which took primary responsibility for questions concerning refugees, whether in terms of assistance or of the search for durable solutions. African refugees, who were for the most part women and children, would be able to benefit from the new Division's services.

56. The countries of asylum were, in so far as their meagre resources would allow, potential donors to UNHCR programmes, in view of the burden they bore and the assistance they gave to refugees. The Republic of Djibouti appealed on their behalf to the international community, and particularly to the developed countries, asking them fully to meet their responsibilities and to give UNHCR the tools it needed to complete the tasks assigned to it. He would point in that connection to the simple arithmetic calculation by Zimbabwe, which showed a figure of \$34 spent per year for each refugee. The Republic of Djibouti would not hesitate to do everything within its means to welcome men, women and children who had lost everything.

57. Mr. SENE (Observer for Senegal) said that the report of the Sub-Commission on Administrative and Financial Matters (A/AC.96/735 and Corr.1) marked a decisive stage in the effort to streamline and restructure the permanent mechanism and functioning of the Office of the High Commissioner, which had been undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee of Eighteen. It was to be hoped that the announced action would allow the High Commissioner, in co-operation with the Executive Committee, to continue that process and further improve the division of work so that the various functions were better distributed and suited to management tools, whether programme co-ordination, budget and finances, the establishment of the Division of Human Resource Management and Services, or the Division of Protection, Refugee Law and Doctrine, to all of which Senegal attached considerable importance.

58. The report showed that considerable efforts were being made to reduce support costs in accordance with ACABQ's request (A/AC.96/735, para. 8). Senegal noted the flexibility accorded to the High Commissioner in the adjustment of General Programmes and the emergency preparedness capability (para. 9). The Deputy High Commissioner's account had also highlighted improvements in contingency planning, the early warning system, and the enumeration and registration of refugees, in other words, the beneficiaries, in order to establish accurate and reliable figures (para. 7).

59. His delegation also welcomed the spirit of dialogue and conciliation which seemed to mark UNHCR staff-management relations, as well as the importance given to training and to harnessing human resources (paras. 10 and 11). The reorganization and streamlining of structures should remove the danger of overlap. If those were to be effective, however, they needed to be adequately financed, particularly in regard to support services and human resources, and especially if the need to improve the representation of women in the professional category was to be taken into account.

60. In conclusion, his delegation paid tribute to the High Commissioner, the Deputy High Commissioner and their staff for the dedication with which they were carrying out a difficult but noble task. It hoped that no effort would be spared to secure funding from as broad a range of donors as possible, including the public sector, as stated in the conclusions at the end of the report (A/AC.96/735, annex, para. (xi)), to ensure that UNHCR was fully able to meet its assistance and protection responsibilities. Senegal would follow with interest the work of the Working Group responsible for reviewing general programmes and administrative and budgetary questions (A/AC.96/735, annex, para. (ix)).

61. Mr. MOKADDEM (Tunisia) said that his delegation noted with satisfaction the reorganization of the UNHCR secretariat, an initiative that answered the need to adapt to current difficulties in refugee assistance and protection, and more particularly because it did not entail additional expenditure. Tunisia especially welcomed the establishment of the Division of Human Resource Management and Support Services, and the changed title of the Division of Refugee Law and Doctrine, which was to become the Division of Protection, Refugee Law and Doctrine; they were basic aspects of a new approach geared towards finding a durable solution to the problem of refugees. Tunisia welcomed such an effort at streamlining, which would strengthen the operational effectiveness of UNHCR, an organization it held in high regard.

62. The CHAIRMAN invited the Executive Committee to adopt the report of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters (A/AC.96/735 and Corr.1) with the annex containing the conclusions and decisions on assistance activities.

63. The report of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters (A/AC.96/735 and Corr.1) was adopted.

64. The CHAIRMAN invited the Executive Committee to adopt paragraphs 129 and 131 of the Overview of UNHCR activities (A/AC.96/729) which contained proposals requiring the formal approval of the Executive Committee.

65. Paragraphs 129 and 131 of the Overview of UNHCR activities (A/AC.96/729) were approved.

66. Mr. HOCKE (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said he welcomed the adoption of the Sub-Committee's report and, with discussion of item 8 drawing to a close, he wished to thank all participants for their efforts in producing the report and drawing up the so-called "package". The circumstances which had made the report necessary were indeed exceptional, and UNHCR would have preferred not to take the measures in question. But the important thing, the real achievement in his view, was the decisions that had just been made, which could be summarized in a few points.

67. First, the measures the Executive Committee had just adopted for 1989 and for 1990 underlined the common desire of all involved to take as full account as possible of the needs of those UNHCR was called upon to serve, the refugees themselves. Second, even though the Committee had not been able formally to approve the programme for 1990, at a figure of \$414 million, something which was admittedly a matter of concern for all UNHCR staff, it none the less represented a clear target for UNHCR's commitment to refugees. Third, the measures which would have to be applied during the first and second semesters of 1990 offered not only a hope but also a real possibility of attaining the goal of reconciling needs and resources yet protecting the dignity and future of refugees.

68. Lastly, it was important to see the establishment of the Working Group mentioned in the annex to document A/AC.96/735 (para. (ix)) in the context of a period of difficulty for humanitarian assistance not only for refugees, but for all victims of conflicts and other man-made or natural disasters; those difficulties were due to the proliferation of such situations and the consequent competing needs and priorities. It was therefore vital to establish genuine co-operation between those responsible for programme implementation, namely UNHCR, and those who, either as host countries or as donor States, were attempting to provide UNHCR with the ways and means to realize its objectives. That co-operation, in whichever form it might take, was necessitated by the circumstances. UNHCR was encouraged by what had been said, which augured well for the spirit and objectives of future discussions. A better understanding both of UNHCR's work and its modus operandi, achieved by scrutinizing its programmes or studying its methods, could only render more tangible and urgent the need for united efforts to face the harsh fact that there were 14 million refugees in the world.

69. The Executive Committee could rest assured that UNHCR would waste no time in setting about its task, and would show the same energy it had shown since its inception in carrying out the exercise just agreed upon - the peculiar and temporary character of which had been underlined - and succeeding in restoring the desired balance. As his assistants and the Chairman of the Staff Council had said, the current situation was paradoxical in that it was not a case of UNHCR producing a statement of success or failure as such, but simply affirming the spirit which guided it, showing not only that it had done everything within reasonable and acceptable limits to meet needs, but also that it had been broadly successful in that task over the past few years. If some surprise, and even a little bitterness, had been expressed, he could speak for staff in the field and at Headquarters in affirming that that would only strengthen their determination successfully to carry out the exercise assigned to them, namely to restore the firm foundation indispensable to the normal and harmonious execution of the mission entrusted to UNHCR, on the eve of its fortieth anniversary.

70. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Executive Committee had completed its consideration of agenda item 8.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.

de ce que le HCR a à faire, mais de la manière dont il doit le faire, acquise soit par l'analyse de ses programmes soit par l'étude de ses méthodes d'action, ne peut que rendre plus sensible et plus pressante la nécessité de l'effort commun à accomplir pour faire face à la réalité, à savoir la présence dans le monde de 14 millions de réfugiés.

69. Le Comité exécutif peut avoir l'assurance que, pour sa part, le HCR s'attellera sans tarder à la tâche, avec toute l'énergie dont il a fait preuve depuis sa création, pour mettre en oeuvre l'exercice qui vient d'être décidé et dont on a souligné la particularité et le caractère temporaire, et pour réussir, c'est-à-dire revenir à l'équilibre souhaité. Comme l'ont dit les collaborateurs du Haut Commissaire, ainsi que le Président de l'Association du personnel, la situation actuelle a un caractère paradoxal dans la mesure où il ne s'agit pas pour le HCR de dresser un constat de réussite ou d'échec en tant que tel, mais simplement de manifester le sentiment qui l'anime, à savoir celui d'avoir non seulement tout fait pour répondre aux besoins dans des limites raisonnables et acceptables, mais aussi d'y avoir largement réussi au cours des dernières années. Si une certaine surprise, voire même une certaine amertume, a pu pointer, le Haut Commissaire se fait le porte-parole du personnel sur le terrain et au siège pour affirmer que cela ne fera que motiver davantage ses collaborateurs dans leur volonté de réussir dans les mois qui viennent l'exercice qui leur est demandé, c'est-à-dire retrouver l'assise indispensable à une poursuite normale et harmonieuse de la mission confiée à l'institution - et cela à la veille du quarantième anniversaire du Haut Commissariat.

70. Le PRESIDENT déclare que le Comité exécutif a ainsi achevé l'examen du point 8 de l'ordre du jour.

La séance est levée à 17 h 25.