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Summary record of the 704th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 3 October 2017, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. McCarney..... (Canada)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

General debate (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Keita** (Guinea) said that his country associated itself with the statement made by Togo on behalf of the Group of African States. The opening of the session coincided with the fifty-ninth anniversary of Guinean independence, and he recalled the role that his country had played in the liberation of former African colonies and the hosting of thousands of refugees and asylum seekers, 5,000 of whom — mostly from Côte d'Ivoire — still lived in his country. In that connection, cuts to the Programme's budget in Guinea had had a negative impact on migrants' living standards and the announcement that the UNHCR office in Guinea was to close was a cause for concern. Highlighting the international community's impotence in the face of the current challenges, he asked leaders to coordinate their efforts and resources to develop a global strategy to promote peace, justice and prosperity for all.

2. **Mr. Manicom** (Canada) said that his Government was working to honour the commitments made in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, notably those relating to women and children. Though women represented more than half of the global refugee population, they had access to fewer opportunities and resources than men and boys and were less well protected. Canada was committed to correcting that imbalance as part of its Feminist International Assistance Policy and called on UNHCR to do the same. The comprehensive refugee response framework had a key role to play in demonstrating that improved integration of refugees into host societies would benefit refugees themselves, their host countries and their countries of origin. Measures might include, for example, integrating refugees into the school system in host countries, thus giving them access to safe, quality education and the opportunity to make a positive contribution to society. In addition, implementation of the framework required expanding access to resettlement in a third country, as Canada was doing under the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative. In that regard, the participation of the private sector, universities and professional associations should be encouraged. With respect to the global compact on refugees, Canada was circulating a discussion paper with its comments and recommendations on the subject.

3. **Mr. Felten** (Germany) said that, as a member of the #IBelong campaign to end statelessness, his country aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. Stressing that, since the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, the refugee population had increased by 1 million and that 60 per cent of refugees continued to be hosted by no more than 10 countries, he said that Germany recognized the considerable efforts being made to address the crises around the world and believed that the global compact would provide the basis for responsibility sharing. He noted with concern that humanitarian aid would remain badly underfunded in 2018; Germany itself was the second biggest bilateral donor to UNHCR and had been one of the first countries to directly support the launch of the comprehensive refugee response framework. As the eighth largest host country, providing protection to 1 million refugees and their families, Germany encouraged other States to find solutions to address the problem of irregular migration. Germany also called for the greater involvement of development actors and a more effective humanitarian response. He congratulated UNHCR on its contribution to the Grand Bargain on humanitarian financing, its participation in his country's pilot project on simplified and harmonized reporting models and its efforts to promote inclusive humanitarian assistance. Lastly, greater attention should be paid to internally displaced persons; Germany would continue to cooperate with UNHCR in that regard.

4. **Ms. Agnèketom Bogoré** (Observer for Burkina Faso) said that her country endorsed the statement made by Togo on behalf of the Group of African States. Some 65 million people were displaced around the world; Burkina Faso itself hosted 35,000 refugees, most of them in camps such as those at Mentaou and Goudoubou in the Sahel region. The 1,350 refugee children in the camps attended school together with other children from the region. However, since 2016, the Sahel region had been a regular target for attacks and on 22 September 2017 the Mentaou camp had been directly targeted, resulting in a major displacement of indigenous groups. Burkina Faso had implemented a programme, at a cost of 475 billion CFA francs, to strengthen the resilience of peoples in the Sahel region and

sought the international community's help in securing the camps and protecting the refugees. As to statelessness, Burkina Faso had ratified the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and in 2017 had adopted a national action plan on statelessness for the period 2017-2020. Moreover, there were plans for campaigns to raise awareness of the problem and to improve birth registration.

5. **Ms. Kirillova** (Russian Federation) said that her Government remained committed to the implementation of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. The Russian Federation made a significant contribution to the strengthening of the international refugee protection regime and the resolving of migration issues, as evidenced by the substantial level of humanitarian assistance it provided to various countries in crisis. It was a reliable donor to UNHCR and one of the countries that hosted the largest number of foreigners, 75 per cent of them from the Commonwealth of Independent States. Migration control and regulation was a national priority. Since April 2014, 2.5 million Ukrainians had applied to regularize their status in the Russian Federation and 450,000 persons had applied for asylum. To date, 190,000 people had been granted asylum and more than 200,000 Ukrainians had been granted the right to remain in the country. Given its geographical distance from Syria, the Russian Federation did not host many Syrian refugees: a total of 1,300 Syrians had been granted asylum and, in 2017, 200 had filed asylum applications. As part of its continuing efforts, the Government was drafting a bill on asylum which would expedite the procedure and establish a temporary protection regime. Moreover, since 2013, Russian citizenship had been granted to 66,000 stateless persons.

6. **Ms. Geleva** (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that her Government aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. In 2015 and 2016, more than 800,000 refugees had transited Macedonia along the "Balkan route". That route had been closed after the 7 March 2016 summit between the European Union and Turkey, but the number of attempts at illegal entry had increased, with 2,216 migrants trying to cross the Greek border illegally between 1 January and 31 August 2017. During the same period, 8 cases of migrant smuggling, involving 90 migrants, had been recorded. In total, 54 migrants and asylum seekers were housed in various centres and in 2017 the authorities had received 91 asylum applications and granted international protection to 4 persons. Macedonia still hosted 404 persons subject to subsidiary protection who had fled the conflict in Kosovo. It had also adopted legislative measures, including, in 2017, the drafting of a Ministry of Labour and Social Policy bill on a new strategy for the integration of refugees and foreigners for the period 2017-2027, the adoption of the 3/6/9 reform plan to amend the law on asylum, and the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of the Interior and UNHCR.

7. **Ms. Borsboom** (Australia) said that her country was committed to working with partners in the Asia and Pacific region to ensure that the global compact on refugees provided for equitable sharing of responsibility. Australia was a global leader in refugee resettlement and planned to further increase the number of places available, from 16,250 in 2017 to 18,750 in 2018-2019. It had taken various steps to improve the situation of refugees around the world, notably by giving its support to the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, helping UNHCR to implement the comprehensive refugee response framework in Uganda and Ethiopia, and co-chairing the Bali Process. In addition, during the period 2017-2018 it had provided humanitarian assistance in the amount of 400 million Australian dollars (\$A), including an unearmarked contribution of \$A 25 million to UNHCR, and was committed to multi-year funding.

8. **Mr. Pérez** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that his country had received no financial assistance from any international agencies to assist with the burden of hosting some 5,000 Colombian refugees. Refugees living in Venezuela had access to free education, were provided with identity documents and were able to participate in local politics and stand for election to their local municipal council. For several years, his country had been the victim of an economic war waged by the United States. Outward migration flows to other countries in the subregion were the result of the inhumane unilateral coercive measures adopted by the Trump administration against Venezuela in the political, economic and financial spheres.

9. **Mr. Nur** (Somalia) said that, for almost three decades, there had been nearly 3 million displaced persons in Somalia, an estimated 2 million of them internally displaced persons, including 900,000 who had been forced to flee because of drought. Somalia had also witnessed increased internal migration to major urban centres, which had placed further pressure on access to services, a situation compounded by the arrival of other internally displaced persons fleeing conflict or food insecurity. In order to protect and assist the refugees, and to find durable solutions to meet their needs, Somalia had established the National Commission for Refugees and, with five other countries in the region, signed the Addis Ababa Commitment towards Somali Refugees. The number of Somali returnees had increased in recent years. With UNHCR assistance the Government had been able to repatriate more than 95,000 Somalis since 2014, mainly from Kenya. More than 35,000 Somali refugees had also been evacuated from Yemen and 120,000 had returned voluntarily to the country. Despite all the assistance that had been and continued to be provided to Somalia, much still remained to be done with regard to access to education, health and water. As one of the pilot countries for the comprehensive refugee response framework, Somalia was developing a national policy framework. The country still faced enormous challenges in meeting refugees' needs, and called upon development actors and multilateral donors to mobilize the necessary resources to promote durable solutions for the longer term for displaced Somalis and their host communities.

10. **Ms. Hassan-Sharp** (New Zealand) said that the mass exodus of Rohingya from Myanmar was a cause for concern; New Zealand strongly condemned the acts of violence perpetrated recently in Rakhine state. She urged the authorities to grant humanitarian workers immediate and unhindered access to the affected communities. Given the scale of the emergency, donors were encouraged to provide timely resources to ensure effective relief. New Zealand would continue to support the work of UNHCR with an annual unearmarked contribution of 6 million New Zealand dollars (\$NZ). It also reaffirmed its commitment to its long-standing refugee quota programme, and the Government had decided to increase the places available to 1,000 per year as from 1 July 2018. In 2016-2017, New Zealand had had the honour of chairing the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, and in that context had sought to highlight resettlement aspects of the New York Declaration. At the Consultations meeting in June 2017, participants had focused in particular on how the international community could improve the refugee resettlement and find alternatives to complement traditional resettlement programmes. Lastly, as a State located in a region facing an increased risk of displacement owing to climate change, New Zealand welcomed the organization of a side event on that subject, even though UNHCR was not specifically mandated to address such issues.

11. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) welcomed the efforts being made by States and their support for the work of UNHCR.

12. **Mr. Hassan** (Observer for Chad) said that for more than a decade his country had hosted a large number of refugees fleeing conflict in neighbouring countries, as well as Chadian nationals who had been displaced and then returned to the country in the wake of the conflicts in Libya, Central African Republic and north-western Nigeria. Dealing with former combatants from Boko Haram posed a real challenge because of the legal vacuum concerning their status. Humanitarian operations planned on an annual basis for refugees in Chad needed to be reviewed and planned on a multi-year basis in order to promote the sustainable socioeconomic integration of refugees. At a forum organized by the Government of Chad and UNHCR in N'Djamena in July 2017, several recommendations had been made to facilitate peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities. Given the length of time the refugees had been in Chad, the Government intended to adopt development policies that would facilitate their integration and make them development actors in their own right.

13. **Ms. De Bonheur** (Rwanda) said that her country hosted 169,000 refugees, most of whom had fled from the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and from Burundi. The majority of them lived in six camps, the largest of which accommodated over 55,000 Burundian refugees. Although most of the refugees living in Rwanda were dependent on humanitarian assistance, the Government of Rwanda ensured their participation in socioeconomic programmes, including in the areas of education, health and livelihood

activities. Having always kept its borders open to nationals of other African countries, Rwanda believed that the principle of non-refoulement was not an obligation, but a duty towards humanity. The Government had decided to grant all refugees identity cards and enable those living in urban areas to join the national health system. The Government of Rwanda not only provided assistance to persons who sought refuge on its territory but also ensured the return and reintegration of Rwandan refugees and facilitated the local integration of those opting to stay in their host countries. In October 2016 UNHCR had increased the funding allocated to Rwandan returnees, resulting in an increase in the number of persons seeking repatriation. By way of example, during the previous three months, more than 4,000 Rwandan refugees had returned home, as compared to the average 1,000 to 2,000 returnees per quarter. As a result of the measures taken, 3.5 million Rwandans who had sought refuge in different countries between 1994 and 2017 had returned to Rwanda. To facilitate the resettlement of Rwandan refugees who had established close ties in their host country, Rwanda had taken measures to ensure that they were issued with passports. Rwandan refugees affected by the cessation clauses in the 1951 Convention, i.e. those no longer in need of international protection, were required to indicate the country in which they wished to settle by 31 December 2017.

14. **Ms. Tsiane** (Observer for Botswana) said that her country associated itself with the statement made by Togo on behalf of the Group of African States. Botswana hosted some 3,500 refugees and asylum seekers. It hoped that UNHCR would increase the assistance it provided, in order to resolve the problem of the refugees from Namibia and Zimbabwe, since it appeared that conditions were right for their return to their countries of origin. It also hoped that a long-term solution could be found for the refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia, who constituted the third and fourth largest refugee populations in the country. The Government was committed to working in an open and constructive manner to ensure the implementation of the comprehensive refugee response framework. She welcomed the financial support that the World Bank planned to provide to host countries and regretted that UNHCR had decided to scale down its operations in Botswana, a move that could compromise the country's ability to meet the needs of refugees. Botswana continued to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of refugees. With regard to health, it intended to provide refugees with the same services as those available to nationals. The introduction of a biometric identity system had already enabled thousands of refugees to obtain identity cards. However, owing to a lack of financial resources, the authorities unfortunately had no machines to read biometric documents.

15. **Mr. Matangala** (Mozambique) said that his country endorsed the statement made by the representative of Togo on behalf of the Group of African States. It deplored the waves of forced displacements around the world and the shortage of resources. He encouraged the international community to combat xenophobia and intolerance and to assist countries in addressing large-scale mixed migration flows. The fact that many refugees were dying in the Mediterranean, the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea and the seas of South-East Asia reflected the magnitude of the current humanitarian crisis. Private sector contributions had been steadily increasing and played an important role in boosting the UNHCR budget.

16. **Mr. Zellweger** (Switzerland) expressed regret that the number of refugees and displaced persons continued to rise; that only a few managed to return to their own countries once the situation had stabilized; and that the average length of periods of forced displacement was not declining. The global compact on refugees, aimed at improving responsibility sharing, would require an increase in the protection and support provided to refugees and the countries that took them in. Switzerland would like to see the global compact highlight the principle of non-refoulement and the right of asylum, and guarantee protection for displaced persons, including internally displaced persons. He stressed the role of political will in that regard. It was regrettable that the issue of internally displaced persons was not properly addressed in discussions of mass movements of refugees and migrants.

17. **Mr. Hajnoczi** (Austria) said that his Government aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. Austria had significantly increased its humanitarian funding levels. For the current year, it had pledged more than US\$ 7 million to UNHCR operations in Jordan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia and Uganda. At the national level, Austria had

invested heavily in handling the large-scale flows of migrants and refugees who had arrived in 2015 and 2016 (more than 130,000 asylum seekers in total). In 2017, Austria was one of the European countries that had received the largest number of asylum seekers relative to its population. In addition to providing them with housing and basic care, the Government had also substantially increased spending on measures to promote their integration, including language and orientation courses. Since 2013, Austria had also been participating in resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes for Syrian refugees. To date, it had welcomed nearly 1,900 Syrians and granted them refugee status. UNHCR had asked 15 countries along the Central Mediterranean route for 40,000 resettlement places and Austria had attended the first meeting of those countries on 11 September. One of the root causes of displacement was the fact that the victims of conflicts were mostly civilians.

18. **Ms. Bard** (Sweden) said that Sweden aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. It commended the generosity and solidarity shown by UNHCR and recalled that, in a world with 66 million forcibly displaced persons, it was important to find common solutions. Sweden was concerned at the insufficient funding provided to UNHCR and, subject to parliamentary approval, intended to sign a four-year partnership agreement with UNHCR. For fiscal year 2018, also subject to parliamentary approval, the Government planned to increase unearmarked contributions to UNHCR to 870 million Swedish kronor, or around US\$ 105 million. Sweden expected UNHCR to give greater visibility to countries making unearmarked contributions and to prepare quality evaluations and reports. It would be following the work of UNHCR closely and welcomed the process of updating of the Minimum Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health and the Inter-Agency Field Manual for Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings.

19. **Ms. Almulaifi** (Observer for Kuwait) said that she deplored the fact that the delivery of humanitarian assistance was hampered by the attacks on residential areas, hospitals and clinics. She feared that the conflicts in Syria, Libya and Iraq would threaten the stability of the region and the security of its populations and lead to an increase in the number of migrants and asylum seekers, impede the ability of countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and jeopardize international peace. She deplored the impotence of the international community in the face of the Syrian crisis; conflicts of interest and the intransigence of certain parties meant that its efforts were fruitless. There was a need to improve the situation in Syria and that of the Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries. Kuwait had hosted three international conferences for donor countries for Syria and had also co-chaired the donor conference for Syria held in Brussels. Some US\$ 3.7 billion had been collected for the period 2018-2020 and around US\$ 6 billion for 2017. Kuwait had also launched health campaigns to eradicate polio in Syrian refugee camps. Moreover, the Emir was willing to host a donor conference for the reconstruction of the areas of Iraq liberated from Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in order to help that country rebuild and enable refugees to return home. Anxious to restore security in Yemen, Kuwait had been providing assistance to that country for decades. It had recently given Yemen over US\$ 100 million and also provided aid through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. It had also given financial support to the people of Yemen through NGOs, international organizations and United Nations agencies. Recently, Kuwait had also provided assistance to the Rohingya.

20. **Mr. Gonzalez-Aller Jurado** (Spain) said that his country supported the statement made by the European Union and reiterated its commitment to UNHCR. The Spanish Government was making efforts to increase its contribution to UNHCR, which had amounted to almost US\$ 11 million in 2016. Spanish society, too, held UNHCR in high regard and was its leading private donor. Spain had played an active part in various initiatives in 2016, including the World Humanitarian Summit, the launch of the Grand Bargain and the New York Declaration. Spain was seriously concerned at the plight of the refugees in the Mediterranean, Lebanon, Libya and the Sahel, and at the situations in the Northern Triangle of Central America and the Sahrawi refugee camps. Spain intended to be a constructive participant in the global compact on refugees and hoped that the comprehensive refugee response framework would make it possible to find solutions to the mass flows of refugees, particularly in Central America and Mexico, and in eastern Africa. In addition, Spain wished to highlight the joint project it had launched in the Eritrean

refugee camp in Shire in Ethiopia. Spain hoped to accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness in 2017.

21. **Ms. Raz Shechter** (Israel) said that, as one of the original members of the Executive Committee, her country believed that it was its duty to provide humanitarian assistance in disaster situations, including through the deployment of field hospitals and the dispatch of search and rescue crews, as it had done recently in Sierra Leone and Mexico. It was important to cater to refugees' and internally displaced persons' basic needs, including the need for water. Israel attached great importance to the comprehensive refugee response framework, as a precursor to a global compact on refugees.

22. **Mr. Jurkovič** (Holy See) said that, despite the commitments made by the international community in the New York Declaration, the global refugee regime continued to be challenged, *de jure* and *de facto*. The securing of borders and the well-being of refugees and asylum seekers should not be seen as a dichotomy but rather as mutually reinforcing. The current situation was not a crisis of numbers, but one of attitudes and values. Pope Francis had proposed a number of concrete measures to promote respect for the dignity of any person forced into exile: the strengthening of private and community sponsorship programmes; the opening of humanitarian corridors and granting of special temporary visas for particularly vulnerable refugees; respect for the inalienable right to a nationality at birth; respect for the unity of the family; a more limited use of detention and the identification of alternatives; and access to primary and secondary education for refugee children. Bearing in mind that the number of refugees and internally displaced persons had more than doubled over the past 10 years, it was important to put in place far-sighted solutions to serve not only refugees but also the citizens of their host countries.

23. **Mr. Pung** (Estonia) said that his country endorsed the statement made on behalf of the European Union and its member States. He reaffirmed Estonian commitment to the New York Declaration and the global compact on refugees, as well as to the implementation of the comprehensive refugee response framework. The magnitude of the refugee problem required joint solutions and the tackling of the root causes of displacement. Estonia wished to draw the international community's attention to the situation of refugees from Myanmar, and also those from Ukraine. It was not acceptable for United Nations agencies not to have full access to eastern Ukraine; the funding gap in respect of their operations in Ukraine was also a source of problems. Estonia commended UNHCR for its efforts to reduce costs and improve efficiency through technology and innovation. It urged the Office to continue to prioritize its interventions while developing greater transparency, and to continue the implementation of the Grand Bargain.

24. **Mr. Muylle** (Belgium) said that his country fully associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and commended UNHCR for the progress made towards a global compact on refugees and the comprehensive refugee response framework. In 2017, Belgium had devoted €170 million to humanitarian assistance, of which over €20 million had been contributed to UNHCR. Belgium tended to prioritize the Great Lakes Region (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda), the Syria-Iraq region (Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq) and famine-stricken African countries (Yemen, Nigeria and Somalia). Belgium wished to draw the international community's attention to the humanitarian situation in the Grand Kasai region in particular. Belgium advocated unearmarked funding, and attached great importance to matters relating to the governance of international organizations. It congratulated UNHCR on its 2016 audit and on the progress made in the implementation of the Grand Bargain. Belgium hoped that UNHCR would soon be able to implement the audit recommendations as well as the backlog of recommendations dating back to before 2015. It urged donors to increase their unearmarked multi-year contributions in order to cover the UNHCR funding requirements.

25. **Mr. Ahsan** (Bangladesh) said that developing countries continued to host the majority of the world's refugees and that it was important for the comprehensive refugee response framework to translate the principles of burden-sharing into practice and to give due consideration to protracted refugee situations. States must address the root causes of displacement, improve protection conditions and find long-term solutions to their situation. In respect of displacement linked to climate change and natural disasters, it would be worth taking account of the provisions of the Nansen Initiative in the two global compacts. It was

also important to strengthen the empowerment of refugees and displaced persons and ensure the socioeconomic development of host societies. Since 25 August 2017, half a million Rohingya had left Myanmar for Bangladesh, bringing the total number of Rohingya refugees in his country to over 900,000. For a developing country with limited resources such as Bangladesh, that influx represented an enormous challenge. Although Bangladesh was not a signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, it had kept its borders open and conducted a massive humanitarian relief operation, with the support of UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other organizations. It called upon the international community to provide prompt assistance to the persecuted population and find ways to enable them to return home. In that context, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, in her address to the United Nations General Assembly, had called for an unconditional, immediate and permanent cessation of violence and ethnic cleansing in Rakhine state, a fact-finding mission to be sent to Myanmar, protection of all civilians irrespective of religion or ethnicity, including through the creation of United Nations-supervised safe zones, the return of refugees in safety and dignity, and the immediate, unconditional and full implementation of the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State chaired by Kofi Annan.

26. **Mr. Podhorsky** (Slovakia) said that his country endorsed the statement by the European Union. He stressed the importance of addressing the root causes of displacement and of responding coherently to what was an unprecedented crisis. Conflict prevention was the best way to achieve that goal. Slovakia called for reform of the United Nations to make the Organization more efficient. His country cooperated in various ways with UNHCR, including by hosting on its territory one of the world's three emergency transit centres, which had already helped to resettle 1,000 refugees. The Government of the Slovak Republic wished to take the opportunity to invite the High Commissioner to visit the country.

27. **Mr. Al-Fadhli** (Observer for Iraq) said that, as a result of the conflict with Daesh, over 4.5 million Iraqis had been forced to leave their homes or their country. About 2.5 million people had been able to return home, but the clashes had left traces, and much remained to be done to get rid of mines and explosive remnants in order to enable the safe return of displaced populations. The conflict and the drop in oil prices had caused a serious deterioration in the economic situation. A committee had been formed to provide refugees with accommodation and identity papers and enrol their children in school, but the humanitarian situation remained difficult, especially with the approach of winter. Iraq hosted over 240,000 Syrian refugees, to whom it provided essential services. At the same time, it continued to wage a relentless war on Daesh while trying to spare as many civilian lives as possible. He called for the support of the international community.

28. **Mr. Grandi** (Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees) thanked Bangladesh for keeping its borders open and stressed the importance of the recommendations of the Kofi Annan commission in creating the conditions for refugees' return. He supported the long-term inclusion approaches put forward by Chad and commended Rwanda for its facilitation of the voluntary return of refugees. He thanked Botswana and Mozambique for their efforts for refugees and their support for the work of UNHCR. He stressed the relevance of the Swiss analysis of the problem of internally displaced persons. He thanked Austria for its increased support and its participation in the refugee resettlement programme, and hoped that the decrease in the numbers arriving in Europe would not bring a decline in support for refugees outside the continent. He also thanked Sweden and Belgium for their exemplary financial support and for their advice on governance. He took note of the invitation by Slovakia. Replying to Estonia, he said that UNHCR did in fact have access to Eastern Ukraine, but that a political solution to the crisis remained to be found. He thanked Spain, Israel and Kuwait for their financial and technical support. He commended Iraq for hosting Syrian refugees despite its own difficult situation. Lastly, he said that he agreed with the Holy See's analysis to the effect that the current crisis was not one of numbers but one of attitudes and values.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.