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Chairperson: Mr. Baddoura(Lebanon)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Regional activities and global programmes (continued)

d. The engagement of UNHCR with internally displaced persons (EC/73/SC/CRP.14)

1. **Ms. Clifford** (European Union) commended UNHCR's commitment to addressing the record levels of internally displaced persons (IDPs), exacerbated in Europe by the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine. UNHCR should act in strong partnership with others, with each actor contributing in line with their respective core strengths and mandate. She welcomed UNHCR's essential ambition to become more decisive, predictable and effective in situations of internal displacement, working alongside States and partners in planning and delivering a protection- and solutions-driven response.

2. Internal displacement remained a priority for the European Union, which from the beginning had firmly supported the work of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement and subsequent Action Agenda. She welcomed the nomination of Robert Piper as Special Advisor on Solutions to Internal Displacement.

3. The European Union fully supported UNHCR's participation as a core member of the steering group on internal displacement solutions. UNHCR's role would be crucial in determining the success of the steering groups on national and global levels. The European Union remained committed to that process, hoping that it would help find ambitious solutions and generate political will for a more comprehensive response. The recurrent, protracted and complex nature of many crises reinforced the importance of developing longer-term interventions addressing humanitarian needs as well as development and peacebuilding challenges. The European Union would welcome more details on UNHCR's role and synergies with other steering group partners, notably on advocacy towards international financial institutions to address internal displacement proactively and systematically as part of development financing.

4. She welcomed the review of UNHCR's engagement in internal displacement settings, and looked forward to the report in September 2022. More information about the process would be welcome, notably on whether UNHCR envisaged discussion with its membership of the report's findings and planned implementation of the recommendations.

5. Centrality of protection was key. She welcomed UNHCR's establishment of the IDP Protection Expert Group in collaboration with the IDP Special Rapporteur in late 2021. Assisting States in fostering a legal and policy environment was more crucial than ever for achieving durable solutions – an objective that was still primarily the responsibility of States. In that respect, it was essential to reach the full potential of the humanitarian, peace and development nexus through a strong, joined-up, people-centred approach.

6. The European Union appreciated UNHCR's update on coordination and inter-agency efforts, including within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). She stressed that addressing internal displacement required a strong collaborative effort by all mandated agencies, with accountability to affected populations and a clear distribution of tasks in line with their respective mandates and cluster responsibilities.

7. Climate-related events such as storms, floods and droughts had an increasing impact on internal displacement. Climate change was not only a driver of conflict but also a risk multiplier. As part of its stepped-up approach towards IDPs, the European Union's presidency of the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) was an opportunity to address the critical challenge of displacement prompted by disasters, climate change and environmental degradation, promote global advocacy, and support multilateral partnerships and processes. The European Union counted on UNHCR's continued engagement, expertise and advice to work hand in hand with PDD, IOM and other relevant stakeholders towards strengthened protection for IDPs in the framework of the European Union's presidency.

8. The European Union welcomed the strong partnerships that were a key priority for UNHCR, particularly regarding the expanded use of cash assistance and working with local partners. She welcomed the two events jointly organized with UNDP as part of the 2022 European Humanitarian Forum in Brussels. Promoting the application of innovative and development

financing in areas affected by internal displacement was a topic of growing significance. Regarding IOM, the European Union acknowledged the joint task team to better coordinate support to resident coordinators for IDP solutions, recalling that solid partnerships should start with putting IDPs, host communities and their needs at the centre of local responses.

9. She agreed that sound, prioritized and collective programming should be reinforced. As all UNHCR operations had finalized their 2022 strategies with the COMPASS approach using the new global results framework, more information and evidence on strengthened IDP planning and programming would be welcome. The European Union reiterated its full support for the UNHCR–World Bank Joint Data Centre on forced displacement, its focus on socioeconomic data and advocacy for the inclusion of IDPs in national policy, development and humanitarian operations. Also welcome were other joint initiatives and regular updates on data collection and analysis, for instance involving IOM.

10. She welcomed the building of staff knowledge and skills regarding IDP situations and strongly encouraged the development and rolling out of training modules together with other United Nations organizations involved in IDP response for efficient and coherent staff capacity building.

11. **Ms. Munro** (Canada), echoing concerns regarding the unprecedented levels of internal displacement, acknowledged that demand for UNHCR’s emergency response capacity had greatly increased in 2021.

12. Canada recognized UNHCR’s increased interagency coordination and engagement, including in ensuring the centrality of protection across IASC and systematizing that approach through operations in the field. Her country supported UNHCR’s strategic partnership efforts aiming to promote IDP self-reliance, financial inclusion and access to national services, and the application of development funding in areas affected by internal displacement.

13. Canada looked forward to hearing more about the leadership work of the IDP Protection Expert Group and how the Executive Committee could support it. As UNHCR updated its IDP policy, her country also looked forward to reading the detailed recommendations included in the report.

14. Canada, a longstanding supporter of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, welcomed the recent arrival of the Special Adviser on IDP Solutions and looked forward to UNHCR’s engagement in the follow-up process alongside other stakeholders – including OCHA and development actors such as UNDP – as work moved forward to better support IDPs.

15. Stressing the importance of continued collaboration with key stakeholders on internal displacement, she welcomed the sharing of data across inter-agency platforms and encouraged further collaboration for more effective programming based on timely data and analysis.

16. Canada recognized that UNHCR’s contribution to the global response on internal displacement was grounded in priorities identified by the displaced persons and communities themselves.

17. **Ms. Arango Blanco** (Colombia) said that as her country remained one of those most affected by internal displacement, it had developed a wide-ranging regulatory framework to ensure the rights of displaced people. To that end, and as expressed in the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, displaced people’s participation in public policy formation had been fundamental. She reaffirmed that communities must always be considered in planning projects and policies that affected them.

18. Supported by UNHCR and other international organizations, Colombia had implemented a series of successful projects targeting its displaced population. It was crucial that those projects should be implemented in a coordinated manner between national and local Governments and with the active participation of displaced persons and host communities.

19. As demonstrated by its Victims’ Unit, Colombia was ready to share its experience and successful practices with other States, including its unified victims register, early warning system for protecting the population and regulatory framework. Her country hoped to continue working with UNHCR and its IDP Principal Advisor and the recently appointed Special Advisor on

Solutions to Internal Displacement, and would closely follow the Action Agenda. IDPs must be at the centre of discussions.

20. **Ms. Rosenvinge** (Norway), commending UNHCR's commitment to strengthening its indisputably key role in protecting IDPs in the Strategic Directions 2022–2026, said that Norway recognized that a consistent IDP programming approach was being developed to help UNHCR provide priority interventions, ensuring that IASC predictably delivered its commitments as providers of last resort and port of first call.

21. She commended UNHCR's leadership, together with the IDP Special Rapporteur, in establishing the IDP Protection Expert Group. Norway supported the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, a robust plan to follow-up the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement.

22. While commitments and plans were a good start, the concerning annual increases in IDPs would not be reversed without strengthened international efforts and resources. With 59 million people internally displaced, her country shared concerns about the expected funding gap for both humanitarian and development funding.

23. **Mr. Jalangania** (Georgia) said that his country had highly valued UNHCR's humanitarian assistance in recent years and its contribution to implementing the peace initiative entitled A Step to a Better Future, including through its associated Peace Fund.

24. Georgia appreciated UNHCR's support in organizing humanitarian corridors for those affected by the conflict in the Russian Federation-occupied Abkhazia region of Georgia since the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Georgia had been very active during the preparation and adoption process for the Global Compact on Refugees, an expression of States' political will to resolve the refugee crisis. He stressed the cooperation between UNHCR and his Government on implementing its pledges made at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum.

25. Hundreds of thousands of Georgians expelled from the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions by the Russian Federation continued to be deprived of the fundamental right to return to their homes in safety and dignity. The return of IDPs and refugees to their homes should be discussed in the Geneva International Discussions (GID) format, as it was a core topic of the GID mandate. He welcomed UNHCR's contribution in the humanitarian working group.

26. His country attached particular importance to the GID format as it was the only forum with the Russian Federation for addressing the implementation of the European Union-mandated ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008. He expressed concern regarding the cancellation of the March round with no clear prospects for the next round. The GID format was vital for ensuring that the conflict and ceasefire agreement stayed on the international agenda: otherwise, the Russian Federation would be able to continue its decades-long crimes and further undermine European security, as had unfortunately been seen over the previous four months.

27. Georgia was keen to avoid continuing business as usual with the Russian Federation. Therefore, the GID should be used efficiently to put due pressure on the Russian Federation and remind it of the necessity of abiding by its international obligations under the ceasefire agreement: the withdrawal of its forces from Georgia's territories, the deployment of the international security mechanism within Georgian regions, and the return of IDPs and refugees. UNHCR should keep the grave humanitarian situation in the Russian Federation-occupied regions of Georgia high on its agenda.

28. Georgia fully supported the UNHCR efforts to meet the needs of millions of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced and stateless persons around the world. The current crisis had shown the importance of a policy to fully implement emergency operations as far as possible with the institutional capacity and full involvement of UNHCR. Decision-making procedures should be strengthened to enable UNHCR to act in a timely manner in emergencies.

29. **Ms. Chapman** (United States of America) said that improving the UNHCR – and system-wide – response to internal displacement remained a top priority for her country, which was closely monitoring the results of UNHCR's step-up initiative on internal displacement and its continued efforts to strengthen its engagement and predictability in internal displacement

situations. Welcoming COMPASS' focus on impact and outcomes across all population groups, the United States urged UNHCR to work with and support its IDP operations to fully integrate COMPASS, in order to standardize effective impact and outcome monitoring metrics. She commended the Principal Advisor for her work with regional bureaus and country IDP operations to provide clear guidance and promote coherence on issues related to staffing, protection programming, and advocacy with host governments. Several country operations had described the value of her in-person and virtual missions and opportunities to engage with other UNHCR operations facing similar IDP challenges.

30. The United States strongly supported UNHCR's ongoing engagement with the World Bank and other multilateral development banks on the inclusion of forcibly displaced populations in development strategies and programmes. Development partners and the private sector were essential to pursuing solutions for IDPs, strengthening self-reliance and resilience, and improving the quality of life for those affected by crises. She welcomed UNHCR's approach of using dialogue on assistance and solutions to enhance understanding by development and government partners of sensitive protection issues, as well as UNHCR's strong and growing engagement with development actors.

31. The United States welcomed the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement and looked forward to learning more about UNHCR's institutional plan detailing how it would reinforce internal capacities and engagement on solutions to internal displacement. While she commended UNHCR's role as a core member of the steering group on internal displacement solutions, more diverse representation within the group would be welcome to include United Nations organizations with a strong understanding of both development and humanitarian contexts. Her country strongly supported IASC's decision to commission a review of the humanitarian response to IDPs, and would continue to encourage IASC members to strengthen their delivery of assistance and protection for IDPs even as the review was ongoing.

32. **Ms. Traore** (Burkina Faso), expressing concern at the dismal global humanitarian situation, with crises of all kinds reaching even countries previously unaffected, said that since 2016 escalating terrorist violence in Burkina Faso had caused an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, resulting in more than 2,000 deaths and massive population displacement. As of 31 March 2022, there were 1,814,283 IDPs and over 1,645,939 people in food insecurity concentrated in unstable regions forcing them to abandon their livelihoods.

33. The security crisis had also limited the population's access to fundamental social services such as health and education, closing 3,664 schools and around 100 health clinics. Furthermore, 10 of her country's 13 regions had suffered from terrorist attacks.

34. However, notable progress had been made in combating terrorism since the political and institutional change of 24 January 2022, thanks to the new authorities' determination to restore the country's security and territorial integrity and allow 1 million displaced people to return to their homes and live with dignity.

35. The Government of Burkina Faso intended to fulfil its mandated role of securing goods and people and meeting the urgent needs of vulnerable IDPs and host communities in food security, nutrition, health, education, water, hygiene, protection and economic recovery.

36. Considerable challenges remained: the yearly growth rate of IDPs, the difficult international situation due to the economic impact of COVID-19, and a cereals deficit arising from climatic variations and insecurity. Despite its good intentions, her Government would not be able to meet its people's expectations alone.

37. At such delicate moments in its history, Burkina Faso needed its partners more than ever to end the humanitarian crisis and resume its development as soon as possible. She called for greater international solidarity as part of the principle of shared responsibility enshrined in the GCR. Beyond Burkina Faso, the entire Sahel subregion needed help to banish the threat of terrorism forever.

38. She thanked UNHCR and other humanitarian actors for their constant support from the beginning of the crisis.

39. **Mr. Petrossian** (Armenia) said that while his country had staunchly supported and contributed to the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel, Armenia had certain doubts about the new position of Special Adviser to the Secretary-General and emerging architecture apparently intended to handle internal displacement. In that context, the view of the Principal Advisor would be welcome as to how UNHCR activities would be affected, especially since UNHCR was the major international body dealing with internal displacement in the field.

40. Noting that conflict caused displacement both within and beyond national borders, which in any case were artificial and often contentious, he regretted that solutions to internal displacement remained largely elusive. However, Armenia welcomed UNHCR's work with various stakeholders to identify and pursue durable solutions for IDPs without any discrimination whatsoever. UNHCR should advocate more for conditions conducive to voluntary return of all victims of forced displacement, as it was uniquely qualified among the United Nations institutions to do so.

41. Conflicts, violence and human rights violations remained primary causes of displacement. In that context, addressing root causes should not be dismissed as primarily a State responsibility. The GCR had rightly recognized the international community's significant role in removing barriers to return, which also applied to IDPs. UNHCR should be at the forefront of that work, in close partnership with other institutions of the United Nations human rights machinery.

42. Whatever issue was discussed, the reference point should be objective criteria. For forced displacement, it was international human rights law, which should be applied and advocated without any reservation whatsoever.

43. The United Nations, its agencies and other humanitarian actors had a universal mandate and should enjoy unconditional, unimpeded, unhindered and unfettered access to people in need, wherever they were and in all circumstances. It was unacceptable to politicize UNHCR's humanitarian access.

44. Armenia remained gravely concerned that entire areas that were UNHCR's statutory responsibility, including the substantial forcibly displaced population, had been marginalized and made inaccessible for humanitarian assistance. In that context, he recalled Recommendation 9 of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel report on strengthening the quality of protection and assistance to IDPs and host communities.

45. The Panel had concluded that in cases where humanitarian access was unduly restricted or denied, the United Nations and donor States should strongly advocate for access, including on behalf of NGOs. Furthermore, where unwarranted access constraints persisted, the State responsible should be held accountable through the United Nations human rights machinery.

46. **Ms. Goetschi** (Switzerland) acknowledged UNHCR's strong involvement and comparative advantage in IDP protection and solutions. She welcomed the important work being done by the global protection cluster, especially the review of the centrality of protection. Switzerland wished to emphasize the importance of improved cooperation in the field and the critical role that protection clusters must play in advancing priorities such as localization, responsibility towards affected populations, mental health and psychosocial support and advocacy. Regarding strategic partnerships to prevent and address internal displacement, she said that a multi-agency approach including collaboration with development and peace partners, multilateral banks and the private sector was necessary. Her delegation congratulated UNHCR on its enhanced engagement with multilateral regional development banks and on the preparation of the joint global initiative with UNDP. The Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement would greatly facilitate linkages between international agencies and national and local institutions. She wished to know how UNHCR, as a core member of the Steering Group on Internal Displacement Solutions, would ensure that the global institutions and processes put in place would support the work of national governments, resident coordinators as well as local institutions to find solutions in internal displacement situations. She also wished to know how the joint task team with IOM, which was to focus on how to better coordinate support to resident coordinators for IDP solutions, would be integrated in or supplement the Secretary-General's Action Agenda. Her delegation welcomed the emphasis on the work of resident coordinators in managing internal displacement; by working with the newly appointed special adviser on solutions to internal displacement, they could do a great deal to bring together the various actors that played a key role at the international level.

Switzerland had supported the offices of resident coordinators in Iraq, Somalia and Ethiopia by providing expertise on durable solutions and was prepared to continue such support.

47. **Ms. Rush** (United Kingdom) said that her delegation welcomed the Secretary General's appointment of a new special adviser on solutions to internal displacement and looked forward to working with him. The most recent figures in the global annual report by UNHCR were staggering: 59 million internally displaced, over half of whom were women and children, more than 12 per cent were living with either physical or mental disabilities, or both, and more than 6 per cent were older persons at risk. Conflict and violence remained primary causes of internal displacement, but millions more were displaced due to disasters and adverse sudden and slow onset climate events. Her Government was pleased to see continued UNHCR efforts to strengthen engagement in internal displacement settings and appreciated the momentum generated by the IDP Protection Expert Group and its collaboration with the IDP Special Rapporteur.

48. Her country continued to highlight protection as a priority for IDPs, including the value of compliance with legal frameworks and addressing the specific vulnerabilities of marginalised groups through vulnerability mapping in humanitarian programmes and response plans. It was supportive of the strategic focus on fostering the legal and policy environment for the protection of IDPs, including through technical assistance and capacity-building of relevant government stakeholders and others. It welcomed the initiation of the GP2.0 Global IDP Platform, co-hosted by UNHCR as an informal platform for joint initiatives and sharing good practices.

49. The United Kingdom acknowledged the many examples of UNHCR collaboration across the United Nations system and more widely and looked forward to seeing the institutional plan for the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on internal displacement, currently under development. It also looked forward to further updates regarding the joint global initiative between UNHCR and UNDP, including how it would strengthen cooperation on matters related to internal displacement. It welcomed the emphasis on practical ways to address the humanitarian, peace and development nexus and encouraged UNHCR and other relevant agencies to utilise partnerships to stimulate innovative, whole-of-society, durable solutions. There was a clear need to seek out longer term, more sustainable approaches and solutions to meet the needs of all displaced populations and, critically, the communities that hosted them.

50. Her delegation had often emphasised that better investment in data collection was needed to ensure that the IDPs most in need were identified and could access what they needed most. It accordingly welcomed and was strongly supportive of the range of initiatives towards improving IDP-related data to generate better protection analysis, including the Joint Data Centre on forced displacement (JDC) established by UNHCR and the World Bank. Lastly, it welcomed UNHCR's continued efforts to enhance operational impact and looked forward to the report that would contain recommendations on how UNHCR could strengthen its engagement in internal displacement settings.

51. **Mr. Mayr** (Germany) said his delegation welcomed UNHCR's unsparing efforts to provide protection in what were often very dangerous and sensitive environments. Germany was strongly committed to offering support for IDPs and their host communities. It looked forward to the report and the recommendations to be contained therein on strengthened UNHCR engagement in internal displacement settings. The recommendations were being developed at a critical time and should be incorporated into the larger framework of the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on internal displacement, his call to increase capacity around internal displacement and the work of the steering group on internal displacement solutions.

52. Solutions to situations of internal displacement had been a spotlight of the High-Level Panel's report and the new action agenda. His delegation fully supported UNHCR's cooperation with development partners, especially the World Bank and UNDP, and efforts to further explore opportunities to facilitate the nexus approach from the outset of operations. UNHCR's experience in facilitating the centrality of protection in IDP situations was unique in the United Nations system, and Germany fully supported its efforts to emphasize its own important role as part of the newly established steering groups on IDP, in the protection cluster and in promoting protection in contexts of disaster displacement.

53. He welcomed UNHCR's efforts towards establishing an area-based approach in IDP situations and looked forward to further updates on IDP programming. Setting priorities was vital, but consistency, predictability and accountability also remained important in continuing to address the assistance landscape laid out in the current IDP strategy. Data remained a priority in order to improve IDP responses and accountability. Germany welcomed the efforts of the Joint Data Centre, and UNHCR's collaboration with the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre was also highly appreciated. Collaboration across the United Nations system and in particular with IOM was crucial to improving interoperability of data, reducing fragmentation and allowing for comprehensive, forward-looking policy analysis and recommendations. Active collaboration should be undertaken with IOM's newly established global data institute, in order to improve data on IDP.

54. **Mr. Fattal** (France) commended UNHCR on working to extend the coverage of its assistance programmes, particularly humanitarian assistance programmes, to IDPs. He urged UNHCR to pursue its efforts to provide support in regions affected by internal displacement crises and to achieve multisectoral coordination so as to better respond to the needs of displaced populations. The organization should engage more closely with regional multilateral development banks to ensure that internal displacement situations were reflected in national development programmes in every domain, including access to water, food and electricity. Lastly, France commended the initiatives developed by UNHCR with other United Nations funds and programmes, particularly UNDP, to strengthen cooperation on projects linked to internal displacement.

55. **Ms. Origoni** (speaking on behalf of NGOs), said that the publication of the report of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, the appointment of the Special Adviser on Solutions and the launch of the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on internal Displacement were key steps to advance collective engagements and generate the changes needed to prevent and respond to increasing internal displacement worldwide. The participatory approach characterizing those processes and the opportunities for NGOs to help shape collective strategies to resolve protracted displacement were appreciated, as was UNHCR's active engagement to support the High-Level Panel's work and its facilitation of IDP participation.

56. With a record 59.1 million IDPs in late 2021, 33 million of whom were children and young people, concrete engagement was crucial. Over 80 per cent of all conflict-related displacements in 2021 had taken place in sub-Saharan Africa, with 5.1 million displacements in Ethiopia alone. Prevailing insecurity in countries such as Iraq and Syria had also forced many secondary or third movements. Those global figures did not include the 8 million people displaced within Ukraine. Internal displacement had reached record levels, doubling over the past ten years, and the scale was expected to continue rising as conflicts and crises multiplied and lasted longer and climate change impacts were felt.

57. Immediate actions were urgently needed to prevent, respond and find durable solutions to internal displacement. The realization of the action agenda should go beyond the sole United Nations system to encompass the State level. UNHCR should advocate for all actors to maintain the momentum and implement the High-Level Panel's recommendations.

58. Regarding the action agenda, she said that the Secretary-General had clearly committed to strengthening United Nations leadership. The "whole-of-society approach," including strong involvement of civil society, was a crucial element of the agenda. However, visibility on its operationalization and ways to actively engage was currently lacking. The current set-up lacked the expertise and operational experience of NGOs and civil society. NGOs should be more systematically included in the action agenda and represented on the steering group. Moreover, NGO interactions with the Special Adviser who was to lead collective efforts on solutions should be more precisely defined. Particularly, the critical voices of local organizations, including IDP- and women-led organizations, must be included in such processes and interactions.

59. While NGOs welcomed the integration of funding for solutions as a key element of the agenda, concerns remained about financing being only accessible to United Nations agencies, leaving NGOs and IDP organizations behind. UNHCR and States should, in line with localization commitments, ensure access to the fund for non-United Nations actors. NGOs were critically important in solutions programming and long-term activities and could be strongly impacted by

lack of funding. New and creative mechanisms for quality, long-term, flexible funding for NGOs, including IDP-led organizations, were needed.

60. All relevant United Nations agencies were to develop institutional plans, by late 2022, to reinforce their internal capacities and engagement on solutions to internal displacement. While the process was ongoing, NGOs were interested in providing inputs for the development of UNHCR's plan and would welcome further information on how they, including local organizations, could be involved and supported.

61. The GP2.0 Global IDP Platform's role in assembling initiatives and capacities on solutions to internal displacement was well recognized. However, NGOs invited UNHCR, as the co-host, to advocate for the formalization of its terms of reference and specific role in the action agenda roll-out. Clarification of its mandate was important to ensure the full participation of key agencies, transparency and accountability.

62. Regarding UNHCR actions and policy processes, she said that the commitment of the United Nations to developing an agenda for protection made it possible to reaffirm that the protection of crisis-affected populations was fundamental to its purpose and values. UNHCR should ensure that internal displacement was clearly mentioned among the biggest upcoming protection challenges and that specific response measures were presented. A comprehensive approach including prevention, response and solutions simultaneously, and the whole-of-society approach, should be reiterated in the action agenda.

63. With regard to UNHCR's involvement in the IASC review of the humanitarian response to internal displacement, she said that NGOs would welcome further information regarding their potential involvement, and particularly that of IDP- and women-led organizations. Clusters and coordination groups could enable local civil society participation by reducing barriers to participation, including prioritizing local languages in meetings, and promoting context-specific communication methodologies.

64. NGOs appreciated UNHCR's reporting on its engagement in situations of internal displacement and the roll-out of its 2019 IDP policy. They stood ready to provide contributions to the evaluation process planned for 2022 and encouraged the provision of more information, particularly on how inputs from local and IDP-led organizations would be solicited and incorporated. UNHCR and States should seize all opportunities to realize the High-Level Panel's ambition of countering the "invisibility" of internal displacement issues. The action agenda was indeed a key step, but mobilization beyond the United Nations system was urgent, including at national and regional levels.

65. **Ms. Rizvi** (Principal Advisor on Internal Displacement) thanked delegations for their supportive comments and for all the support, including funding, given to UNHCR in countries where it operated. One subject that had come up again and again in their comments was solutions for all. UNHCR was very directly involved in supporting solutions for internally displaced populations, based on its long experience in refugee solutions. IDP and refugee situations often had common root causes and were becoming more and more regionalized. A siloed international approach would not work –it was extremely important to draw on the experiences of all actors and feed them into the larger system, namely the Secretary-General's Action Agenda, the Steering Group on IDP Solutions and the Special Advisor on IDP solutions.

66. As to the broader question about how UNHCR would develop the Secretary-General's Action Agenda, she said that it was in its conceptualization and would remain involved through to its day-to-day functioning. It was directly supporting the Special Adviser and his teams in the work which would need to be carried out through a ground-up, country-level impact approach. More importantly, the humanitarian, development and peace nexus had to be translated into practical action that would demonstrate to the world what the combined effort of a multiplicity of actors could bring about, under the special advisor's leadership and the overall leadership of the Secretary General. UNHCR had shared its networks on development financing, private sector partnerships and the multiple relationships it had built in the context of refugee solutions. At the same time, it was looking into tailoring responses for specific country operations. The special adviser had just been appointed and he should be given some time to adapt. UNHCR was looking forward to working with him on a country-by-country basis, in the target countries he

would identify, and would play its part in providing a protection lens across the entire spectrum of international displacement, including IDP solutions.

67. Concerning two other issues that had come up in relation to the Secretary-General's Action Agenda, firstly the IASC review, she said that UNHCR had been pointing out the need for a lighter, leaner coordination mechanism enabling resources to be optimized on the ground and actually delivered to persons who needed them in the places where they needed them. Hence, the feet-on-the-ground approach, rather than a capital-centred approach, was extremely important, and advocacy for that was what UNHCR planned to contribute to the IASC review.

68. Secondly, on the impact of UNHCR's activities, she said that UNHCR's engagement was multi-faceted but primarily related to humanitarian assistance and, of course, the core objective of protection, through the provision of shelter and camp and community management. That engagement would continue and had to be bolstered. She thanked Norway for the comment on the need for resources, which was increasing as the needs of the people on the ground increased. UNHCR's area-based and integrated programming approaches were not just UNHCR-centric but ones that brought together local and international actors in specific locations where different kinds of communities in need resided. It was there that UNHCR was working very actively for IDP inclusion, including IDP returnee inclusion, refugee inclusion and host community and local community inclusion while developing and supporting the building of national and local services and the involvement of local actors on a continuing basis.

69. The activities UNHCR had been engaged in with regard to solutions leaned more towards its being a catalyst. With its protection lens, protection and impact advisory capabilities and networks and development financing, it was working very closely with UNDP to support the special advisor. It was also trying to bring in new actors who had not hitherto been involved in IDP solutions, such as finance and development agencies, multi-level development banks and private sector actors. UNHCR had learned from its refugee solutions experience that private sector actors were often a very engaged group that could be mobilized effectively.

70. The reporting and analysis of data, collected by different agencies and actors, was an important aspect of UNHCR's work. Each entity collected data from its own perspective, and so did UNHCR. For example, it had boosted its cash programming in an IDP context by relying on data. As to how the data was collected, IDP enrolment was usually the methodology. In Burkina Faso, UNHCR had worked with the Government to collect IDP data with socioeconomic elements to facilitate resilience and solutions. The reading of different forms of data, their analysis from a protection impact point of view, was something that UNHCR was stepping up its ability to do. The Joint Data Centre with the World Bank had done about 50 per cent of its work in IDP settings.

71. At the request of Member States, UNHCR was coming up with a report covering 2019-2021, to be released sometime in September 2022. Responding to a question by the European Union about the process around the report, she said it had required the collection of information and data from across UNHCR's IDP operations around the world – 37 IDP operations and the regional bureaux – as well as from the repositories of information and policy and guidance at headquarters and in the different divisions and different services that supported the field. The report, which was in the process of compilation, would be an analytical document that would not just proclaim everything that had been done well but also highlight and point out the gaps and challenges where the support of Member States would be needed. A dedicated briefing could be provided to Member States, if they so desired, upon the report's release.

72. Questions had also been asked about the IDP Protection Expert Group. It was an extremely interesting mechanism, a multilateral group that drew upon the expertise of current and former special rapporteurs on IDPs as well as humanitarian and resident coordinators. It was a new and evolving institution that was stepping in to provide nuanced advice to address the specific challenges of protection with which countries and communities needed help, to provide solutions on the ground rather than just at the global level. As such it was a complementary mechanism whose outcomes would feed into the special advisor's work and the Secretary-General's action agenda, without duplicating or replicating any existing processes.

73. With regard to climate change, it was very well recognized that there was a significant amount of displacement both internally and across borders due to climate change. Disaster-induced

displacements were often sudden onset, and UNHCR provided help and support to the countries concerned, including through its stockpiles. One current example was the work being done in Afghanistan due to the recent earthquake and floods.

74. Partnerships were key to UNHCR's work: none of it was possible alone, and UNHCR was by no means interested in going it alone. Everyone needed to step in, and of course UNHCR was working with and for Member States in many locations. The leadership provided by the Secretary-General and the Special Advisor's appointment were examples of future joint and joined-up approaches. UNHCR was now working with UNDP, IOM and within the steering group of the Secretary-General's Action Agenda to develop core activities that could support the larger response. As the protection lead agency, it stood by to continue to provide a protection lens and contribute to IDP solutions based on lessons learned from its experience with refugees. It was also bringing to bear its relationships with the World Bank and other multilateral development banks in regard to IDP solutions, including looking at the root causes and advocacy issues that had been raised by some delegations. The global protection cluster was a main source for advocacy efforts, including through its current activity of releasing a periodic report in every country on protection situations.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

75. **Mr. Boukhris** (Morocco) described as 'false and misleading' the statement previously made by the representative of Algeria. As usual, and despite the calls by the Chairperson and the Secretariat to refrain from political statements, the representative of Algeria was polluting the debate with his senseless and useless interventions, solely intended to attack Morocco. For the record, Algeria had been the only country to raise the issue of the Sahara before the Committee.

76. While the Algerian military regime continued to finance and devolve power to separatist movements on its territory, the people in the Tindouf camps — which were under the tight control of armed militias — were abandoned in vulnerable conditions, without elementary resources, medical care or adequate housing, despite the substantial provision of social housing elsewhere in the country. The military confrontation in the region, invented by the Algerian regime, was pure propaganda aimed at diverting attention away from its complicity and responsibility under international humanitarian law. In the absence of any instance of forced displacement, the situation in the Sahara remained calm and stable, as witnessed by United Nations agencies present in the field, including UNHCR and the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), which monitored the ceasefire in the region. The United Nations had never referred to any armed conflict or violent activities in the Sahara. With regard to the alleged occupation of the Western Sahara, he recalled that it had ended in 1975, just as the colonization of Algeria had ended in 1962, a process to which his country had contributed substantially. Since that time, the United Nations had considered the Sahara issue not an occupation but a regional dispute in which Algeria was the main, if not the only responsible, party. The Algerian people lived in precarious conditions, facing the horrendous ordeal of forced displacement in their own country as a result of a failed public policy and years of corruption and embezzlement by the military regime in power.

77. **Mr. Akzhigitov** (Russian Federation) described as 'politicized' the statement made by the representative of Georgia. He emphasized that South Ossetia and Abkhazia were independent States, not occupied Georgian territories, and that claims to the contrary were unfounded. The true underlying cause of forced migration in the region had been the aggressive policy adopted by Tbilisi. His country was therefore convinced that the conclusion of a legally binding agreement on the non-use of force between the countries of Georgia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia could serve as a mechanism for normalizing the situation in the region and overcoming problems, including in the humanitarian field.

78. **Ms. Marrazza** (United States of America) said it was not sanctions that drove migration from Venezuela, but the illegitimate Maduro regime that had bankrupted the country and had forced millions of its citizens to flee. Sanctions were an important and effective tool for responding to malign behaviour, promoting peace and countering terrorism; they could, among other things, promote accountability for human rights violations and abuses, corruption and the undermining of democracy. Those who pointed to sanctions as the problem advanced a false narrative. Economic sanctions were a legitimate way to achieve foreign policy, security and other national and international objectives, a view and a practice shared by countries other than her own.

79. The United States took extraordinary measures to minimize the potential humanitarian impact of its sanctions on vulnerable communities. Its sanctions programme included broad exemptions and authorizations to safeguard the provision of humanitarian assistance and the commercial sale and export of food, agricultural commodities, medicine and medical devices to Venezuela. Her country had made it clear that should the provision of humanitarian aid be impeded, it would be notified by Venezuela so that appropriate steps could be taken; to date, however, no legitimate impediment had been identified by the Maduro regime.

80. More than 6.1 million people had fled Venezuela since 2015, making it the largest external displacement of persons in the hemisphere's history. Of those, more than 5 million had sought refuge throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Many were in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, such as access to shelter, education, health and, in some cases, international protection. To that end, President Biden had announced at the Ninth Summit of the Americas nearly \$314 million in new humanitarian, health, economic and development assistance for Venezuelan refugees, vulnerable migrants and their host communities across the hemisphere. As the single largest donor to the Venezuela regional crisis, her country had provided more than \$1.9 billion of such assistance since 2017.

81. **Mr. Chemakh** (Algeria), noting the Secretary-General's recent condemnation of atrocities committed by Morocco, said that country had yet again sought to evade responsibility for its actions, undermining its system of governance. Assured by the support of certain complicit parties, the Moroccan regime was vainly attempting to impose a blackout on Sahrawi refugees and legitimize the illegal occupation of the non-self-governing territory of Western Sahara. Its deplorable attitude was a poor disguise for its underhanded attempts; blinded by its geographical fixation and long-held expansionist ambitions, the regime was attempting to perpetuate a short-sighted, self-serving status quo and deprive the Sahrawi people of their inalienable right to self-determination and independence.

82. Through an increasing number of manoeuvres aimed at distorting, falsifying and diluting the legitimacy of the Sahrawi cause, the Moroccan occupier also sought to tarnish Algeria's image and undermine its unwavering solidarity with Sahrawi refugees, who were hosted in camps near Tindouf in what had become the longest-standing refugee crisis in UNHCR's mandate. Morocco had cynically employed appalling tactics against Algeria and other neighbouring countries, including espionage, the use of mass migration as a means of exerting political pressure, drug trafficking and support for terrorist groups. Nonetheless, those illegal and immoral processes, rooted in a desire to benefit from colonization and fictional triumphs of diplomacy, had failed to change the nature of the conflict in the Western Sahara, a matter which had been settled by the United Nations in 1966 and recognized by the International Court of Justice as a decolonization issue in 1975.

83. As usual, the representative of Morocco was attempting to classify the Polisario Front as a separatist organization, while neglecting to admit that it had been recognized by the International Court of Justice and the Court of Justice of the European Union as the sole legitimate representative of the Sahrawi people, thus affording it diplomatic and judicial authority. In that connection, he underscored that Morocco had formally recognized the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, which was clearly mentioned in the Constitutive Act of the African Union as a founding member. In response to Morocco's crude attempts to align Algeria and the Polisario Front with practices banned by the international convention, he recalled that those allegations had been flatly refuted by international courts, the United Nations and other actors engaged in the Sahrawi refugee situation for almost half a decade. He therefore urged the representative of the Moroccan occupier to rethink his notions about decolonization, decolonize his own way of thinking and face up to the fact that Morocco was depriving the Sahrawi people of their rights against their will.

84. **Mr. Jalagania** (Georgia), referring to the right of reply statement made by the representative of the Russian Federation, recalled that on 21 January 2021 in the case of Georgia v. Russia (II) the European Court of Human Rights had established that the Russian Federation had violated a number of articles of the European Convention on Human Rights during the August 2008 war, and, as it had exercised effective control over the Tskhinvali region and Abkhazia, it had been responsible for the mass violations committed against the Georgian population. Importantly, the Court had recognized that those regions were an integral part of Georgia's territory. As an occupying power, the Russian Federation would thus continue to bear

responsibility for the dire situation in the occupied territories until it fully relinquished control of them.

Programme/protection policy (EC/73/SC/CRP.15)

85. **Ms. Lippman** (Head of the Development Partnership, Analytics and Research Service of the Division of Resilience and Solutions, UNHCR) expressed her strong appreciation of the technical support of the World Bank, the Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development in developing the initiative on measuring the impact of protecting, hosting and assisting refugees, in line with the objectives of General Assembly resolution 72/150. As one of three processes informing the collective assessment of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), that initiative included the development of metrics to inform discussions about cooperation and responsibility-sharing, and the analysis of pledges and commitments made during the Global Refugee Forum.

86. Turning to the support provided by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, she said that the 2020 refugee financing survey had been aimed at collecting information on official development assistance and ‘beyond aid’ trends for the benefit of refugees, returnees and host communities in developing countries since the adoption of the GCR. It provided data on official development assistance to support five of the fifteen indicators of the GCR indicator report, and contributed to measuring the gaps in international cooperation. While the 2021 report demonstrated an increase in official development assistance to refugee situations and a general upward trend, the overall increase in funding had been offset by the increase in forcibly displaced people, the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequences of the Ukraine crisis. In that context, measuring the cost of inclusion in national systems had become increasingly important, and she drew attention to the longstanding concern of host States that their contributions to refugee protection, resilience and solutions had been insufficiently recognized.

87. Despite the constraints of the pandemic, some progress had been made. In 2021, the World Bank and UNHCR had released a report entitled “The Global Cost of Inclusive Refugee Education”. Based on two years of work with several Member States, the methodology provided an analytical framework for measuring and projecting the cost of inclusion in the sector. Notably, the paper had highlighted that the average annual cost of educating refugees was less than 5 per cent of public education expenditure in developing nations, which hosted 85 per cent of the world’s refugees. Moreover, the inclusion of refugees in national education systems had an estimated annual cost of \$4.85 billion globally. If Member States worked together, that figure was achievable and provided a benchmark for discussions with development and private sector actors to achieve education goals for refugees. Including those costings in financing models incorporated the costs associated with supporting refugees to be included in national systems into systemic global education discussions, leading to greater global recognition of the gaps in funding and financial mechanisms for refugees who fell outside of national systems, and of the gaps in responsibility-sharing for supporting host countries.

88. With regard to the country-level costings under way, she noted that the World Bank was supporting a follow-on study with select countries to assess the status of education sector costings and the status of financing to support refugees, with a view to establishing how refugees were represented in national data systems, such as Education Management Information Systems, and in decision-making processes. Such costing work had been undertaken in Colombia, Kenya and Uganda, in addition to regional work, such as the facilitated costed plan undertaken in the Sudan by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. Fully understanding the cost implications of including refugees in national education systems was proving to be a critical element of the urgent advocacy to generate the resources required to ensure equitable access to quality education.

89. For 2020/2021, the agreed aim had been to consolidate the practical impact-measuring work developed during 2018 and 2019, expand the costing analysis to another sector and organize regional meetings in Member States. Although the latter two activities had not taken place due to the pandemic, there was a need to reflect on the best course of action for the initiative and assess progress ahead of the Global Refugee Forum in 2023. In that connection, she encouraged Member States to express their interest in actively participating in and leading the impact-measuring initiative.

90. **Mr. Banzet** (Canada), reaffirming his country's commitment to responsibility-sharing and commending the efforts of host states to assist refugees, acknowledged the important socioeconomic contribution of refugees to host communities. Effective humanitarian action, including action to address the specific needs of refugees and host communities, must be informed by reliable data and evidence, which required investment in innovative approaches and in the architecture supporting evidence-based decision making. Shared investment in data collection and disaggregation would facilitate effective responses and interoperability, thus ensuring a coordinated and constructive approach. Enhanced data, while supporting traditional humanitarian responses, was also critical for anticipating population movements and facilitating interventions based on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus to improve preparedness, enhance resilience and promote the safe and sustainable voluntary return of refugees. Canada welcomed UNHCR's role in the Joint Intersectoral Analysis Framework, and called for continued inter-agency efforts to improve the humanitarian programme cycle and contribute to a more coherent, coordinated and effective humanitarian response.

91. **Ms. Adoum** (Cameroon) said that the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts and climate change had made it increasingly difficult for host countries to manage the situation of refugees and displaced persons. Welcoming the participation of the High Commissioner for Refugees in the Regional Ministerial Conference on Solutions in the Context of Forced Displacement related to the Central African crisis, held in Yaoundé from 25 to 28 April 2022, she noted with satisfaction that the event had provided a framework for strengthening international solidarity and had prompted the adoption of the Yaoundé Declaration, which heralded a new era for the management of forced displacement in Central Africa and the Lake Chad basin. As a country committed to fraternity and solidarity, Cameroon would continue to play its part in ensuring that refugees, in particular those from Central Africa, continued to experience the same socioeconomic realities as its own citizens, and stood ready to work towards the implementation of the Yaoundé Declaration.

92. **Mr. Guillond** (the Republic of the Congo), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, strongly encouraged the international community to redouble its efforts to support the coordinating actions of UNHCR in measuring the impact of protecting, hosting and assisting refugees, given the grave impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the principles of burden-sharing and solidarity. As low- and middle-income countries hosted the highest number of refugees and displaced people, they would require greater support from the international community to strengthen hosting conditions for people in need of international protection. The Group therefore supported the UNHCR's approach for addressing the deficiencies in burden- and responsibility-sharing at an international level, in line with the GCR.

93. Recalling that some 85 per cent of refugees were hosted in developing countries, he noted the global rise in refugees and displaced people forced to leave their countries of origin to escape armed conflicts, violence and increasingly hostile climate conditions. The protracted conflicts in Africa had devastating consequences for the families of uprooted people, while making it more difficult for host countries to accommodate them. Refugees in many countries, in particular women and children, were exposed to greater risks of violence and exploitation, often being forced to work illegally or in very dangerous conditions.

94. As the main host continent for refugees, Africa continued to face challenges in hosting, assisting and protecting forcibly displaced people. Certain camps were plagued by a lack of hygiene, overcrowding and food insecurity, conditions which exiled generations had endured for decades. Refugees often outnumbered resident populations, and coupled with a lack of resources, that led to conflict. Given that many host countries were in a similar situation to refugees' countries of origin, African States struggled to meet their hosting obligations. In that connection, the Group reiterated its call for equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing to be widely accepted and translated into international practice, with a view to relieving disproportionately burdened host countries.

95. In line with its tradition of hospitality, the African continent was committed to investing in refugees and those who hosted them. The Group appreciated the support of the World Bank in evaluating the short-, mid- and long-term impact of refugees. It welcomed the valuable conclusions on the methodology for measuring the cost of integration into the national education system, and noted with satisfaction the working group established at the request of Member States

to guide work in that area. The Group further welcomed the World Bank's efforts to address the factors that drove people to seek refuge in other countries, and to ascertain the root causes of conflict and fragility. To eradicate conflicts and violence, which were causes of forced internal displacement, it was incumbent on States to maintain an appropriate governance framework. In closing, the Group called on the international community and UNHCR partners to create the conditions conducive to burden- and responsibility –sharing, and to make available more funds for humanitarian causes, thus ensuring the attainment of the GCR objectives.

96. **Ms. Chapman** (United States of America) said that UNHCR's efforts to measure the impact of hosting, protecting and assisting refugees provided crucial data to underpin more effective programming to meet the long-term needs of refugees and host communities. It was more important than ever for the international community to work in partnership with refugee-hosting countries to share the responsibility for providing assistance and protection. Her country had emphasized its commitment to that priority during the High-Level Officials Meeting in December 2021, when it had pledged to support at least ten existing pledges made by States and organizations aimed at strengthening the inclusion of refugees by host communities and helping refugees become self-reliant. They would continue to work to implement that pledge over the next two years. The United States had also pledged continued support for the International Development Association's Window for Host Communities and Refugees and the Global Concessional Financing Facility (GCFF). Those facilities, hosted by the World Bank Group, had been critical tools in helping host countries to address the development needs of refugees and their host communities, while also supporting a protective policy environment for refugees. The United States had contributed to the GCFF since its creation, including US\$ 40 million in 2021 to support the implementation of temporary protected status for Venezuelans in Colombia.

97. She welcomed the work of UNHCR and the World Bank to measure the cost of the inclusion of refugees in host countries' national education systems, and looked forward to hearing how those findings would be used to inform policy and programming in future. The United States also continued to support the World Bank-UNHCR Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement (JDC) and would appreciate more information on its work to develop a costing methodology for shelter and housing.

98. **Ms. Rush** (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) said that her Government had led the way in forging innovative solutions to refugee crises and championing a longer-term, international approach to displacement. Ultimately, political efforts to build and sustain peace were the key to resolving displacement. The United Kingdom was committed to supporting refugees, upholding the Refugee Convention and enabling a long-term approach to refugee assistance, as well as providing protection that restored dignity and offered refugees a viable future.

99. Since 2015, the United Kingdom had provided over GBP 11 billion in humanitarian funding to support the world's most vulnerable people. It had also committed to spending GBP 3 billion over the next three years on humanitarian assistance. The United Kingdom recognized the considerable burden on host nations, while commending the support they provided and supporting the call to enlist the active engagement of a greater number of stakeholders to promote more equitable, predictable and sustainable burden-sharing.

100. The efforts of UNHCR and the World Bank to develop a methodology to measure the cost of the inclusion of refugees in host countries' national education systems were to be commended. She looked forward to further updates regarding the working group of Member States to guide further work in the education sector. It would also be interesting to better understand how UNHCR measured progress with regard to the inclusion of refugees in national systems, since the annual Global Report only included percentages and not the actual numbers.

101. **Mr. Mayr** (Germany) commended UNHCR on its important work and agreed that international efforts towards more equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing should not wait for a full assessment of impact and shortcomings. The basic facts were already clear: a small number of countries hosted the majority of refugees or provided the bulk of financial support. Germany was committed to implementing the Global Compact and it supported host countries around the world, providing specific support for the inclusion of refugees into their national education

systems, as pledged at the Global Refugee Forum in 2019. Germany called on others to increase their engagement and commit to more equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing.

102. Quality data was important, but data-sharing had to be coordinated and collaborative. New and existing data centres needed to be brought together and data harmonized across the United Nations system, in order to avoid duplication and allow for a clear evidence-based response.

103. While supporting efforts to address existing gaps in burden-sharing, Germany believed that the discussion should go beyond cost-sharing agreements; it should include ways for refugees to make positive contributions to their host countries. It was also important to recall that burden- and responsibility-sharing needed to include all members of the international community, not just the group of large host countries and top donor countries.

104. **Mr. Al Forhad** (Bangladesh) thanked the Office for its progress report and expressed his appreciation of the World Bank's study measuring the cost of the inclusion of refugees in host countries' national education systems. He noted with concern that burden- and responsibility-sharing remained unequal and that there were huge gaps in international cooperation. Just 15 countries hosted 85 per cent of the world's refugees, and only a handful of donor countries provided the bulk of financial and technical support. Bangladesh was hosting over a million displaced Rohingyas. Despite its resource constraints, it was trying to ensure the best possible humanitarian assistance. However, hosting such a large number of refugees incurred significant economic, environmental, social, health and infrastructural costs. For the past five years, his Government had deployed a large number of public officials and police and security forces to operate the refugee camps, at the cost of service to its own people. The refugee populations had overwhelmed public service delivery and infrastructure in Cox's Bazaar, causing massive disruption to the host community.

105. Although he welcomed the exercise on measuring the impact of hosting refugees on the education sector, it would be good to see similar studies on the impact on other sectors, such as the economic, health, environmental, security and employment sectors of host countries.

106. **Mr. Arga** (Ethiopia) noted that his country was hosting nearly 900,000 refugees from 26 nations. In spite of the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the various socioeconomic and political challenges in the country, the Government of Ethiopia had maintained its longstanding open-door asylum policy. It was also pursuing alternatives to refugee camps, by allowing refugees to reside outside the camps, including in urban areas, where they could better exercise their rights.

107. Although refugees made positive contributions, there were also negative impacts on host communities. UNHCR should conduct further studies and undertake a comprehensive analysis of the impacts of hosting refugees. There was broad recognition of the important gaps in international cooperation, with the large majority of refugees being hosted by a small number of countries and only a few donor countries providing financial and technical support. Host countries took on the greatest burden, so it was crucial to broaden the support base and promote effective responsibility- and burden-sharing in a more equitable, predictable and sustainable way, so as to mitigate those impacts.

Management, financial control, administrative oversight and human resources **(EC/73/SC/CRP.16)**

108. **Ms. Clements** (Deputy High Commissioner, UNHCR) introduced the conference room paper containing proposed changes to the terms of reference of the Independent Audit and Oversight Committee (IAOC). The changes had been proposed by IAOC members following a periodic review in 2021.

109. The first set of proposed changes could be described as "housekeeping". They updated the terms of reference to reflect current IAOC practice and to adapt to changes within UNHCR's functional structure. The second set of proposed changes aimed to bring greater clarity to existing provisions in the terms of reference. The final proposed change would align the IAOC with best practice in the United Nations system by adding ethics to the list of desirable experience for Committee members.

110. There was consensus among IAOC members and UNHCR management on the proposed changes, and they had been approved by the High Commissioner for final consideration and approval by the Executive Committee. The proposed changes were minor refinements and clarifications to the terms of reference, and did not impact the fundamental purpose, mandate or membership of the IAOC.

111. **Ms. Hebert** (Canada) said that she appreciated the important work of the IAOC and supported the proposed revisions to its terms of reference.

112. **Ms. Chapman** (United States of America) supported the proposed revisions, which provided additional clarity. Strengthening oversight and accountability continued to be a top priority for the United States.

113. **Ms. Rush** (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) welcomed the review and update to the IAOC's terms of reference, and supported the proposed changes. She would however be interested to know whether the terms of reference now fully met the criteria for good practices identified by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) in its 2019 Review of audit and oversight committees in the United Nations system. Were there any recommendations that UNHCR had not yet been able to incorporate? She was particularly interested in Recommendation 4 from the JIU report, on including the oversight of ethics and anti-fraud activities in the revised terms of reference in order to strengthen the accountability framework. Although the proposed changes would add ethics to the terms of reference under areas of expertise for members of the Committee, and fraud was already included, neither were explicitly mentioned in the Committee's mandate. Lastly, she noted that the terms of reference did not include anything about performance evaluation of the IAOC. She wondered whether the processes for self-assessment or external evaluation of the IAOC should be reflected in the terms of reference.

114. **Ms. Clements** (Deputy High Commissioner, UNHCR) said that she believed the terms of reference now effectively matched the JIU recommendations. Indeed, the proposed addition of ethics was for that reason. She noted that the IAOC Chairperson had indicated that the Committee had done some self-assessment themselves at their most recent session, which had been their first in-person meeting in quite some time. They would be undertaking a survey in the coming weeks among those within the organization who interacted most specifically with the Committee, and the results of that survey could be made available as early as September, or perhaps at the next session of the Standing Committee. With regard to the question of external evaluation, she believed that it would be preferable to keep the terms of reference as light and nimble as possible, and she advised against inserting additional elements.

115. **The Chairperson** took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft decision on the revised terms of reference and criteria for membership of the Independent Audit and Oversight Committee, contained in Annex II of document EC/73/SC/CRP.16.

116. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.