



# General Assembly

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## Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Sixty-ninth session

### Summary record of the 716th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 4 October 2018, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Dalil.....(Afghanistan)  
*later:* Mr. Muylle (Vice-Chair)..... (Belgium)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

**General debate** (*continued*)

1. **The Chair**, thanking the 135 delegations that had taken the floor during the general debate, said that she wished to recall the concerns expressed by the High Commissioner about the escalation of conflicts and intensification of crises caused by poverty, exclusion and the growing impact of climate change, and about the lack of political will to counter the voices of division that allowed discrimination, racism and xenophobia to flourish. She reaffirmed the hope that the global compact on refugees would be a rallying point for solidarity and a victory for multilateralism.

2. She then recalled the core strategic directions that guided the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), namely protecting, responding in emergencies and beyond, promoting inclusion and self-reliance, empowering the people that UNHCR served and pursuing solutions. Many delegations had expressed their support for the regionalization of the work of UNHCR, which was but one of the innovative and effective steps that it had taken. She also wished to stress the importance of non-earmarked and multi-year funding, which would place UNHCR in a stronger position to do everything expected of it.

3. Delegations had applauded the efforts of the 15 countries where the comprehensive refugee response framework was being rolled out and was transforming the manner in which they responded to refugees, including through regional approaches. The global compact on refugees represented a powerful step forward for international cooperation and solidarity, while the 2019 Global Refugee Forum would provide an important opportunity to make actual pledges, highlight key achievements and track progress against the objectives of the compact.

4. Despite the suffering and challenges, 2018 had been a year of some optimism. It was to be hoped that, in years to come, the commitments made in 2018 would yield positive outcomes for displaced persons. The expressions of solidarity made during the general debate should be translated into concrete actions, beginning with a strong endorsement of the compact at the seventy-third session of the General Assembly. In the words of Dr. Evan Atar Adaha, winner of the 2018 Nansen Refugee Award, “we are here to save lives, not to sit”.

*Statements in exercise of the right of reply*

5. **Mr. Mardaliyev** (Azerbaijan) said that Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced persons had been suffering rights violations for more than 25 years owing to the policy of aggression and occupation of Armenia against Azerbaijan, as well as the notorious practice of ethnic cleansing on a massive scale in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and in Armenia itself. Armenia must implement the Security Council resolutions of 1993. It was sufficient to consult the number of displaced persons in Armenia and Azerbaijan in the database of UNHCR in order to have a clear understanding of the situation on the ground.

6. Armenian refugees from Syria had been illegally settled in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, in flagrant violation of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, for the purpose of consolidating the annexation of Azerbaijani territories and preventing hundreds of thousands of forcibly displaced Azerbaijanis from returning to their homes.

7. With regard to the events of April 2016, the escalation in the conflict zone had been the consequence of Armenian forces having deliberately targeted Azerbaijani civilians, killing six people, including one child, and wounding 26 others. In order to defend the civilian population, Azerbaijan had taken measures to restore its sovereignty over certain territories in the occupied regions and to ensure the return of Azerbaijani displaced persons. The events in Sumqayit, which had taken place prior to the independence of Azerbaijan, had been masterminded by Armenian extremist organizations as a means of launching an extensive anti-Azerbaijani campaign to cover up the ethnic cleansing and mass expulsion of the indigenous Azerbaijani population from Armenia and to begin annexing the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

8. **Mr. Peña** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that more than 25 unilateral coercive measures had been imposed on his country by the Government of the United States of America and its allies since 9 March 2015. Only if the sanctions and blockade were lifted could Venezuela address the challenges facing it in the area of human mobility. An attempt was being made to paint a picture of a humanitarian crisis in order to justify all kinds of interference. Mean-spirited external actors were trying to appropriate the country's natural resources in order to pave the way for an unlawful foreign military invasion against the homeland of Simón Bolívar and Hugo Chávez.

9. Despite the region having to confront a common enemy intent on dividing its constituent countries, Venezuela was convinced that the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean would be able to strengthen the integration mechanisms created at the initiative of leaders such as Fidel Castro, Hugo Chávez, Lula da Silva, Rafael Correa, Tabaré Vázquez, Néstor Kirchner, Evo Morales and Manuel Zelaya.

10. Venezuela would simply not be able to address the challenges that it faced without cooperation, non-domination, solidarity and non-intervention in its internal affairs. It demanded respect for both its sovereignty and self-determination. Millions of dollars were being invested in the "Return to the homeland" plan (Plan Vuelta a la Patria) developed by President Maduro. However, the billions of dollars frozen in Western bank accounts must be released to allow Venezuelan citizens to return home.

11. **Mr. Kārklīnš** (Latvia) said that his country was currently home to 178 stateless persons, who represented less than 0.01 per cent of the total population, and that it rigorously complied with its international obligations under the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, to which it was a State party. Latvia had taken measures to avoid a situation of mass statelessness upon regaining its independence in 1991 after the fall of the Soviet Union. Referring to the 2016 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook, he said that "non-citizens" had the right to reside in Latvia *ex lege* and that they enjoyed rights beyond those prescribed by the 1954 Convention. The number of non-citizens had decreased from 750,000 to 230,000 over the past 20 years. Although the Government of Latvia has taken steps to facilitate the naturalization process, that did not mean it was pursuing a policy of forced naturalization.

12. **Ms. Kazakova** (Russian Federation) said that she felt compelled to respond to Ukraine and Latvia following the highly politicized statements made by those delegations imputing to the Russian Federation the situations in their respective countries, despite it having taken in more than 1 million Ukrainians, granted asylum to more than 460,000, granted Russian nationality to more than 300,000 and allocated a share of its voluntary contributions to the activities of UNHCR in Ukraine. With regard to refugees and displaced persons in Ukraine, the crisis could only be resolved through a ceasefire and a political settlement of the issue of South-East Ukraine on the basis of the Minsk agreements.

13. **Mr. Pakhil** (Observer for Ukraine) said that his delegation fully rejected the false allegations made by the Russian Federation on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine and on the nature of the crisis. There was abundant evidence of the Russian invasion of South-East Ukraine, not only from Ukraine, but also from reliable sources of information such as explicit satellite imagery from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In those conditions, the Government of Ukraine was doing everything possible to address issues related to assistance and protection for internally displaced persons. Ukraine urged Russia to take immediate steps to halt actions which brought death and destruction to Ukraine and threatened peace and stability throughout the entire European continent.

14. **Mr. Ghazaryan** (Armenia) said that some delegates were still intent on politicizing the debate and that Azerbaijan wished to rewrite history according to its political preferences. As a result of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia had received between 300,000 and 400,000 refugees, the majority of whom had integrated into Armenian society, whereas Azerbaijan sought to prolong the current refugee situation for political reasons. Armenia would continue to take in Syrian refugees from a sister country that had hosted millions of Armenian refugees during the 1915 genocide.

15. **Mr. Mardaliyev** (Azerbaijan) said that the new Armenian authorities were repeating the mistakes of their predecessors and had no desire to negotiate a settlement to the conflict.

Instead, they wished to continue the unlawful occupation of Azerbaijani territories and to prevent Azerbaijani displaced persons from returning home.

*Mr. Muylle (Vice-Chair) took the Chair.*

**Consideration of reports on the work of the Standing Committee:**

**(a) International protection (A/AC.96/1177, A/AC.96/1178, A/AC.96/1184 and A/AC.96/1186)**

16. **Mr. Türk** (Assistant High Commissioner for Protection) said that the world had become a paradoxical place, with the development by United Nations Member States of the global compact on refugees — an unprecedented success of multilateralism — on the one hand, and the politicization of the refugee debate and the questioning of reception traditions, on the other. Humankind had shown itself capable of both great generosity and immeasurable cruelty towards refugees. Those two qualities spoke to what was at the heart of the work of UNHCR, namely respect for human dignity, the very dignity enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Future refugee protection efforts could focus on five areas.

17. Firstly, respect for dignity must be central to the progressive development and implementation of legislation and standards for refugee protection. Any attempts to narrow the concept of who was a refugee must therefore be thwarted. Being recognized as a refugee could be a matter of life and death. The framers of the 1951 Convention had intended the definition to be full and inclusive in its application. The Convention must also adapt to evolving realities and take into account new phenomena causing displacement. Unfortunately, the central focus on preserving dignity tended to get lost in debates that cited security as the rationale for restrictive approaches to refugee protection. The over-complication and narrowing of the definition of refugee status in international law had detracted from the essence of refugee law. It was time to return to the initial object and purpose of refugee protection, as it was first conceived, in analyses conducted and interventions. UNHCR was working to create refugee status determination systems that could be adapted to changing circumstances and large numbers, including by relying on simplified and accelerated procedures. That approach required a deep knowledge of the profiles of asylum seekers and their countries of origin. With regard to internally displaced persons, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement had been published 20 years previously and a three-year plan of action had been developed on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of their adoption as a means of advancing their implementation.

18. Respect for dignity must be the antidote to dehumanization. The dehumanization of refugees, migrants, internally displaced persons and stateless persons, which resulted from inappropriate language, arbitrary detention, the separation of families etc., was a worrying trend. It had the effect of numbing the conscience and normalizing mistreatment. However, there was a need to confront and address the xenophobia, racism and fanaticism advocated by populists, whose discourse served as a pretext for demolishing liberal democracy. In order to counter those dangers, the causes of the phenomena, especially the inequalities that led to a sense of victimization and hatred of foreigners, needed to be addressed.

19. Respect for dignity must be at the centre of the right to a nationality, which recognized that individuals were not objects but subjects of law by giving them an identity. However, statelessness, even unseen, still persisted, which was why UNHCR was conducting a campaign to end it. Respect for the dignity of all spoke to the necessity of multilateralism in an interdependent world. Conflicts in faraway lands — often those rich in natural resources — affected growth and consumption patterns. Those present therefore had a collective responsibility to address the root causes of displacement and to help countries hosting refugees to shoulder their responsibilities. It was surprising, then, that some of the countries that had benefited the most from international cooperation were among those least willing to be a part of regional frameworks on population movements. In that respect, the global compact on refugees had enormous potential. It was not an end, rather the beginning of an evolution in governance that included refugees and made host communities persons of interest to UNHCR. The creation of the Division for Resilience and Solutions in 2018 was a step in that direction.

20. Those present had a responsibility to secure the dignity and safety of future generations. The issues that had led to forced displacement, armed conflict being foremost among them, needed to be addressed. In 2017, there were 55 situations of armed conflict, most prominently in Syria, where 12 million persons had been displaced. Those situations had other, less visible consequences, such as illiteracy, which was three times higher in conflict-stricken countries, and starvation, which was also used as a weapon of war. Nowhere was the need for prevention so urgent and fundamental than in relation to climate change and environmental degradation. Drought and competition over access to water had fuelled social tensions, leading to conflicts and displacements in several countries. The current consumption system, which was unsustainable, was at the root of that phenomenon. Those present owed it to future generations to change their way of life. In that regard, UNHCR would continue to “green” its operations and reduce its carbon footprint, for example by installing solar panels in refugee camps.

21. **Mr. Dávalos** (Ecuador, speaking also on behalf of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and Peru) said that some 2.6 million Venezuelans had left their country and that many of them had sought refuge in Latin American and Caribbean countries. Some 330,000 of them had formally applied for refugee status and the situation of 680,000 had been regularized in various ways in the countries of the region. Despite the efforts of transit and destination countries to provide comprehensive solutions intended to protect Venezuelan citizens, the phenomenon exceeded their reception and protection capacities and required not only a coordinated regional response, but also technical and financial cooperation from other Member States and United Nations agencies to facilitate the setting up of mutual accountability mechanisms. At the conclusion of a technical meeting on the mobility of Venezuelan citizens held in Quito on 3 and 4 September 2018, in which 11 countries had taken part, the Declaration of Quito, which laid the foundations for a joint strategy based on full respect for the rights of Venezuelan citizens, had been adopted.

22. **Mr. Flores Monterrey** (Plurinational State of Bolivia, speaking on behalf of 11 unnamed countries) said that the countries for which he was spokesperson wished to stress the importance of the principles governing the work of United Nations agencies providing assistance to internally displaced persons. They rejected any measure that could undermine the peace and democratic stability of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and threaten its sovereignty. It was the responsibility of the Venezuelan people to freely determine the political status and future of their country and to pursue its political and social development, in accordance with the Venezuelan Constitution and domestic legislation. The countries in question called on all leaders of the international community to refrain from interfering in any way in the internal affairs of the Republic. They believed that the displacement of Venezuelans was due to a situation imposed from the outside, including financial and trade sanctions. They encouraged Venezuela to continue its efforts to address the problems related to the displacement of persons abroad, supported the “Return to the homeland” plan and requested UNHCR to support Venezuela in its implementation.

23. **Ms. Pollack** (United States of America) said that the United States remained committed to the protection of those forced to flee from their homes because of persecution and conflict and wished for protection to remain at the heart of international responses to displacement. The United States continued to provide significant financial support to UNHCR and called upon Member States to increase their financial contribution and develop humanitarian diplomacy. The United States hoped that the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement would provide an opportunity for UNHCR to review its policy in that area, taking into account all the issues raised during consultations with NGOs and other partner organizations. The United States believed that the temptation to press prematurely for the return of individuals to their countries of origin must be resisted. In that respect, UNHCR played a critical role in ensuring that the return of refugees and internally displaced persons was voluntary, informed and conducted in conditions of safety and dignity.

24. **Ms. Chohan** (South Africa) said that dignity was awarded when human beings were governed by a body of law, the essence of which was the right to a nationality. The functioning of civil registration systems in many African countries had not always been

satisfactory. It was for that reason that the First Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration had been held in 2010 under the auspices of the African Union. The conference had been held every two years since and, in 2018, 10 August had been proclaimed Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day. Since those initiatives were aimed at eradicating statelessness, South Africa suggested that they should be mentioned in the Note on International Protection (A/AC.96/1178).

25. **Mr. Felten** (Germany) said that his country was concerned about the significant reduction in the number of resettlement places. Germany had increased its number in 2018 and called upon other Member States to do likewise. Germany was deeply concerned about the situation in Syria and called upon UNHCR to continue to insist that returns took place voluntarily and to utilize all access options to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to those in need. Germany welcomed UNHCR efforts to combat statelessness and would provide financial support for those activities the following year, around the midterm point of the #IBelong Campaign.

26. **Ms. Lindblad** (Sweden) said that contributing to the implementation of the global compact on refugees must be the mission of all, not just the main host and donor countries. It was also important to promote access to quality education for refugee and host community children, to expand resettlement programmes and to look for solutions before crises occurred, while ensuring that the necessary funding was allocated to assist those who needed it the most.

27. **Ms. Rosenvinge** (Norway) said that her country would continue to provide unearmarked funding to UNHCR and encouraged other States to do likewise. Norway had launched a new humanitarian strategy, where protection, innovation and comprehensive approaches were the main priorities. In the coming years, it would aim to strengthen its efforts to protect refugees and internally displaced persons, to provide care to children and young people, to provide civil status documents, to restore family links and to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence. Given that the number of internally displaced persons had doubled since the adoption of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement 20 years previously, Norway, together with other States, including States deeply affected by population displacement, had requested that the Secretary-General should consider establishing a high-level panel on internal displacement.

28. **Ms. Escorel de Moraes** (Brazil) said that her country continued to maintain an open-border policy, despite the increase in the number of refugees and the difficulties that it posed. Brazil continued to engage in responsibility-sharing through its visa programme for persons affected by the Syrian conflict. The programme had been extended until 2019 and had enabled 740 Syrians to obtain refugee status since September 2016. Brazil had recently created a temporary identity card for asylum seekers, which would make it easier for them to obtain a work permit and to access public services.

29. **Mr. McGlynn** (Australia) said that his country had provided UNHCR with \$24 million to support its protection operations in Myanmar and Bangladesh. By the end of 2018, it would have provided nearly \$410 million in humanitarian assistance for crises around the world and would have offered 18,750 resettlement places through its annual resettlement programme.

30. **Mr. Cochrane** (Canada) said that he wished to call upon all States to expand their resettlement programmes to assist the growing number of refugees. Canada had made multi-year and multi-regional commitments in that area, including plans to resettle an additional 1,000 vulnerable women and girls. The protection and empowerment of women and girls remained a priority for the country, which ensured that its humanitarian actions included a gender perspective.

31. **Mr. Valero** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said it was regrettable that the information provided by UNHCR had been manipulated and that his country was not experiencing a humanitarian crisis. Venezuela had always been a host country for refugees, and the migrants who had settled there had been treated humanely. The country had opened its borders to 9 million refugees from different countries in the region, but also from Caribbean States. In the aftermath of the two world wars, it had welcomed nationals from Arab and European countries. All those people enjoyed the same economic, social and

cultural rights as Venezuelan citizens. Furthermore, it was unlikely that Venezuelan migrants living elsewhere in the region enjoyed better living conditions. They were subjected to ill-treatment and often deprived of their most basic rights, which explained why thousands of requests for repatriation had been received by Venezuelan embassies. The President of the Republic had also launched the “Return to the homeland” plan, which had enabled thousands of Venezuelans to return home.

32. **Ms. Sato** (Japan) said that Japan, in keeping with its commitment to receive up to 150 new refugee students over the coming five years, had welcomed a total of 28 students and their families in 2017. Japan would like UNHCR to continue to assist it in promoting access to higher education for young Syrians. Japanese universities had also been partnering with UNHCR to implement the Refugee Higher Education Programme, which provided scholarships for refugees living in Japan to study at Japanese universities. Japan had been the first country in Asia to have a third-country resettlement programme, which was an important mechanism for the protection of refugees. The beneficiaries of the programme had received thorough assistance, which had facilitated their smooth integration into society.

33. **Mr. Andrews** (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) said that his country encouraged UNHCR to continue to focus its efforts on displaced persons in urban environments and to continue to involve the private sector in efforts undertaken in that area. The United Kingdom would welcome more information on the proportion of refugees and internally displaced persons supported by UNHCR within and outside camps. If more refugees were being supported inside camps than outside, he would like to hear more about how UNHCR planned to address that situation.

34. **Mr. Ghazaryan** (Armenia) said that his country remained firmly committed to providing international protection to asylum seekers and refugees. In cooperation with the country and regional office of UNHCR, Armenia was putting in place asylum procedures and integration programmes, which had proved to be quite successful. Since the adoption of its first law on refugees in 1999, Armenia had been amending its refugee legislation to ensure its alignment with relevant international standards. The country was also working with UNHCR to reform its asylum system and was participating in the Quality Initiative in Eastern Europe and South Caucasus. Armenia was also fully committed to ending statelessness. To that end, the country was establishing procedures for determining statelessness and hoped that UNHCR would support it in putting those procedures into effect. The integration of refugees and persons in situations similar to that of a refugee was also a fundamental issue for Armenia, which was the third largest recipient of Syrian refugees per capita in Europe. The country was committed to providing them with every right and opportunity enjoyed by its citizens and hoped that the international community would be able to support it in its efforts to provide them with decent housing.

35. **Mr. Boutin** (Observer for Haiti) said that a large number of Haitians had been forced to leave on account of the natural disasters that had rocked the country in recent years. While the Government of Haiti was grateful to host countries for having taken in its nationals, it would like those States to work to better guarantee their dignity and the protection of their fundamental rights, in accordance with international law. Haiti, for its part, was redoubling its efforts to strengthen its protection system and encouraged the international community to continue to address the root causes of displacement and to consider, without further delay, creating a legal status for persons displaced by climate change.

36. **Mr. Dávalos** (Ecuador) said that Ecuador was the country with the highest number of refugees in Latin America. The majority of those refugees had declared their intention to remain in the country, where they had found favourable conditions owing to the policies adopted by the Government to facilitate their social integration and to guarantee full respect for their rights. The issuance of identity documents to refugees and asylum seekers was an effective means of preventing discrimination and intolerance. Those documents also allowed refugees to access services that promoted their autonomy and full economic and social inclusion on an equal footing with the rest of the population. In November 2017, Ecuador had initiated a process whereby refugees would be registered in the civil registry and issued with identity documents identical to those of Ecuadorians. Furthermore, the

2017 Human Mobility Act guaranteed the rights of refugees and asylum seekers and contained provisions aimed at preventing statelessness and facilitating the naturalization of stateless persons.

37. **Mr. Hamad** (Sudan) said that, in Sudan, refugees and asylum seekers were protected by the provisions of international instruments and domestic refugee legislation. In keeping with its tradition of hospitality, Sudan had welcomed 1.5 million refugees from South Sudan and had opened humanitarian corridors for the delivery of World Food Programme assistance to their country. Sudan had also developed a plan for the voluntary repatriation of Sudanese nationals from Chad and of Chadians present in its territory and called upon donors and UNHCR to support it. As to the protection of refugees and migrants, the Government had established a supreme council for migration, responsible for all matters relating to the protection of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, as well as the fight against trafficking, in accordance with domestic legislation on refugee protection. Sudan called upon all organizations and stakeholders to work with it to provide refugees and returnees with the necessary humanitarian services, and requested the European Union to provide assistance under the Khartoum Process. The country had concluded an agreement with UNHCR to ensure the registration of all refugees, which would provide them with access to health and education services and help eradicate statelessness. Sudan had also issued electronic passports to facilitate repatriation procedures. Lastly, it called upon host countries to increase the resettlement rate of Sudanese nationals.

38. **Mr. Chen** (China) said that China supported the adoption of comprehensive measures to address the root causes of problems that could lead to refugee situations, such as war, poverty and violence. States must respect the principle of shared responsibility and provide more support to UNHCR and host countries. UNHCR and the international community should uphold the principle of neutrality and ensure the credibility of the international refugee protection regime. The international community must respect the sovereignty of Venezuela and the path of development chosen by the Venezuelan people. China was convinced that Venezuela and its people had the capacity to solve their problems and welcomed the country's efforts to respond to population flows dynamically and to put in place a voluntary repatriation plan.

39. **Mr. Al-Fadhli** (Observer for Iraq) said that, in order to assist refugees, it was necessary to address the reasons that turned displaced persons into refugees in the first place. As displacement took place in many regions, a climate conducive to stability must be created. The international community must make stronger commitments in that regard. Although Iraq was not a party to the statelessness conventions, it had taken many measures to eliminate the problem in its national territory. Iraq was grateful to the international community and UNHCR for their assistance.

40. **Mr. Anderson** (RefugePoint), speaking on behalf of a wide range of NGOs, said that, despite the progress made on the global compact on refugees, the reality on the ground remained sombre. Displaced persons did not receive the protection and life-saving assistance that they needed and were often confined to areas contaminated by unexploded ordnance. In Myanmar, Yemen and the Mediterranean, for example, humanitarian access to affected populations was severely restricted. RefugePoint urged States to comply with their obligations under international law. Moreover, while repatriation was a good and durable solution when it was voluntary, safe and dignified, it was alarming to see that refugees were still being pressured to return prematurely to their countries of origin. RefugePoint called upon third countries to move quickly to resettle those in need, as resettlement remained an important protection tool. With two thirds of the world's displaced population having been displaced internally, there was an urgent need for strategies to ensure that they received adequate protection and assistance. RefugePoint therefore welcomed the Global Protection Cluster's Plan of Action, which provided for a collective reflection on necessary contributions by the United Nations, NGOs and States.

41. At least 10 million people remained stateless worldwide, including the Rohingya and persons of Haitian descent living in the Dominican Republic. As discrimination against women in nationality laws remained a major driver of statelessness, he urged States to change their laws and procedures to put an end to that problem. As women and girls, who made up about half of the world's displaced population, often faced a high risk of sexual



and gender-based violence, RefugePoint welcomed the recent adoption by UNHCR of the Age, Gender and Diversity Policy and urged all actors to systematically consult men and women, boys and girls, including persons with disabilities, in displaced and host communities to ensure that they were protected.

42. Lastly, greater political and practical action was needed to expand access to quality education for children and young people from refugee and host communities, as education was undeniably a protective measure for the millions of children who had fled violence or had been forced out of their homes.

43. **Mr. Türk** (Assistant High Commissioner for Protection) said that UNHCR was working to update its policy on internally displaced persons in the light of the strategic guidelines issued in early 2018 by the High Commissioner for Refugees to ensure that protection was at the heart of its activities. Protection was not only central to the work of UNHCR, but to all activities conducted by United Nations country teams and humanitarian coordinators.

44. Many countries, such as Australia, Brazil and Germany, had encouraged UNHCR to review, at the current session of the Executive Committee, the results of the roll-out of the campaign to end statelessness, “#IBelong”, and that South Africa had spoken of the need to register births and to issue identity documents. The Executive Committee’s 2019 session could therefore be an opportunity to review the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16.9, which dealt specifically with birth registration, bearing in mind the decision taken by the African Union to declare 2019 the African Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons. Moreover, the Economic Community of West African States had just published a legal document setting out the obligation of its member States to guarantee civil registration and the issuance of identity documents.

45. As to resettlement, he thanked the United States of America and Sweden, which were the largest donors to the Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism. As to the Age, Gender and Diversity Policy, which was supported by a wide range of NGOs and Japan, many actors had recalled the particular importance of education. The High Commissioner’s dialogue, to be held at the end of 2018, would focus on the role of cities and would provide an opportunity to take stock of the situation and gather useful ideas, particularly in relation to internally displaced persons and refugees living outside camps. Lastly, he recalled that the guiding principles contained in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the global compact emphasized the agreement’s apolitical nature.

**(b) Programme budgets, management, financial control and administrative oversight** ([A/AC.96/1178](#), [A/AC.96/1186](#), [A/AC.96/1177](#) and [A/AC.96/1184](#))

46. **Ms. Clements** (Deputy High Commissioner) said that, despite the many challenges faced, the global compact had been developed collectively through formal and informal consultations. The process of change mentioned by the High Commissioner in his opening statement had led to the creation of the Division of Resilience and Solutions, the reconfiguration of the partnership service and the establishment of an integrated programme service within the Division of Programme Support and Management. UNHCR had also worked to define a new approach to regionalization and decentralization, which had led the High Commissioner to locate the regional offices of UNHCR in their respective regions and which encompassed a transformation of planning and operations management. UNHCR was advancing with the review of the results-based management system and was ensuring that the process supported other changes in progress so as to achieve better results management at the local level. Moreover, the UNHCR reform process was fully in line with the wider reform of the United Nations system. UNHCR had also reviewed the services, systems and processes of the Division of Human Resources Management to make it a strategic partner in its activities. It had also placed a greater emphasis on ethical conduct and was working to transpose values such as tolerance, respect, diversity and gender equality into its institutional culture. Tackling sexual exploitation and sexual harassment had been a key pillar of that work. Since the launch of the Risk Management 2.0 initiative, substantial progress had been made in that area. In particular, risk management and compliance advisors had been assigned to several key operations.

47. The revised budget for the biennium, which was based on planning assumptions and the most likely scenarios concerning refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide, indicated a need for \$8.2 billion in 2018, taking into account the six appeals for supplementary budgets. Unfortunately, the UNHCR funding gap amounted to almost half of its total budget, forcing it to make difficult choices. UNHCR would continue to act transparently when funds were insufficient and to report on the results achieved.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*