

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-FOURTH SESSION
Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
47th meeting
held on
Friday, 17 November 1989
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 47th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KABORE (Burkina Faso)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/44/SR.47
4 December 1989
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

89-57261 2193S (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 110: OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES
(continued) (A/44/12 and Add.1, A/44/93-S/20420, A/44/415-S/20749, A/44/520,
A/44/523, A/44/527 and Corr.1 and 2, A/44/551, A/44/688, A/44/689 and A/44/710)

1. Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia) said that the question of refugees was very complex, since it arose from many causes, both natural and social. In addition to the humanitarian needs created by refugee flows, there were also political and security considerations which had far-reaching ramifications for the economic, social and cultural development of the countries concerned. The vast majority of refugees were currently in developing countries, many of which lacked sufficient infrastructures for their own citizens, so that it was more difficult for them to care for and sustain large numbers of refugees. In that connection, increased importance should be given to activities designed to promote the self-sufficiency of refugees.

2. His delegation had noted with satisfaction the recognition in paragraphs 80 and 81 of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (A/44/12) that in many countries the host population suffered from impediments to its economic development similar to those facing refugees. Furthermore, refugee operations were recognized as vehicles for economic development. More support was being channelled into institutions and infrastructure with a view to achieving greater viability. It was encouraging to note in the report that special attention was being given to the protection of and assistance to refugee women and children. He hoped that the efforts to introduce effective measures to integrate women's issues at all stages within the programme planning cycle would meet with success.

3. During the previous year, the international community had held several regional conferences to discuss and formulate solutions to refugee flows. The International Conference on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa, the International Conference on Central American Refugees and the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees had underscored the world's concern for coping with the refugee problem and eliminating the root causes of refugee movements.

4. In the South-East Asia region, the refugee problem persisted despite considerable efforts at the national, regional and international levels. Ten years had elapsed since the convening at Geneva of the first Meeting on Refugees and Displaced Persons in South-East Asia, which had adopted the Orderly Departure Programme to regulate the exodus that was occurring. Since then, with the co-operation of the Governments and organizations concerned, it had been possible to resettle more than 1.5 million Indo-Chinese refugees. At the recent International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees, a Declaration and Comprehensive Plan of Action had been adopted to facilitate international co-operation and take new steps. His delegation hoped that those arrangements would help to resolve the Indo-Chinese refugee problem, thereby promoting regional stability and security.

5. Mr. MEHNAT (Afghanistan) said that in recent years, the problem of refugees and displaced persons had not only not improved but had actually worsened. In order to resolve it, the international community must adopt a concerted, objective and realistic approach. On the basis of those criteria, Afghanistan welcomed the encouraging steps recently taken by the international community towards solving such problems at the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees and the International Conference on Central American Refugees. In the past, it had more often been natural disasters, such as drought and epidemics, that had given rise to refugee flows and the displacement of persons. Now many other factors had been added to those causes. Wars, with their serious consequences for the socio-economic life of countries, had been one of the major root causes in recent years.

6. His delegation noted with satisfaction the completion of several repatriation operations assigned to UNHCR, such as the repatriation of Namibians within the framework of the United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia, an operation which had been successful.

7. Urgent attention should be given to the question of the safe, voluntary and honourable return of Afghan refugees. In the hope of resolving that serious issue, Afghanistan and Pakistan had signed at Geneva, in April 1988, the Agreements on the Settlement of the Situation relating to Afghanistan, including the Bilateral Agreement on the Voluntary Return of Refugees. Afghanistan recognized with appreciation the efforts made in 1988 by UNHCR to prepare the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees to their homeland. UNHCR had played a very positive role by participating in inter-agency missions in Afghanistan with a view to preparing for the return of the Afghan refugees. However, in the 18 months since the entry into force of the Geneva accords, one of the parties had continued to overlook articles III, IV, V and VII of the Agreement relating to the return of the refugees, which had created serious obstacles. That same party to the Geneva accords had not responded positively to the notes communicated to it on the issue of joint commissions between Afghanistan and Pakistan for facilitating the voluntary and mass return of Afghan refugees.

8. It was undeniable that the Afghan refugees were eagerly looking forward to returning to their homeland. Conditions were ripe for their return with dignity and honour, and his Government had provided the necessary facilities and services for them, and had established a ministry to manage their affairs. However, Afghanistan reiterated its position that any politically motivated calls for resolving humanitarian issues would not yield the desired results, but would add to the sufferings of the refugees and displaced persons.

9. Mr. CHADERTON MATOS (Venezuela) said that his country was concerned over the world refugee situation. The international community must do its utmost to alleviate the difficult living conditions of refugees, whose number was continuing to increase.

10. In the previous year, several positive developments had occurred, such as the return of some 42,000 Namibian refugees to their homeland. Progress had also been

(Mr. Chaderton Matos, Venezuela)

made in the family reunification programmes. Some of the objectives of the Plan of Action adopted by the International Conference on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa had been achieved. It was to be hoped that the complementary activities necessary for the full implementation of that Plan would continue. Other positive developments had been the Declaration and the Concerted Plan of Action adopted by the International Conference on Central American Refugees, and the Declaration and Comprehensive Plan of Action adopted by the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees. Both Plans of Action would contribute effectively to the achievement of peace and security in those two regions.

11. However, certain negative aspects of the refugee situation should also be highlighted. Increased protection was needed for refugee women and children, who were physically and mentally more vulnerable to exploitation and moral degradation. Another subject of concern was the financial situation of UNHCR. The international community must contribute more funds to finance its activities. The Government of Venezuela was ready to provide greater support for the humanitarian work of UNHCR. In that connection, the President of Venezuela had approved the establishment in Caracas of the regional office of UNHCR, which would co-ordinate programmes for the countries in the northern part of South America and the Caribbean.

12. Venezuela welcomed the establishment by the Executive Committee of the Programme of UNHCR of a working group to enable Committee members to participate more actively in the work of the Office. It was to be hoped that the working group would adopt measures to strengthen the operational capacity of UNHCR and would suggest ways of finding new sources of financing so that the financial crisis of UNHCR could be resolved.

13. Mr. KHOSHROO (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the refugee problem was a social phenomenon with far-reaching international implications. The wide gap between the rich and the poor nations, the policy of open and covert interference in the internal affairs of other States and the continued plundering of the resources of nations were the main causes of that painful contemporary tragedy. The Islamic Republic of Iran was host to about 2.5 million Afghan refugees, the second largest refugee population in the world, and was extending assistance to them in accordance with its Islamic beliefs and values and its respect for humanitarian principles. It was to be hoped that, with the final resolution of the problem of Afghanistan and the improvement of social, economic and political conditions in that country, the way would be opened for the voluntary return of the Afghan refugees. The Islamic Republic of Iran was also providing shelter to 100,000 Kurdish refugees. Meeting the needs of those refugees had put an additional burden on his country, which already faced serious problems as a result of the situation during the past 10 years. His country therefore needed further support from the international community in order to acquit itself properly of its humanitarian task.

(Mr. Khoshroo, Islamic Republi. of Iran)

14. As in the past, the delegation of Iran called upon the international community to deal with the problem of Afghan and other refugees in Iran in a manner that took account of the dimensions of the problem. Adequate facilities must be provided to enable the refugees to return to their own countries. States with better economic possibilities should increase their voluntary contributions so that the United Nations bodies and specialized agencies could carry out their refugee protection and assistance programmes. In that regard, he wished to mention the agreement on a project for the improvement of range lands in southern Khorasan, a province in eastern Iran. That agreement, concluded between UNHCR, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Islamic Republic of Iran, had been made possible by co-ordination among agencies of the United Nations system. It was hoped that with the completion of the project the international community would witness implementation of similar refugee-assistance projects in the future.

15. Mrs. KALMYK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, despite some encouraging signs, the flow of refugees continued unabated. The plight of those refugees could only arouse concern and compassion. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was doing commendable work, which should retain its humanitarian nature. In ensuring normal living conditions for millions of refugees and facilitating their voluntary repatriation, its activities contributed to international humanitarian co-operation.

16. The International Conference on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa, held in Oslo in 1988, had been followed by two more conferences, one on Indo-Chinese refugees and the other on Central American refugees. Those conferences showed that world public opinion was becoming increasingly sensitized to the pressing need to find solutions to the refugee problem.

17. United Nations efforts to assist Afghan refugees were of vital importance and reflected the unshakeable desire of the refugees to return to their homeland and to participate in its reconstruction. With the conclusion in Geneva, in 1988, of the Agreements on the Settlement of the Situation relating to Afghanistan, it was now possible by means of voluntary repatriation, to find a durable solution to the problem of refugees from that country, who constituted the world's largest refugee population. The Soviet delegation supported the General Assembly's decision to continue to extend humanitarian assistance to the Afghan refugees, through UNHCR. It should be noted that the Soviet Union was participating actively in the United Nations programme of economic assistance to Afghanistan, to which it planned to contribute 250 million roubles.

18. The Government of the Soviet Union was also providing bilateral assistance to Afghanistan, which would amount to 120 million roubles in 1989. Economic assistance would facilitate the reconstruction of Afghanistan as an independent, democratic, and non-aligned country, and would enable millions of Afghan refugees to return to their homes in peace, and that would contribute to the resolution of other regional conflicts in the world.

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(Mrs. Kalmyk, USSR)

19. The Soviet delegation agreed that UNHCR's activities should be oriented towards achieving a durable solution to the world refugee problem and should emphasize voluntary repatriation. Attention should also be given to preventive measures aimed at avoiding massive flows of refugees. Lastly, the Soviet Union favoured adoption in the Third Committee of measures to intensify international co-operation in humanitarian fields.

20. Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria) said that his delegation deeply deplored any actions that was incompatible with the basic principles of the international protection of refugees, such as refoulement of asylum-seekers, military attacks on refugee camps and the practice of forced military recruitment. Austria was convinced that international protection efforts should focus on the most vulnerable refugee groups: women, children and the elderly. While repatriation had provided a durable solution in some instances, the number of refugees continued to increase. The Austrian delegation would follow the Executive Committee's discussions on the causes of that phenomenon with special attention.

21. The two international conferences on refugees held in 1989 had provided a basis for a solution to the problem, but further political and financial support was required to make the conclusions of those conferences a reality. In the specific case of the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees, Austria's regret that the Conference agenda had not included the question of the Cambodian refugees was a matter of record, and his country had recently demonstrated its solidarity by making a financial contribution to the assistance programme for that refugee group.

22. Austria supported the Executive Committee's conclusions regarding the "sharing of responsibilities for operational activities relating to refugees", because it was convinced of the need for increased co-operation between UNHCR and other United Nations organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

23. In order to overcome the financial problems facing UNHCR, it was essential to find a balance between the needs of the refugees and the means to meet them. His delegation had therefore noted with a certain degree of optimism the Executive Committee's decision to establish a working group specifically entrusted with that task. It also welcomed the fact that donor countries had increased their financial contributions. Once the current problems were resolved, UNHCR would again become of the most prestigious agencies of the United Nations.

24. Experience had shown that refugee and emigrant movements required special solutions reflecting the specific situation in each region. Some countries of first asylum were not in a position to cope with refugee or emigrant influxes; the international community should thus demonstrate its solidarity. He noted the situation in Europe where, in spite of the remarkable evolution in some countries in Eastern Europe, the number of asylum-seekers from that region continued to grow. While most of those seeking asylum did not meet the necessary criteria to be granted refugee status, they imposed a heavy burden on the countries of first asylum and diminished their capacity to accept genuine refugees. In his

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

Government's view, it was indispensable to distinguish between refugees and emigrants. The latter category should be subject to immigration regulations, not to principles of international protection.

25. Lastly, Austria welcomed Hungary's accession to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and to the 1967 Protocol thereto, as well as the opening of a new UNHCR office in Budapest. It called upon all States which had not yet signed those instruments to do so without reservations limiting their applicability.

26. Mr. KASSIM (Malaysia) said that the dimensions of the refugee problem in the world prevented the international community from feeling complacent about the progress achieved thus far. His delegation strongly believed that a multidimensional approach was needed to tackle the problem. He noted the continued plight of the Afghan refugees, the majority of whom were still not able to return to their homes in spite of the Geneva Conventions. That showed that, in a situation such as that obtaining in Afghanistan, a comprehensive political settlement was essential for an effective solution to all problems, including humanitarian problems. The same applied to Kampuchea. His delegation was also concerned about the plight of the Palestine refugees, who must be taken into account in the Middle East peace process.

27. Among the achievements, mention should be made of the repatriation of over 42,000 Namibians to their homeland, which had enabled them to participate in the elections and in the process of independence in Namibia, and the convening of the International Conference on Central American Refugees in May 1989.

28. The International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees, held in June 1989, had been particularly important for his Government, which had hosted the Preparatory Meeting of the Conference in Kuala Lumpur. In spite of the high expectations raised by the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan of Action, it was clear that the international community as a whole should take steps to translate the Plan's provisions into action, in order to alleviate the suffering of the Indo-Chinese refugees, particularly that of the Vietnamese "boat people", and relieve the burden of the countries of first asylum.

29. Malaysia was disappointed with the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan of Action. While Viet Nam claimed that it had endeavoured to deter clandestine departures, such departures had not in fact decreased, as was shown by the number of people arriving in Malaysia. Moreover, voluntary repatriation had proved to be ineffective. Malaysia's position on the refugee problem attested to its support for the search for a balanced humanitarian and lasting solution; his Government had always maintained that more attention should be paid to tackling refugee problems at the source.

30. His delegation believed that, for the past few years, the Vietnamese who had left Viet Nam were not refugees fleeing because they were victims of persecution, but economic emigrants seeking a better life. Malaysia had allowed the transit of hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese and was currently host to more than half a

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(Mr. Kassim, Malaysia)

million immigrants and refugees from neighbouring countries. It was essential to recognize that the search for a lasting solution was an arduous task that would be facilitated by international co-operation.

31. Mrs. BUTIKU (United Republic of Tanzania) noted that the number of refugees had skyrocketed in the past decade to nearly 13 million. As the largest concentration of refugees was in Africa, her delegation attached particular importance to the plight of those who had been compelled to leave their countries as a result of colonialism, racism, injustice or strife. Those refugees in Africa represented a challenge to UNHCR and to the international community as a whole, not only to provide the necessary humanitarian assistance to them, but also to seek a permanent solution to the problem. The existence of machinery to ensure the speedy identification of the problems faced by the refugees and by the receiving countries could be mutually advantageous. To that end, UNHCR and other relief agencies should play a crucial role in order to guarantee the success of refugee programmes.

32. In view of the circumstances that had obliged them to leave their countries, the refugees suffered from health and food deficiencies and their adaptation to life in other countries was often impeded by cultural, religious, racial and even ideological differences. In some cases, the extension of humanitarian assistance had been made selectively and subjectively on the basis of that diversity, and some countries had adopted restrictive practices. Before the physical admission of the refugees, various administrative procedures had to be carried out and at times political criteria were taken into account. More often than not, the refugees were detained in concentration camps during the waiting period and sometimes they were even forced to return to their countries of origin, at serious risk to their lives. While at times some liberal admission policies had been abused, it was not unusual that the measures adopted to correct such abuses meant new suffering for bona fide refugees. The central role of the receiving country was to provide humanitarian assistance; political considerations should therefore not be an overriding factor.

33. In that regard, her country had established adequate administrative and legal machinery, including an eligibility commission responsible for reviewing individual cases and formulating contingency plans to handle large-scale influxes of refugees. It realized that speed in admitting and settling the refugees would minimize their physical and emotional suffering and would reduce their problems in adapting to the new environment.

34. She noted that her country condemned the apartheid system and the policy of destabilization pursued by the racist régime of South Africa through terrorists from the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) and the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO). That was the major cause of refugee influxes in the region. Tanzania, which had granted asylum to over 265,000 refugees and had made land available for their settlement, was one of the few countries which offered naturalized citizenship to a large number of refugees. However, in the case of refugees as in other cases, prevention was better than cure. That was why national and international efforts should be intensified in order to eliminate the root causes of refugee flows.

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(Mrs. Butiku, Tanzania)

35. The presence of refugees in countries such as her own gave rise to considerable expenditures on the establishment of infrastructures in the settlement areas. While those expenditures had been reduced by settling the refugees near the local population, the preparation and maintenance of the settlement areas had involved substantial human and financial resources. With the help and co-operation of UNHCR, Tanzania had been able progressively to improve the quality of life in most of the refugee settlements. The international humanitarian assistance in the form of food, clothing, medicine and shelter that was provided by UNHCR and other relief agencies, was essential for the transition period until the refugees could provide for themselves.

36. Referring to the recent repatriation of 42,000 Namibians, she said that voluntary repatriation was the preferred durable solution for the problems of refugees. Her delegation continued to support follow-up activities to the Oslo Declaration and Plan of Action on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa, and trusted that both the International Conference on Central American Refugees and the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees would help in lessening the pain and hardship of refugees in those regions.

37. Mr. LOPEZ-VITO (Philippines) commended the work done by UNHCR during its 38 years of existence, and said that important advances had recently been made in addressing and resolving the problems of refugees, asylum-seekers and other groups which needed humanitarian assistance. In that connection, he mentioned the recent international conferences on refugees, in which the Philippines had actively participated, and the voluntary repatriation of over 42,000 Namibians.

38. With regard to the continued exodus of Indo-Chinese refugees, displaced persons and other asylum-seekers, his country, together with the other countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, viewed the problem as a serious threat to peace and stability in the region. The adoption by consensus of the Declaration and Comprehensive Plan of Action at the second International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees, held at Geneva on 13 and 14 June 1989, was evidence of the political commitment of all participants to take practical actions to solve the problem of the massive flow of refugees, particularly the difficult situation of the boat people. Despite its own economic difficulties, the Philippines was prepared to do its part in sharing the international burden. The Philippine First-Asylum Camp in Palawan and the Philippine Refugee Processing Centre in Bataan were clear examples of the continued support of his Government for the programmes and activities of UNHCR, as well as other international efforts that sought to alleviate and provide durable solutions to the plight of the Indo-Chinese refugees. Some 6,000 refugees were currently living at the Palawan Camp, and the Bataan Centre had received a total of 268,473 refugees between 1980 and 1989.

39. His delegation maintained that the voluntary repatriation of refugees was the most desirable solution to the problem, and that conditions should be created to facilitate that solution. In that regard, he called on all the parties concerned to heed the call in General Assembly resolution 42/22 on the situation in

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(Mr. Lopez-Vito, Philippines)

Kampuchea, which had recently been adopted by an overwhelming majority of 124 States Members of the United Nations. Although settlement in the country of asylum might be considered a durable solution to the problem of refugees in cases where voluntary repatriation was not feasible, that was not the most practical solution in the context of South-East Asia, since the continued outflow of refugees and people in a similar situation had strained the capacity of most countries of first asylum to receive them. In his delegation's view, resettlement in third countries was still the most acceptable and practical solution to the problem of refugees in the region.

40. At the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Philippines had proposed the establishment in his country of a regional resettlement centre for refugees in first-asylum camps. The establishment of such a centre would be subject to four conditions: (1) that a formal guarantee should be given by resettlement countries that the centre would be cleared within three years under the terms of the resettlement programme envisaged in the Comprehensive Plan of Action; (2) that Viet Nam should host a counterpart regional holding centre for "screened-outs" or those persons not granted the status of refugee; (3) that a ceiling or maximum number of refugees to be accommodated in the centre should be determined by mutual agreement between the Philippine Government, UNHCR and the resettlement countries; (4) that the establishment of the centre should not involve any expenditure on the part of the Philippine Government, but should be the sole responsibility of the resettlement countries and UNHCR. His Government had formulated that proposal to help provide a solution to a serious and persistent problem and considered that the success of the measures stipulated in the Comprehensive Plan of Action depended, fundamentally, on the concerted efforts and full co-operation of the countries of origin, the countries of first asylum and the countries of resettlement.

41. Finally, as a State party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto, his country was happy to note that there were now 106 signatories to those instruments. It urged other States that had not yet done so to consider becoming parties to the Convention.

42. Mrs. KRAEGE (Observer for Switzerland) said that there had been some encouraging developments in the situation of refugees throughout the world, particularly the voluntary repatriation of a large number of refugees; however, there was a flow of new refugees, who had been obliged to leave their countries as a result of violations of human rights or the existence of armed conflicts.

43. In the view of her Government, UNHCR played a fundamental role in that sphere, and should have more resources made available to it by the international community in order to enable it to protect and assist a growing number of refugees, to take advantage of new opportunities for durable solutions, and to draw up and implement the voluntary repatriation programmes envisaged in agreements on the settlement of local conflicts. Her country, which was a member of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, had joined the consensus to establish a provisional financial mechanism designed to ensure the continuity of the main programmes

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(Mrs. Kraege, Observer, Switzerland)

carried out by UNHCR. Switzerland attached great importance, not only to the survival of refugees - as well as the education of their children and the provision of essential community services - but also to the need to maintain the general guidelines for assistance programmes as agreed upon by the Executive Committee over the past decade. Those guidelines had to do with the strengthening of the technical quality of programmes, the promotion of self-sufficiency among the refugees whenever possible, and the integration of refugees into the development activities of the countries of asylum. It was therefore essential to expand the circle of donor States and ensure that the burden of the economic and social activities carried out by UNHCR on behalf of refugees was shared with UNDP and the other agencies concerned. In that regard, co-operation between UNDP and UNHCR in Central America provided a model which should be followed.

44. Not only did UNHCR need more resources; it also needed to make efforts to reduce losses and unnecessary expenditures, both at Headquarters and in the field. In her Government's view, UNHCR should - without detriment to the Financial Rules of the United Nations - maintain the independence it needed in view of the importance of its mandate, the humanitarian nature of its work, the importance of its activities in the field, and the voluntary nature of its financing.

45. Before concluding, she wished to pay tribute to Mr. Jean-Pierre Hocké, who for four years had worked tirelessly in the service of the refugees and had strengthened the role of UNHCR, promoting dialogue between States, especially at the regional level, in the search for joint solutions.

46. Finally, she said that Switzerland would announce the amount of its contribution to UNHCR for 1990, as well as its special contribution to alleviate the 1989 deficit, at the Pledging Conference to be held the following week. Her country's support for UNHCR was one of the main components of its humanitarian policy, and was clear evidence of its willingness to participate in international co-operation within the framework of the United Nations.

47. Mrs. TASKINUD-DIN (Pakistan) recalled that, as a result of foreign military intervention, more than 3 million Afghan refugees had been forced to seek refuge in Pakistan. In addition, many unregistered refugees and children had been born in refugee camps. Despite limited resources, both the Government and the people of Pakistan had extended relief and shelter to the Afghan refugees. That was in the glorious tradition of Islamic brotherhood and was the expression of his country's respect for humanitarian principles. But such an enormous refugee population would be a heavy burden for any country, and was even more so for a developing country like Pakistan. Although Pakistan valued the help received from friendly Governments, UNHCR, the World Food Programme and other international organizations, it wished to point out that it bore approximately 50 per cent of the relief assistance to the Afghan refugees.

48. In the early part of 1989, more than 70,000 new refugees had entered the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan. Her delegation was convinced that the only durable solution to the refugee problem was their voluntary return. It was

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(Mrs. Taskinud-Din, Pakistan)

therefore necessary to achieve a political settlement based on the establishment of a Government acceptable to the Afghan people that could ensure peace and tranquillity and create conditions for a voluntary return of the refugees, pending which it was imperative to maintain and, if possible, increase the current level of assistance. In view of the financial crisis facing UNHCR, her delegation appealed to the international community to help the Office to obtain the resources needed to carry out its humanitarian activities.

49. Pakistan had participated actively in the International Conference on Central American Refugees and the Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees and sincerely hoped that the efforts of the High Commissioner to implement the plans of action adopted would be successful. It was heartening to note that UNHCR had carried out many of the actions recommended by the International Conference on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa and that a more general follow-up plan to the Declaration had been drawn up.

50. Her delegation commended the countries that had contributed to UNHCR, but although financial support in 1988 had been the highest ever, it had still been inadequate to cover all the programme needs. Pakistan therefore joined the appeal to the donor countries to increase their support of the Office. Only a strengthened UNHCR could improve the condition of refugees.

51. Mr. OSMAN (Somalia) welcomed the activities carried out to help refugees in southern Africa, Central America, South-East Asia and Indo-China. The report of the High Commissioner (A/44/12) had rightly emphasized the need to find durable solutions through a concerted approach. In the mean time, it was necessary to assist the host countries, most of which were developing countries, to bear the heavy burden, which was causing enormous problems for their economies. The international community had recognized the importance of sharing the responsibility for the refugees and the link that existed between refugee assistance and development.

52. Somalia had been compelled to grant asylum to more than 1 million refugees. But the best solution to the problem was voluntary repatriation. In fact, his Government had reached an agreement with Ethiopia and UNHCR to establish a tripartite commission to draw up the principles for repatriation. It was unfortunate that the assistance being provided by the international community to refugees in Somalia had been inadequate to their most basic needs, and the decision by UNHCR and the World Food Programme to suspend food aid to refugees in the north-west districts of Somalia was worrisome. His Government urged those organizations to review their decision and resume their assistance programmes. It also requested the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the Office, the World Food Programme and the donor community, to launch an interim assistance programme to ensure that aid would continue to reach the refugee settlements in Somalia until a more permanent arrangement could be made. His Government also appealed to the Committee to ensure that the principles agreed upon in the Declaration and the Programme of Action were upheld, full support was given to the Office, as well as to the United Nations Development Programme, so that assistance to Somalia could be increased, and, lastly, the proposed restrictions were not implemented.

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53. Mr. ELIADES (Cyprus) reaffirmed his Government's support of UNHCR and recognized that the refugee problem was steadily becoming more serious. The only way to tackle the problem was for the international community to act collectively, because unfortunately the problem of refugees was not shared evenly. His delegation was deeply concerned by the budgetary crisis facing UNHCR and stressed the need to seek additional resources, not only from traditional donors, but also from new ones. It was confident that the Working Group established by the Executive Committee would thoroughly review UNHCR programmes and activities so as to find ways of increasing its financial resources. His Government welcomed such UNHCR accomplishments as the Comprehensive Plan of Action approved by the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees, the Guatemala Declaration and the Plan of Action adopted by the International Conference on Central American Refugees. It had also noted with satisfaction the repatriation of some 42,000 Namibian refugees.

54. With regard to the particular situation in his country, it was to be hoped that the mission of good offices entrusted to the Secretary-General by the Security Council would help bring about a just and lasting solution for the one third of the Cypriot population that had been forcibly uprooted from their lands by the military occupation more than 15 years previously.

55. Mr. HINTEREGGER (Officer-in-Charge of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he was heartened by the expressions of support of various delegations, which would encourage UNHCR staff to continue their important work in the awareness that they enjoyed the backing of the international community. He had taken due note of the concern voiced by delegations, which would serve to give better direction to the Office's efforts. The general debate had shown that an awareness existed of the complex responsibilities of UNHCR and its need for additional resources and had clearly demonstrated that the obstacles facing the Office required the steadfast support of the international community.

56. Mr. BURCUOGLU (Turkey), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that in its statement, the Cypriot delegation had made implicit accusations against Turkey, which his delegation categorically rejected. The mission of good offices of the Secretary-General was currently completing its work in Cyprus, and the Secretary-General would soon receive in New York representatives of the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities. It was therefore necessary to abstain from making provocative statements, which could prejudice the diplomatic initiatives under way.

57. Mr. ELIADES (Cyprus), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that it apparently mattered little to the representative of Turkey that, in deference to the Committee and with a view to avoiding unnecessary polemics, his delegation had, in its statement, avoided naming Turkey as the invading country of Cyprus. It was Turkey which for 15 years had under military occupation almost 40 per cent of the territory of Cyprus. It was Turkey which was violating numerous General Assembly resolutions calling upon it to withdraw its troops from Cyprus and allow displaced persons to return to their homes. It was Turkey which was violating Security Council resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984), resolutions which condemned the

(Mr. Eliades, Cyprus)

secessionist acts in the occupied part of Cyprus and called upon the States Members of the United Nations not to recognize the setting up of a purported State within Cyprus. Lastly, it was Turkey which had been condemned for serious human rights violations, not only in Cyprus, but in its own territory.

58. Mr. BURCUOGLU (Turkey) said that his delegation categorically rejected all the accusations that had just been made against Turkey.

59. The CHAIRMAN said that the Third Committee had concluded the general debate on agenda item 110.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.