

UNITED NATIONS  
  
**General Assembly**  
FORTY-FOURTH SESSION  
*Official Records*

THIRD COMMITTEE  
45th meeting  
held on  
Thursday, 16 November 1989  
at 3 p.m.  
New York

---

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 45th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KABORE (Burkina Faso)

later: Mrs. SHERMAN-PETERS (Barbados)

CONTENTS

- AGENDA ITEM 108: ADOPTION OF A CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (continued)
- AGENDA ITEM 110: OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES  
(continued)

---

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned  
*within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, Room DC2-750,  
2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL  
A/C.3/44/SR.45  
1 December 1989  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: SPANISH  
/...

89-57207 2164S (E)

15 p.

The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 108: ADOPTION OF A CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled that at the 44th meeting the day before, the Committee had, at the request of the United States representative, held a recorded vote on draft decision A/C.3/44/L.45. He had just been informed that, for technical reasons, the electronic system had not duly recorded the results of that vote. The Secretariat regretted that technical incident, completely beyond its control, which prevented it from giving a detailed tally of the results in its report to the General Assembly. The Chairman suggested that the vote on draft decision A/C.3/44/L.45 should, if there were no objections, be considered a non-recorded vote and the results of the vote given in the summary record of the 44th meeting should be approved. a/

2. It was so decided.

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, 523, 527 and Corr.1-2, 551, 688 and 710)

3. Ms. ARMSTRONG (Canada) said that 1989 had been an extremely difficult year for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and that her delegation hoped that, with the co-operation of Governments, it could concentrate on addressing the pending problems, for which it could count on Canada's support.

4. The new High Commissioner's first priority would undoubtedly be the troubled financial situation of UNHCR, in order to avoid its recurrence in 1990. To that end, Canada supported the short- and medium-term measures recommended by the Executive Committee and had already provided \$2 million over and above its planned contribution for 1989. Canada was confident that the Working Group formed at the request of the Executive Committee would thoroughly examine the content and the administration of UNHCR programmes and activities. Her delegation agreed that the donor base must be broadened to include other Governments, non-governmental organizations and private sources of funds.

5. Assistance to refugees, however, did not end with financial assistance. Besides being a major donor to UNHCR as well as to other agencies and non-governmental organizations, Canada resettled significant numbers of refugees under its humanitarian programmes and had become a country of first asylum, in addition to spending approximately \$200 million a year on the resettlement of refugees from abroad.

---

a/ See A/C.3/44/SR.44, para. 52.

(Ms. Armstrong, Canada)

6. Despite the efforts of donors, the UNHCR budget had risen faster than the contributions. Although the discrepancy could be attributed to an increase in the number of refugees requiring assistance, it was also due to the fact that the international community had continued to ask UNHCR to take on more and more responsibilities, which fell perhaps more properly within the competence of other agencies. Canada therefore welcomed the UNHCR Executive Committee resolution on sharing of responsibilities for operational activities relating to refugees with other agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund.

7. The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol were perhaps not perfect but they did form the basis of the international system of aid to refugees that UNHCR had created. In Canada's view, the essence of the UNHCR mandate was still to protect and assist refugees, and the renewed effort and good will of the international community were the means to achieve that and find lasting solutions to their problems.

8. Mrs. Sherman-Peters (Barbados) took the Chair.

9. Mr. ELIASSON (Sweden) observed that the legal protection of refugees was the basis of the work of UNHCR. His Government had already welcomed the accession by Hungary to the 1951 Convention and urged all States to do the same.

10. 1989 had seen positive instances of United Nations action in co-ordinating humanitarian assistance programmes, as in the case of the Namibian refugees. Sweden and the other Nordic countries had given substantial assistance to those refugees and were financing about 25 per cent of the costs of repatriation. Sweden also intended to support the future Government of Namibia in building up a new nation based on social justice and equality. However, it was crucial that the work of reintegrating and rehabilitating the Namibian refugees should be funded by the international community.

11. UNHCR must have the support of the international community for activities such as its programme for Mozambique, whose people had undergone untold suffering as a result of the policies of the apartheid régime, or its follow-up activities to the International Conference on Central American Refugees, its implementation of the Comprehensive Plan of Action adopted at the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees and its efforts towards the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees. Sweden had already made an additional contribution of \$2 million for the UNHCR programme for Mozambique and another contribution towards the follow-up activities to the Conference on Central American Refugees. It had also undertaken to receive some 400 Vietnamese refugees during the current year.

12. Sweden believed that the countries of asylum had a special responsibility to ensure the welfare and safety of refugee women and commended the work UNHCR had done in that area, as well as its work with refugee children. His Government would support all further efforts by UNHCR, other United Nations organs and non-governmental organizations in that respect.

/...

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

13. Sweden had noted with concern the increasing numbers of asylum-seekers who were not refugees or who already had protection in another country. He therefore believed that it was necessary to develop a new, more open and realistic approach in dealing with such problems, since the current tools did not provide an appropriate solution.

14. The financial crisis was the major problem facing UNHCR. His Government's primary concern was that the needs of refugees should be met in the most efficient and humanitarian way possible, and that the concept of burden-sharing should be kept in mind. Sweden had supported the Executive Committee's decision to establish a Working Group to examine the issues relevant to the effective use of funds and administration of programmes and projects, a pre-condition for obtaining additional contributions from donors.

15. In the long run, the link between refugee aid and development should be emphasized. His delegation welcomed the continued efforts of the High Commissioner to strengthen co-operation with the World Bank, UNDP, the World Food Programme and other development organizations. Countries should also demonstrate their acceptance of that link through practical actions, for instance by accepting the official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of GNP.

16. Mr. AZAMBUJA (Brazil) said that, despite the developments which had marked the international scene, the numbers of refugees who crossed frontiers in search of protection continued to increase. It could be foreseen that, in future decades, migratory pressures would rank among the serious global issues which would exert influence on international relations. Brazil was concerned at the general perception that uncontrolled migratory movements contributed to tension in many parts of the world. Furthermore, it should be noted that refugees imposed an increasingly heavy burden on developing countries, which already had limited resources. As a member of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Brazil was aware of those developments and reiterated its full support for the role of UNHCR.

17. His delegation felt that the highest priority of UNHCR was the protection of and assistance to refugees, with a view to their voluntary repatriation, but that such a task was almost impossible. It was understandable that attempts should be made to avoid excessive expenditure and to rationalize methods in order to control the flow of resources; however, it was imperative to remember that what was involved was not only figures, but human beings, most of them women and children.

18. Brazil had joined the consensus on the report of the Executive Committee, and supported its conclusions and decisions, including the establishment of an open-ended Working Group to examine the effective use of funds and administration of programmes and projects. It had also supported the holding of an extraordinary session of the Executive Committee in May or June 1990 to address the issues considered by the Working Group.

(Mr. Azambuja, Brazil)

19. Brazil had taken part in the International Conference on Central American Refugees, held at Guatemala City in March 1989, and had joined the consensus on the adoption of the Declaration and Concerted Plan of Action in favour of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Central Americans. That Conference represented an indispensable step towards lasting peace in the region. Brazil welcomed the work already begun for the implementation of the Plan of Action, and had taken note of the report on the first preparatory meeting of the International Follow-up Committee of the Plan of Action, held in September 1989. Brazil also welcomed the proposal to hold the first meeting of the Follow-up Committee in March 1990. The Concerted Plan of Action was an important attempt to link refugee aid and development, through a new understanding of refugee policies and of how to arrive at durable solutions. That approach would equally benefit refugees and local populations crucially affected by the presence of refugees. Furthermore, it would enable refugees to actively participate in the reconstruction and development of Central America. The international community should provide sufficient technical and financial resources to implement the Concerted Plan of Action.

20. Brazil was following with interest the situation of refugees on the African continent. He again expressed concern over the increase in the number of refugees in the region during the previous year. However, some positive developments should also be mentioned, such as the repatriation of more than 41,000 Namibian refugees, who had finally been able to return to their homes. His delegation had closely followed the political and diplomatic developments in Namibia and firmly supported the role of UNHCR in the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

21. There were currently some 13 million refugees in the world. That figure underlined the tragic reality of the refugee problem and the magnitude of the task facing the international community. All necessary actions must be taken in order to resolve the refugee problem in a satisfactory manner.

22. Mr. DING Yuanhong (China) said that the hopes expressed at the previous session of the General Assembly with regard to a possible improvement in the world refugee situation had not materialized. In fact, the refugee situation had worsened, and the number of refugees, instead of decreasing, had risen to 14 million. At the same time, UNHCR had encountered serious financial difficulties, with its deficit forecast rising to \$40 million by the end of 1989. Accordingly, UNHCR had been forced to cut some aid programmes already committed, thus affecting refugee-assistance operations. At the fortieth session of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the High Commissioner, there had been a thorough discussion of ways to prevent the further deterioration of the refugee situation and to resolve the financial crisis confronting UNHCR. The Executive Committee had decided to establish two working groups to study ways of promoting the protection of refugees and to evaluate UNHCR assistance programmes. UNHCR must reduce unnecessary expenditures and expand financial resources. In addition, the international community should increase its contributions to UNHCR.

23. Over the past decade, the international community had made enormous efforts to resolve the refugee problem. UNHCR spent an average of \$400 million to

/...

(Mr. Ding Yuanhong, China)

\$500 million every year on refugee assistance. However, the problem had continued to worsen. At the fortieth session of the Executive Committee, many countries had emphasized the need to eliminate the causes of refugee flows, which were of a political, economic and social nature. Indeed, colonialism, racism and foreign aggression and occupation remained the principal cause of refugee problems. However, there were also other causes, such as unevenness in economic development, the huge disparity between the rich and poor countries and conflicts between States. Therefore, the international community must focus not only on providing assistance and protection to refugees, but also on eliminating racism, colonialism and aggression against other States and ensuring the observance of the principles of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, equality and peaceful coexistence of States. Human rights, including the right of peoples to self-determination, must also be respected.

24. Moreover, the progress achieved in 1989 on the refugee problem should not be forgotten. Tens of thousands of Namibian refugees had been able to return to their homes. Over 200,000 refugees in other areas of Africa and in Central America had also been repatriated. One hundred and ten thousand refugees had been able to settle in third countries. The International Conference on Central American Refugees and the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees had also been welcome developments which would make it possible to achieve progress in solving the problem. The International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees had formulated a Comprehensive Plan of Action providing for the adoption of very constructive measures for Indo-Chinese refugees. Viet Nam, the country of origin of most Indo-Chinese refugees, had undertaken to adopt measures to reduce and even halt the illegal exodus of Vietnamese nationals and to agree to the return of its nationals who had been determined to be non-refugees. Only when Viet Nam discharged its obligations could there be a gradual solution to the problem of Indo-Chinese refugees.

25. The majority of the world's refugees were in the developing countries. China had agreed to resettle around 300,000 refugees, which was why it fully understood the difficult situation experienced by other resettlement countries. The development assistance for refugees not only helped to improve their lot, but also enabled them to get on their feet sooner, thus eliminating a part of the burden that the countries of asylum had to bear. The financial difficulties facing UNHCR should not make development assistance for refugees play a secondary role. China was in favour of the General Assembly's examining the participation of the relevant United Nations development agencies in development aid to refugees. His Government reiterated its commitment to help as far as possible, to achieve a final solution to the refugee problem in co-operation with the international community and UNHCR.

26. Ms. POC (Democratic Kampuchea) said that her delegation had noted with keen interest the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in document A/44/12 and, particularly, chapter III on assistance activities. It shared the High Commissioner's view that the primary objective of the Office's activities was to achieve durable solutions. On various occasions, the Government

/...

(Ms. Poc, Democratic Kampuchea)

of Cambodia had stated its view that the solution of the refugee problem required the adoption of a two-pronged approach: the provision of protection and humanitarian assistance and the elimination of the root causes of the problem.

27. The armed invasion and continuing occupation of Cambodia by foreign forces for nearly 11 years had led around 1 million Cambodians to seek refuge abroad, one quarter of whom had taken refuge in Thailand. The Government and people of Cambodia wished to express their appreciation to Thailand and the other countries of asylum for the generous help that they had given to the Cambodian refugees. They also wished to express their gratitude to UNHCR and to other international organizations, within and outside the United Nations system, and to the donor countries for their humanitarian work and assistance to Cambodian refugees.

28. In the case of Cambodian refugees in particular, emphasis should be placed on the urgent necessity to remove the root cause of the problem, which was the invasion and continuing occupation of Cambodia by foreign forces. There would be no durable solution to the Cambodian refugee problem in the absence of a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodian problem based on the five-point peace plan proposed by Cambodia. Viet Nam continued to reject that plan, while claiming that it had withdrawn all its forces from Cambodia by 26 September. However, the actual situation in Cambodia proved the contrary. The Government of Cambodia reiterated that several tens of thousands of armed Vietnamese and 1 million Vietnamese settlers remained in the country. The presence of Vietnamese settlers in Cambodia had had very adverse consequences for the Cambodian people. That settlement was unlawful and violated the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The Vietnamese settlers in Cambodia had expelled the Cambodians from their lands and homes, which was one of the main reasons for the refugee outflows from the country. Those Vietnamese settlers had been sent to Cambodia as part of a policy to "Vietnamize" that country. They were organized into armed groups which had assisted the invading forces of Viet Nam in occupying Cambodia and defending the puppet régime of Phnom Penh against the Cambodian National Resistance forces. The puppet régime had given them Cambodian citizenship, enabling them to participate in any election. Those settlers could in no way be considered refugees; rather, they were part and parcel of the occupying forces and must withdraw together with other categories of forces occupying Cambodia.

29. The legitimate Government of Cambodia was prepared to resolve the question of the Vietnamese settlers in Cambodia as part of a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodian problem. At the recent Paris Conference on Cambodia, Viet Nam had rejected any measure to repatriate, under United Nations supervision, the Vietnamese settlers in Cambodia and had even denied their existence. It was not possible to repatriate Cambodian refugees when their lands, farms and villages were still occupied by Vietnamese settlers. The voluntary repatriation and reintegration of Cambodian refugees would only be possible when all Vietnamese forces, including the Vietnamese settlers in Cambodia, were withdrawn from the country under the comprehensive political settlement.

/...

(Ms. Poc. Democratic Kampuchea)

30. While her delegation appreciated the Office's efforts to help the Cambodian people, it regretted to note that UNHCR had signed an aide-mémoire with the illegal Phnom Penh régime outlining conditions and procedures for voluntary repatriation of refugees to Cambodia. That would only encourage Viet Nam to maintain its inflexible stand on the so-called "problem of Kampuchea". It was doubtful that the Cambodian refugees who returned to a Cambodia still occupied by Viet Nam could do so in safety and with dignity. The Government of Democratic Kampuchea reiterated that the successive resolutions on Kampuchea adopted by the United Nations, including resolution 44/22 recently adopted by the General Assembly, emphasized that it was the inalienable right of the Kampuchean people who had sought refuge in neighbouring countries to return safely to their homeland and that no effective solution to the humanitarian problems could be achieved without a comprehensive political settlement of the Kampuchean conflict. Her delegation was confident that countries committed to peace and justice would continue to exert pressure on Viet Nam so that it accepted a comprehensive, just and durable political settlement enabling the Cambodian refugees to return home in safety and with dignity.

31. Mr. SZELEI (Hungary) said that despite favourable developments in international relations in recent years, the flight of refugees had intensified in many parts of the world. To meet that challenge, the United Nations must call for greater international co-operation and search for lasting solutions. In that context, his delegation welcomed the outcome of the three international conferences on refugees held recently.

32. In reviewing its human rights policies, and wishing to engage in international co-operation to solve the problems of refugees, Hungary had acceded to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and to the 1967 Protocol. That indicated Hungary's willingness to participate in the international protection of refugees and to apply the provisions of those instruments to the tens of thousands of people seeking refuge in its territory. Moreover, his Government had undertaken a major effort in bringing its laws into line with Hungary's recently assumed international obligations. Hungary had enacted a new law on the granting of refugee status, with the possibility of appeal to a court. Under that new law, refugees were entitled to enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms, except those that derived exclusively from Hungarian citizenship.

33. Currently, Hungary was facing a new phenomenon: in the past few months approximately 28,000 refugees from Romania had crossed its borders, and their number continued to grow. He wished to state that Hungary had not encouraged the flow of refugees, nor was it able to handle the problem without serious difficulties. No effort would be spared, however, to assist those who had fled their country in despair. Therefore, international assistance would be required to provide for their needs.

34. Regarding international assistance, his delegation reported that in early October two agreements had been signed between Hungary and UNHCR. The first dealt with the settlement of refugees in Hungary, and several countries had made contributions to the implementation of that programme, which included the

(Mr. Szalai, Hungary)

establishment of three refugee reception centres. The second agreement had opened the way for the establishment of a UNHCR branch office in Budapest. Hungary was ready to extend full co-operation to the Representative of UNHCR in the performance of his humanitarian task.

35. Hungary's position on the refugee problem could be summarized in the following manner: people should live in their native land, and their living conditions and fundamental human rights, should be guaranteed by the State concerned, as was the case in democratic societies all over the world. If human rights violations occurred despite the existence of democratic institutions, they should be dealt with and rectified by due process of law.

36. The flow of refugees always constituted a warning to the international community. Unfortunately, at the present time there were too many of those warnings. The Government of Hungary was ready to co-operate with the United Nations, and particularly with UNHCR, in the search for long-term solutions to the refugee problem.

37. Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand) said that his delegation attached great importance to agenda item 110 because, since 1975, Thailand had provided temporary refuge and humanitarian assistance to nearly a million displaced persons and Indo-Chinese refugees, of whom some 400,000 were still in his country.

38. Substantial international efforts had been undertaken to alleviate the plight of refugees in many parts of the world. In southern Africa, progress had been made towards the implementation of the Oslo Plan of Action. The Declaration and Concerted Plan of Action adopted at the International Conference on Central American Refugees could prove a major step towards the restoration of peace in that region. In south-western Asia, progress had been made in preparing for the voluntary repatriation of millions of Afghan refugees.

39. In South-East Asia, the Declaration and Comprehensive Plan of Action adopted by consensus during the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees had given new impetus to international co-operation for the achievement of a lasting solution to that problem. It was important to emphasize that all the measures provided for under the Plan were interrelated and mutually reinforcing. To be effective, they must be implemented in their totality. All the countries concerned should make a concerted effort to ensure the full implementation of the Plan. In that connection, his delegation was pleased to note that the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic had participated in the Conference.

40. Among the activities undertaken by the Government of Thailand to implement the Comprehensive Plan of Action, the Vietnamese "boat people" arriving in the country before the cut-off date had been moved to a processing centre, and procedures had been established for the screening of refugees who arrived after that date. Those found to be ineligible for refugee status would be held in separate areas pending their eventual return to Viet Nam. His Government believed that those arrangements

/...

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

would provide the proper protection for the bona fide refugees as well as those not considered refugees.

41. His delegation was concerned about the continuation of clandestine departures from Viet Nam, as they had often resulted in fatalities for the "boat people". It was therefore imperative that humane measures should be implemented to deter such departures. Another area of concern was the repatriation of those who failed to qualify as refugees and who could not remain in the country of first refuge indefinitely. Until the necessary measures were adopted, the establishment of a regional holding centre could be useful as a temporary solution to that problem.

42. There were approximately 76,000 Laotian refugees currently in Thailand. In November 1988, the Prime Minister of Thailand and the Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic had signed a joint communiqué. Substantial progress on the question of Laotian refugees had been made since then, with about 300 Laotians voluntarily returning to their country each month. The co-operation of UNHCR and the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic had been very helpful in that respect.

43. There were currently some 350,000 displaced Kampucheans seeking temporary refuge in Thailand, and international assistance was required to supply their needs. The role of the United Nations Border Relief Operation (UNBRO) would remain vital. Mass repatriation of the displaced persons should take place only after achieving a comprehensive political settlement of the Kampuchean problem. In the mean time, his Government, in co-operation with UNBRO and other related agencies, had formulated a training programme for the displaced Kampucheans. International financial support for that important undertaking would be most helpful.

44. The problem of refugees was a truly international one, and the burden must be shared. His Government would continue to do its best, and expressed its appreciation of the support and assistance given by the international community to refugee relief operations, especially in Thailand.

45. Mr. KAUPPILA (Finland) said that, although the trend towards stabilization in the overall number of refugees in the world continued, his Government remained concerned at the increasing complexity and magnitude of the problem, which called for durable solutions and preventive measures.

46. There had been positive developments in the search for durable solutions, particularly the return of more than 42,000 Namibians to their home country on the eve of Namibia's independence. With other Nordic countries, Finland had financed around 25 per cent of the costs of the repatriation. Namibia could count on continuing support from Finland, as in the future the Namibian people would be among the main recipients of Finland's development assistance.

47. Mention should also be made of the two international conferences organized under the auspices of UNHCR. As regards the Indo-Chinese refugees, Finland, as part of the Nordic quota, had pledged to receive 600 refugees during three years;

/...

(Mr. Kauppila, Finland)

more than half that number had been received during the first year. Regarding the Central American refugees, the Government of Finland had decided to contribute to programmes in the area with the aim of facilitating the efforts of the Governments concerned to promote the human rights of the refugees and thereby create a favourable atmosphere for the peace process.

48. In the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/44/12) the international protection of refugees was stressed as the primary function of UNHCR, and his delegation fully endorsed that position. To carry out its mandate, UNHCR was dependent on the co-operation of Governments, which should not only fulfil the obligations they had undertaken in the international instruments relating to human rights, but should also be concerned with legal protection for refugees, adopt preventive measures and create favourable conditions to enable refugees to return to their homes.

49. His delegation welcomed the fact that 107 countries had become parties to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees or the 1967 Protocol. He particularly welcomed the steps taken by Hungary, and said that the Government of Finland had recently announced a further contribution to the UNHCR assistance programme in Hungary, thus increasing its total pledge to the programme to more than \$1 million.

50. His delegation had followed with interest the discussions on refugee aid and development which had taken place during the fortieth session of the Executive Committee. In that context, he would urge UNHCR to play a catalytic role in putting theory into practice, and to strengthen co-operation with other agencies. Finland had participated actively in the implementation of many refugee programmes through contributions to the project planning account and other relevant programmes.

51. The financial situation of UNHCR was of serious concern to his Government. There was a pressing need to streamline the administration of the Office and to reorientate its work towards activities in the field so as to ensure full respect for the human rights of refugees, and particularly of women and children. In order to assist UNHCR, his Government had increased its financial contributions to the point that it had become one of the largest donors, at least in per capita terms. Over the past few years the growth in funds made available to UNHCR had been about 30 per cent per annum. Finland had contributed 36 million markkaa in 1989, and an additional 37.5 million markkaa for specific projects. In 1989 Finland's total contribution to UNHCR had exceeded \$17 million.

52. Besides its financial support, the Government of Finland would continue to co-operate with UNHCR in providing resettlement places to refugees, and during the current year had considerably increased its quota. To date, the majority of refugees had come from camps in Indo-China, but measures were being taken to receive refugees from other countries. In conclusion, the Government of Finland assured the Committee that it would continue its support for UNHCR in the future.

/...

53. Miss FUNDAFUNDA (Zambia) said that the international community should approach the problem of providing protection for refugees and asylum-seekers in a spirit of solidarity and burden-sharing. It was therefore important for refugee and development activities to be linked. After stressing the central role of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, she said that the international community should increase its support for that Office. The financial crisis confronting UNHCR could have a negative impact on the ability of the Agency to fulfil its mandate. Zambia hoped that more countries would contribute or would increase their contributions to UNHCR, and it wished to thank donor countries for their generous support. Her delegation was hopeful that the working group established by the Executive Committee would help to strengthen the financial capacity and operational activities of the Office.

54. The search for solutions to refugee problems could not be entirely divorced from the situations that gave rise to refugee flows. In Africa, the problem of apartheid continued to be the cause of flows of refugees and displaced persons, particularly in Mozambique, where South Africa was pursuing its murderous campaign through RENAMO. Only the eradication of apartheid would put a final end to the problem. In that connection, her delegation reiterated that the only way to force South Africa to eliminate apartheid was through the imposition of comprehensive and mandatory sanctions. Similarly, the only effective means of eliminating the refugee problem in the Middle East lay in guaranteeing to the Palestinian people the exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination and independence.

55. With reference to 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, she expressed confidence that the momentum generated by those initiatives would be maintained and that practical action by the international community on behalf of the refugees would result.

56. With regard to the situation in Africa, UNHCR and other agencies of the United Nations system, in collaboration with donor countries and the Governments of the region, had adopted a number of initiatives to implement the provisions of the Oslo Declaration and Plan of Action. Zambia was grateful to all countries which had supported and continued to support refugee-related projects that were being implemented in its territory, and reaffirmed its intention of continuing to maintain a positive policy in that respect. Until recently a substantial proportion of the refugees in Zambia had consisted of thousands of Namibian refugees, most of whom had since returned home under the terms of Security Council resolution 435 (1978). Zambia urged that efforts should be intensified to secure additional funding in the amount of \$5.6 million to complete the Namibian repatriation operation. It also welcomed the plans for an emergency management training course in southern Africa, to be organized by UNHCR in early 1990.

57. With regard to displaced persons, her delegation had noted that the Secretary-General had not considered it necessary to establish a special mechanism to cater for displaced persons and had preferred to designate one of his senior officials to co-ordinate assistance to a given country or group of countries. In

(Miss Fundafunda...Zambia)

the case of Africa, that responsibility had been assigned to the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions, Regional Co-operation, Decolonization and Trusteeship. It was important to provide that Office with adequate resources in terms of funding and staff to enable it to carry out its mandate effectively and in a timely manner.

58. Mr. BARKER (Australia) said that the volume of work for UNHCR had increased substantially since 1988, entailing a considerable increase in UNHCR expenditure, which had outstripped its income. The 1989 budget for General Programmes was likely to show a deficit of \$60 million. The Executive Committee had already developed a package of measures designed to absorb the 1989 shortfall and to restore financial equilibrium by the end of 1990. Australia fully supported the implementation of those measures and welcomed the efforts by UNHCR to widen its donor base by including non-traditional government sources and the private sector.

59. As the world sought to cope with a new situation, it was important to maintain the distinction between refugees, as defined by the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, and persons wishing to migrate in order to seek better opportunities elsewhere. To ensure that refugees were accorded full and proper protection, it was necessary to accept that those who were not refugees were not entitled to the same privileges.

60. With regard to voluntary repatriation and the need to address the causes of refugee flows, he was pleased by the Executive Committee's conclusions on durable solutions and reiterated his country's support for the Committee's efforts to establish a clearer definition of the relationship between refugee aid and development. UNHCR must continue to play a catalytic role in that area - both in identifying, preparing and formulating appropriate projects and in mobilizing resources. At the same time, the Office should not seek to become a development agency.

61. Among the accomplishments of 1989 were the holding of the International Conference on Central American Refugees, plans for the repatriation of Namibians, and other similar large-scale repatriation efforts. His delegation attached particular importance to the agreement reached in Geneva in June 1989 on a set of measures designed to resolve the problems related to the outflow of Indo-Chinese refugees and asylum-seekers. The Comprehensive Plan of Action adopted on that occasion represented an innovative approach which held the prospect of a successful solution to a long-standing international problem. Australia, which had already adopted relevant measures, called upon all interested countries to ensure a balanced and timely implementation of the Comprehensive Plan of Action.

62. Resettlement was only one of the possible solutions for refugee problems and, as such, it involved the breaking of ties with family and homeland. Nevertheless, Australia supported such operations in cases where no other feasible alternative was available and in its annual immigration programme had provided 14,000 places for the resettlement of refugees and the accommodation of humanitarian cases. It had also provided long-term assistance for refugees and displaced persons,

(Mr. Barker, Australia)

including Afghan refugees in Pakistan, the displaced population in Mozambique, refugees in Malawi, Irian Jayan refugees in Papua New Guinea, and Indo-Chinese refugees seeking asylum in South-East Asia. Lastly, his country would continue to offer financial support to UNHCR and, in an effort to assist the Office in dealing with its cash-flow difficulties, had brought forward 40 per cent of its 1990 annual contribution to June 1989.

63. Mr. OLUSOLA (Nigeria) said that his delegation saluted the efforts of UNHCR in repatriating close to 40,000 Namibians, which had contributed in a significant fashion to furthering the Namibian independence process.

64. UNHCR was currently undergoing the most critical crisis in its history. Some had defined it as a crisis of multilateralism and others as a financial crisis; but fundamentally it appeared to be a political crisis engineered by the most financially powerful member States of UNHCR. Beyond disagreements about the management and control of the Office's budget were more profound differences in the perceptions of its role and capabilities. His delegation was rather disturbed by recent events at UNHCR headquarters in Geneva, in particular the resignation of the High Commissioner, Mr. Jean Pierre Hocke, in response to pressures from the richer donor countries, and the establishment of a Working Group to assist the High Commissioner in his day-to-day administration at headquarters. Those events had created a situation of uncertainty which affected all refugees, particularly the approximately 6 million African refugees. The countries of Africa had to get involved in the efforts of the working group of the Executive Committee of the Programme. There was also a need to appoint an executive officer at a high level in the UNHCR office in the region, as Second Deputy High Commissioner, if such a post existed in the new structure, or as Special Adviser on African refugees.

65. While it realized the important role played by traditional African hospitality in compensating for the serious weaknesses in the international community's efforts to assist African refugees, his delegation was firmly opposed to any attacks directed at multilateral institutions such as UNHCR. Another negative development was the continuing reduction in the volume of assistance to African refugee programmes. In 1988, Africa had received 45 per cent of the total UNHCR budget, while in 1989 its share had been reduced to 37 per cent, even though the number of refugees continued to increase. New budgetary reductions were expected for 1990. Furthermore, although the UNHCR 1989 global budget had increased by 10 per cent over that for the previous year, the portion of that budget allotted to African refugees had been reduced by 9 per cent compared with 1988. The situation of African countries was of particular concern because of the serious economic difficulties with which they were faced and the persistence of the apartheid régime in South Africa.

66. Although it was not a country from which refugees came, Nigeria had always played a leading role in solving African refugee problems. At the Oslo International Conference on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa, his Government had pledged a substantial contribution with a view to promoting the welfare of African refugees.

/...

(Mr. Olusola, Nigeria)

67. Refugees in Africa and world wide would lose a great deal if the UNHCR mandate was restricted to the protection of refugee rights. The most urgent problems facing refugees around the world were those involving such material needs as education and welfare, which were fundamental for the future of refugee children. Fulfilment of such needs was included in the current mandate of the Office.

68. Finally, he wished to express his appreciation to all the countries and non-governmental organizations that had provided assistance to the Office by their generous contributions and to highlight the necessity for the international community to take immediate steps to resolve the serious refugee situation, in particular in the African countries.

69. Mr. TANASE (Romania), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, rejected categorically the statement by the delegation of Hungary concerning the refugee situation in his country. The reasons underlying such behaviour were not clear. If Hungary was in need of international economic assistance, it should not resort to such strategies, which were inadmissible from a political, legal or moral standpoint. His country had always sought to maintain friendly relations with Hungary, but that country was apparently not responding in the same fashion.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.