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Summary record of the 747th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 10 October 2022, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Baddoura (Lebanon)

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

General debate (*continued*)

1. **Ms. Farouq** (Nigeria) said that her Government remained committed to meeting its obligations under the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. As part of its commitment to the Global Compact on Refugees, her Government had incorporated a road map on its implementation into the country's Medium-Term National Development Plan, 2021–2025.
2. The National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons had been approved, establishing safeguards for the approximately 3.2 million internally displaced persons in Nigeria. Moreover, the National Assembly was currently considering legislation that would incorporate the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa into domestic law.
3. Nigeria was host to more than 89,000 refugees and asylum-seekers from over 30 different countries and more than 340,000 Nigerian refugees were spread across the Niger, Chad and Cameroon. The Government, respecting the non-refoulement principle and the policy of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on alternatives to camps, encouraged integration into host communities in border towns, which facilitated access to livelihoods activities. In recognition of that, the cities of Abuja, Lagos and Calabar had been recognized by the With Refugees campaign.
4. The President of Nigeria had recently approved a procedure for profiling asylum-seekers from Cameroon suspected of having played an active part in armed conflict. Under the Tripartite Agreement between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Governments of Cameroon and Nigeria, over 5,000 Nigerian refugees had been repatriated to Cameroon; negotiations on the voluntary repatriation of Nigerian refugees from the Niger and Chad were at an advanced stage. In addition, her Government was constructing resettlement cities in six states of Nigeria for returnees and internally displaced persons and had increased its efforts to repatriate persons of concern in the north-east of the country.
5. Her Government continued to issue Convention travel documents to refugees and was making efforts to encourage embassies and high commissions in Nigeria to honour such documents. It was also enhancing its capacity to manage data on internally displaced persons and encouraging civic registration of persons of concern. Alongside the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR, the Government was combating trafficking in persons by means of the project entitled “Strengthening evidence-based response to trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants in Nigeria”.
6. Climate change in the Lake Chad basin had increased all forms of displacement across the region. Against that backdrop, her Government was seeking partnerships to support its National Flood Emergency Response Plan, among other climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, and its National Humanitarian-Development-Peace Framework. The abhorrent racism and discrimination suffered by refugees and migrants of sub-Saharan African descent had no place in the world. Her Government called for global cooperation with burden-sharing and for solidarity towards countries of origin and host countries.
7. **Princess Lindiwe** (Observer for Eswatini) said that the Kingdom of Eswatini aligned itself with the High Commissioner's opening statement. It was essential to recognize that displaced persons had enforceable rights and not to provide services and facilities to persons of concern grudgingly. The Kingdom fully met its international obligations through the implementation of the Refugee Act of 2017. Her Government would not compel refugees to return to countries where they could be subjected to persecution of any kind.
8. Changes to the refugee status determination process had increased the number of asylum decisions per month. The Ministry of Home Affairs had partnered with World Vision and UNHCR on initiatives that included a pilot livelihoods project, in which 52 households in Ndzevane refugee camp produced vegetables. Also, her Government continued exploring various sustainable economic integration models to accompany resettlement.

9. On 16 March 2022, Eswatini had concluded a memorandum of agreement on implementing the National Action Plan to Eradicate Statelessness. The exercise of the Ministry of Home Affairs to improve national birth registration levels and ensure an updated and credible national population register, along with the almost-complete study on the stateless population, would inform the Government on the extent of statelessness in the country, in order to enable it to take appropriate measures. In addition, a bill on national civil registration and vital statistics was being currently pending a decision by the parliament.

10. **Mr. Shamukuni** (Observer for Botswana) said that his Government was grateful to UNHCR for reducing the staff of its Botswana office, rather than closing it entirely. The UNHCR presence at Dukwi refugee camp facilitated joint activities for the refugees and asylum-seekers housed there, such as livelihoods projects, along with preventing and responding to gender-based violence and other social ills.

11. Botswana faced challenges caused by the onward movement of asylum-seekers, who had either been granted refugee status in neighbouring countries or left their camps before the processing of their asylum claims. The situation did not promote burden-sharing between States. His Government was discussing with the regional UNHCR office, in South Africa, feasible lasting solutions to the resulting caseload.

12. In Dukwi refugee camp, 100 housing units had been refurbished to house asylum-seekers; such asylum-seekers had previously been kept in Francistown Centre for Illegal Immigrants until their application had been processed. At the Centre, 20 refurbished family units had been created to house asylum-seekers while they awaited processing by officials, following rejection of their application. The relaxation of travel restrictions related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had revealed latent interest in voluntary repatriation, with six refugees having been helped to return to their countries of origin from Botswana; in addition, the Government was currently helping others to do so.

13. His Government wished to thank all donors to UNHCR. It was crucial for the international community to intervene swiftly in conflicts, which were a fundamental cause of mass human flight.

14. **Mr. Darar** (Djibouti) said that his country had been one of the first to implement the comprehensive refugee response framework and was, with support from UNHCR, implementing a policy to expedite refugees' inclusion in its socioeconomic programmes. Refugees' integration was an important element of the National Development Plan 2020–2024 (known as Djibouti ICI). The Government encouraged all States in the Horn of Africa – home to around 4 million refugee children, in total – to follow the example of his country, where 76 refugees had completed their schooling and started studying at the University of Djibouti. With the support of UNHCR, the Government was updating the details it had recorded for the refugees in Djibouti City, with a view to enabling them to find work, travel freely throughout the country and take out commercial loans. In addition, the Government was guaranteeing some 12,000 refugees universal health insurance. Other measures promoting refugees' socioeconomic inclusion included a law to protect their rights and a World Bank-funded urban development programme for refugee communities.

15. In August 2022, a mission organized by the UNHCR office in Djibouti had visited Rwanda, where the members of the mission had held discussions on best practices for refugee integration, which had been very fruitful for both sides. In addition, with a view to demonstrating the country's progress with implementing the comprehensive refugee response framework, a national forum on refugee integration would be held in Djibouti in 2023, to which the High Commissioner and all Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) members were invited.

16. The international community should live up to its burden-sharing responsibilities, in a region suffering political and security upheaval. Djibouti would continue honouring its commitments under the comprehensive refugee response framework.

17. **Mr. Sirleaf** (Observer for Liberia) said that his Government was grateful to the High Commissioner for his leadership during his visit to Liberia in June 2022 and subsequent participation in the voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees. Between October 2021 and

October 2022, voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees had reduced the refugee population of Liberia from nearly 32,500 to just over 5,000.

18. Under the Roadmap for Comprehensive Solutions for Ivorian Refugees, agreed – with UNHCR support – between Liberia and other regional countries hosting Ivorian refugees, cessation of refugee status for Ivorians living in Liberia had come into effect on 30 July 2022. The durable solution survey conducted jointly by his Government and UNHCR had shown that 865 Ivorian refugees had opted to integrate locally. In support of their integration, the Government had acquired and readied over 1,400 acres of land and had built more than 260 shelters. In addition, the President had issued an executive order instructing all government ministries and agencies to provide services, including issuance of civil documentation, for locally integrated Ivorian families. Nearly all of the country’s 330 applications for exemptions to the cessation of refugee status under review had been processed. All six of the asylum applications received during the previous 12 months had been approved.

19. He called on UNHCR to cater for the needs of the nearly 2,800 Ivorian nationals who had not been counted during the verification exercise conducted in October 2021 in collaboration with the Office to determine the size of the Ivorian population of refugees and asylum-seekers living in Liberia. His Government would also be grateful for the Office’s support with providing help for the more than 1,500 Liberians who wished to return to their country of origin from Ghana.

20. **Ms. Kayisire** (Rwanda) said that her Government hosted more than 127,000 refugees, 90 per cent of them living in refugee camps across the country and dependent on humanitarian assistance. In accordance with the comprehensive refugee response framework and the Global Compact on Refugees, it had strengthened policies aimed at the socioeconomic inclusion of refugees in education, health, civil registration, employment and other areas. It had entered into a memorandum of understanding with UNHCR and the African Union to help evacuate refugees and asylum-seekers from Libya through the Office’s emergency transit mechanism for resettlement in third countries. Her Government was proud of the progress made and was committed to strengthening its partnership with UNHCR.

21. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic to refugee response and returnee operations around the world, Rwanda had continued to provide protection and assistance to refugees, to open its doors to asylum-seekers and to help refugees to achieve durable solutions. Since August 2020, more than 30,000 Burundian refugees had received assistance with safe and dignified voluntary repatriation, a process that would continue. Her Government was making headway in honouring the commitments it had given at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019 in the areas of education, health, jobs and livelihoods, energy, infrastructure, environment, civil registration and refugees’ access to legal documentation. It was redoubling its efforts to improve refugees’ job prospects and economic opportunities and to empower them to be self-reliant. Good progress had also been made towards implementing the Government’s commitment to eradicate statelessness by 2024; a new nationality law facilitated the naturalization of stateless persons and systematic birth registration. Children who were born in a health facility were immediately assigned a unique identifier.

22. After the cessation of refugee status for Rwandans had entered into effect, her country had kept its doors open to Rwandan refugees, including some 1,900 in 2022, most of whom had come from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She urged States hosting Rwandan refugees to encourage them to return or to integrate them in the host country. The developmental approach to refugee response was being successfully implemented. Infrastructure, such as classrooms, water systems and markets, had been built with the support of partners’ funding and economic opportunities for refugees had been improved in an effort to pave the way to self-reliance. Refugees had been included in the recent national census. A report was being drawn up with a view to shaping future responses and ensuring refugees’ inclusion in national development planning. Rwanda was committed to further cooperation to protect and improve the welfare of persons of concern.

23. **Mr. Masauni** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his Government had recently conducted two critical exercises in cooperation with UNHCR, namely the Intention Survey and “Go and See” visits to Burundi, both of which had shown that most Burundian refugees

in the United Republic of Tanzania did not need international protection. Against that background, his Government again urged the application of the cessation clauses to Burundian refugees.

24. Three major groups of refugees in his country were a matter of concern: Burundians who had fled in the 1970s, Congolese refugees from the 1990s and Burundians who had left their country in 2015. It was regrettable that the international community was failing to provide any support for Burundians who had sought asylum in 1972 and was supplying only insignificant funds to assist the Congolese who were in a protracted refugee situation. In fact, the Burundians who had arrived in 2015 were the world's least-funded refugees. Although most of the Burundians who had entered the country in 1972 had since been naturalized, they continued to live in refugee camps and were poorly integrated into the local Tanzanian community. To remedy that situation, the Government intended to close the camps and to settle them in various locations around the country. The Government also intended to map and document Burundians who had settled on their own initiative in villages in Kigoma Region in order to avoid possible statelessness.

25. To enable it to implement those initiatives, his Government called for much-needed humanitarian support from UNHCR and the international community at large. In that connection, he highlighted the importance of addressing the root causes of displacement as a means of controlling large refugee movements.

26. His Government was committed to the implementation of all international instruments governing refugee matters and would continue to be a reliable partner in the search for durable solutions for the refugee population still in the country.

27. **Mr. Mahmood** (Pakistan) said that, for over four decades, his country had been on the frontline of offering protection in one of the world's biggest refugee crises and it was currently taking the brunt of climate change, despite the fact that it was not responsible for either. It therefore looked to the international community to act more responsibly by demonstrating enhanced engagement and providing support.

28. The staggering impact of the recent unprecedented floods induced by climate change had caused the death and injury of thousands of persons, a massive loss of livestock and crops and a huge amount of damage and destruction to homes and infrastructure. The Secretary-General of the United Nations had estimated that the total damage might amount to US\$ 30 billion, although Pakistan contributed less than 1 per cent to the global carbon footprint.

29. That catastrophe had also affected Afghan refugees, particularly those in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan Provinces. Pakistan had nevertheless steadfastly provided protection and basic services to over three million Afghan nationals and was committed to working with partners to promote the three pillars of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries. While he appreciated the increased repatriation grant to returnees, it remained insufficient to meet burgeoning challenges, especially rising inflation.

30. His Government had supplied documentation to assist Afghan refugees' access to employment and banking services. The documentation renewal and information verification exercise (DRIVE) had been completed successfully in 2021 with the financial support of UNHCR. While he welcomed donors' contributions to the Afghanistan situation refugee response plan, the levels of funding received to date were so modest that ongoing efforts might be compromised. He therefore requested UNHCR to take steps for the timely mobilization of resources.

31. Those growing challenges were another reminder of the need to give full effect to the Global Compact on Refugees and to fulfil the pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum. The focus must remain on protracted refugee situations. His Government therefore urged UNHCR to broaden its donor base and advocate grant-based financing. His country looked forward to strong, continuing partnership with UNHCR in the future.

32. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he wished to express his sympathy for the losses and damage caused by the catastrophic flooding in Pakistan. UNHCR would continue to participate in the international community's humanitarian response. Due note had been taken of the disparity between the impact of

climate change on Pakistan and the country's tiny share of the global carbon footprint. UNHCR would continue to stand by Pakistan which, for over 40 years, had played a major role in hosting millions of Afghan refugees. He agreed that the cash grant for that purpose was insufficient, but the current financial situation made it impossible to give more. He concurred that the protracted refugee situation should not be neglected. The focus on Afghanistan which had stemmed from the Taliban's takeover of power in 2021 should not obscure the fact that, in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, there was still a long-standing caseload of Afghan refugees who deserved attention, support and resettlement.

33. In response to the statements made by the Africa Group, he said that a recent high-level UNHCR delegation had visited Abuja and Borno State to discuss with the federal Government and local authorities solutions to the substantial problem of internal displacement in Nigeria. That was an area where, with international support, progress could be made towards ending a long-standing complicated situation. Nigeria was a key partner in some of the most important global discussions of situations that had a direct impact on displacement. The Office counted on Nigeria to play an ongoing regional and global role in those discussions.

34. In Liberia, he had been privileged to witness one of the last organized movements of Ivorian returnees before the cessation clause had come into effect and he wished to thank the President of Liberia for all the work done in that respect. The appropriate follow-up action would be taken, if necessary, with some other agencies, in respect of some Ivorians who had opted to remain in Liberia and the repatriation of former Liberian refugees from Ghana.

35. He thanked the Eswatini delegation for the generosity the country had shown to refugees and asylum-seekers and for the work it had done to bring its laws into line with its international obligations. The memorandum of agreement for implementation of the National Action Plan to Eradicate Statelessness would enable his Office to offer better support for the country's efforts in that respect. He was glad that the right answer had been found to his Office's continued presence in Botswana. He welcomed the fact that there had been some returns to the country. He congratulated Djibouti on being one of the countries that was most committed to giving effect to the principles of the Global Compact on Refugees and indeed it had acquired exemplary know-how in the inclusion of refugees in society, inter alia through their education. He encouraged it to press on with its efforts in that domain. He was grateful to the representative of Rwanda for giving some examples of good practice with regard to the inclusion of refugees in the community. Inclusion in national systems was really the best way to protect refugees. It was vital to mobilize resources for both recent and long-standing refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania. As he had said earlier, his Office would continue to work with Burundi to create conditions to enable Burundians in the border areas of the United Republic of Tanzania to return to their country in safety and dignity.

36. **Mr. Mavima** (Zimbabwe) said that the various challenges that had driven unprecedented numbers of persons from their homes necessitated collaborative efforts to provide immediate assistance to and durable solutions for persons of concern. In his country, National Development Strategy 1 contained pro-poor policies designed to remove structural barriers and leave no one behind. Sustained efforts had been made to promote the self-reliance of refugees and asylum-seekers and build their resilience. To that end, his Government was fostering strategic partnerships with local and international agencies with the aim of creating an enabling environment for projects initiated by refugees. One of the main objectives was to promote food security for refugees, asylum-seekers and host communities.

37. Member States must address the root causes of their failure to meet their international obligations. His Government called on UNHCR to reduce the widening funding gap between Member States' needs and available resources.

38. In line with the pledges that it had made at the Global Refugee Forum in 2019, his Government had made strides in facilitating the inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers through sport and cultural programmes. Several youth organizations that had been set up at the Tongogara refugee camp had provided young people with coping mechanisms which had made them less prone to drug and substance abuse, or to mental health issues associated with idleness.

39. Unilateral sanctions had greatly undermined his country's ability adequately to meet the needs of persons of concern. His Government therefore strongly supported the call for the ending of unilateral coercive measures. However, good relations between UNHCR and his Government had facilitated the introduction of a developmental approach to refugee protection that enabled refugees to realize their aspirations with greater ease.

40. **Mr. Sonko** (Observer for the Gambia) said that his Government welcomed the support provided by UNHCR partners, which enabled it to implement strategies designed to secure the well-being of displaced persons and refugees. Nevertheless, it reiterated its call for greater support for the Office's humanitarian work to help the millions of persons displaced or internally displaced by the growing number of human rights violations, armed conflicts, terrorism and climate change. Developing and the least developed countries were in particular need of assistance, as the huge numbers of refugees, displaced persons and asylum-seekers whom they were hosting had exacerbated the humanitarian emergency even before the COVID-19 pandemic had struck. As of September 2022, his country was hosting over 5,000 persons of concern from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other regions. Most of them were living peacefully in rural host communities. However, the Gambia, along with other developing countries, would welcome a greater supply of COVID-19 vaccines to cope with the unprecedented influx of refugees and displaced persons.

41. His Government would continue to adopt policies and programmes to promote the humanitarian rights of refugees and other vulnerable persons and to ensure their safety and well-being. Gambian education and health laws and policies did not discriminate against refugees, asylum-seekers or other persons of concern and protected them from sexual exploitation and abuse. In order to achieve the goal of ending statelessness by 2024, his Government would welcome assistance from its partners to help it to improve the requisite institutional capacity. As a supply of affordable food and commodities should be regarded as an humanitarian imperative, the least developed countries also needed support to cope with the current price instability.

42. **Mr. Atagarayev** (Turkmenistan) said that Turkmenistan welcomed the focus of UNHCR on close cooperation among States to ensure humanitarian security. His Government was guided by strict observance of the principles of neutrality and unwavering commitment to peaceful political and diplomatic means when it came to providing assistance to and protecting the rights of refugees and stateless persons. It was convinced that world stability and security depended on the eradication of statelessness by 2024 and the provision of socioeconomic assistance to refugees to end their plight. With that goal in mind, his Government had adopted a statutory procedure for determining the status of stateless persons. It had completed the pilot phases of holding a census and electronically registering civil status in some regions and was about to roll out the process throughout the country. The registration of all births was guaranteed. A system for updating the registration of and keeping comprehensive statistics on stateless persons had been launched. In September 2022, citizenship had been granted to over 1,500 stateless persons, which brought the total number of naturalizations to about 30,000. Stateless persons had the same access to rights and freedoms as citizens of the country. As the Global Compact on Refugees, the outcome of the Global Refugee Forum and the Ashgabat Declaration of the International Ministerial Conference of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on Refugees in the Muslim World were inextricably linked, his Government called on the international community to redouble its efforts to support stateless persons and refugees to the best of its ability. A constructive exchange of good practice would lend impetus to the global campaign to end statelessness within a decade. Turkmenistan was open to constructive international partnership which would lay the foundations for global well-being and prosperity.

43. **Ms. Mendonça** (Observer for Angola) said that she wished to draw attention to a framework agreement between UNHCR and IOM entitled "Serving and Protecting Together" which identified potential areas of cooperation in migration management and sought durable solutions for internally displaced persons that were based on global best practices. More than 52,000 migrants were currently receiving international protection in Angola. They comprised over 22,000 refugees and approximately 30,000 asylum-seekers. They benefited from social protection in the form of health care, water and basic sanitation and education. They were granted plots of land for farming and building a home. The birth of their children was

registered and they could obtain a licence to run a business. Women were protected by law against domestic violence.

44. The Government held regular meetings with the National Council for Refugees. Cessation clauses had been invoked in respect of refugees from Sierra Leone, Liberia and Rwanda in line with the Executive Committee's recommendations. Asylum-seekers' right to remain had been extended and refugee passports and residence permits had been issued in pursuance of the Global Compact on Refugees.

45. The Government was committed to the elimination of statelessness through a variety of programmes that would provide all residents of Angola and expatriate Angolans with documents giving them a legal identity and enabling them fully to exercise their rights. Civil registration services had been expanded within the country and had also been set up in embassies abroad. As a result, more than 30,000 identity cards had been issued to Angolan expatriates.

46. She invited everyone at the meeting to the tenth summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, which would be held in Luanda in December 2022. The theme of the summit would be "Three continents, three oceans, a common destiny: building a resilient and sustainable Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States".

47. **Ms. Fati** (Observer for Guinea Bissau) said that her Government welcomed various States' demonstration of their determination to protect the rights of refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons and to find durable solutions for them. The recent situation in Ukraine and Ethiopia highlighted the need for greater human solidarity and collective responsibility. Participation in the Executive Committee offered an opportunity to share worldwide experience and best practice in dealing with issues related to displacement, asylum and migration. Her country could bear witness to the fact that it had proved possible to tackle those scourges successfully through the concerted action of the Government of Guinea Bissau, the UNHCR country office (which had been closed in 2022) and persons of goodwill.

48. Refugees in her country could be naturalized free of charge. Administrative and legal assistance was provided with safe voluntary repatriation to Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria. Support had likewise been provided with the registration of plots of agricultural land for long-term, rural refugees. Studies had been carried out to identify persons who were at risk of statelessness. Sociopolitical action was being launched at central and local government level to forestall risks to communities threatened by climate change and intercommunal conflicts.

49. Further challenges that arose with the implementation of the Abidjan Declaration on the Eradication of Statelessness were related to the naturalization of refugees and their children, the updating and putting into effect of the National Plan on the Prevention and Reduction of Risks of Statelessness, the consolidation of the programme for the sustainable management of land and the integration of refugees in communities, the provision of technical assistance in areas hosting displaced persons, especially on the islands, and the speeding up of operations of the National Commission for Refugees, Stateless and Internally Displaced Persons.

50. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that the closure of the UNHCR office in Guinea Bissau was probably good news, because it showed that many problems had been settled and that the country was able to cope with refugee movements and was successfully combating statelessness. In Angola, the framework agreement with IOM was very important in that it went some way towards clarifying the division of labour and made for even stronger cooperation between the two entities. He thanked the Gambia for its management of mixed flows and for mentioning the fact that inflation had adverse repercussions on the most vulnerable refugees and that it was a humanitarian imperative to counter those effects. He particularly welcomed Zimbabwe's reference to the developmental approach to refugee protection since, as he had said earlier, inclusion was a powerful form of protection. Self-reliance was indeed crucial and, as many refugees were young, it was important to invest in them and to secure their inclusion through sport. The imposition of sanctions should not impede the delivery of humanitarian assistance. He commended Turkmenistan on making great strides towards the reduction of statelessness.

51. **Mr. Rimestad** (Norway) said that the challenge of providing the necessary protection and support for refugees and more than 100 million displaced persons had become overwhelming. Too many protracted crises meant that persons were often displaced for decades. The 40 new crises around the world were another cause of increasing concern. Against that background, UNHCR staff were making commendable efforts to stay and deliver, often in very difficult circumstances. For the first time since the 1990s Norway had reactivated its temporary collective protection procedures that provided medical evacuation and other forms of support to Ukrainians fleeing from horrific attacks on their towns. The illegal war of Russia must stop.

52. A comprehensive approach to the protection of refugees and other displaced persons remained a priority for his Government. It was strongly in favour of the Global Compact on Refugees as a means of promoting inclusive refugee policies and more equitable international burden sharing. It intended to support that approach by specifically allocating budgetary funds to address the needs of displaced persons and host communities. It was vitally important to protect the LGBTQI+ persons, since they were the most vulnerable group of refugees and displaced persons, as a recent spike in gender-based violence had shown. He therefore urged UNHCR to step up its efforts to provide support for survivors of such violence. In that respect, it was crucial to recognize the particular protection needs of boys and men. Norway supported the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement. UNHCR had a key role to play in finding solutions to such displacement.

53. His Government likewise endorsed initiatives that sought to improve refugees' access to jobs and livelihoods through the recognition of their qualifications. Refugees should always be properly consulted on and participate in the formulation of social and economic inclusion policies. A well-functioning asylum system also required an appropriate framework for the return of persons who did not require international protection.

54. Norway strongly supported the mandate of UNHCR. It was committed to providing flexible, unearmarked funding to facilitate the provision of well-coordinated, rapid, effective assistance to persons of concern for many years. He urged other Member States to follow suit in an effort to reduce the current funding gap.

55. **Ms. Di Giovanni** (Holy See) said that the Executive Committee was meeting at a time when violence, persecution and conflict were weakening fraternity and the unity of the human family. As Pope Francis had pointed out in his address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on 10 September 2022, history was unfortunately showing signs of regression towards an all-out third world war. Against that dramatic background, record numbers of displaced persons far outpaced humanitarian aid and jeopardized durable solutions. While the Holy See viewed the forced deportations and other consequences of the war in Ukraine with great apprehension, it was grateful to all those who have offered Ukrainian refugees a generous welcome.

56. Displacement resulting from the increasingly severe impact of climate change and national disasters required deeper reflection and practical action, especially as it had harsh consequences for the poor and vulnerable. A more closely harmonized international and institutional approach that underpinned the protection mandate of UNHCR was needed.

57. At the same time, the Holy See urgently appealed for more tangible progress towards durable solutions. Significant numbers of refugees were unable to return home or integrate into their host communities. In such cases, permanent resettlement in a third country was essential. Refugees and displaced persons were human beings with rights; they should not be regarded as objects of assistance. The Holy See was therefore grateful to countries that had increased their resettlement quotas and to the many faith-based organizations that were cooperating in operations on the ground. However, solidarity and generosity were not inexhaustible and geographical proximity should not be the only factor that determined responsibility for protection or the level of humanitarian aid. The Holy See was concerned that certain countries had offloaded the burden of caring for large, mixed flows on other host communities through agreements that halted the movement of people at strategic points along their journey. Such a delegation of responsibility led many asylum-seekers to embark on even more dangerous routes in search of protection.

58. The Holy See was also concerned that the Executive Committee's conclusions were being used to push certain agendas and ideologies, rather than as a source of technical guidance on ways to meet the very real needs of refugees and host communities. The "take it or leave it" approach of some delegations undermined political will and multilateralism. Her delegation therefore looked forward to a resumption of dialogue in good faith and stood ready to work with States that saw value in rebuilding the foundations of authentic consensus.

59. Given that an increasing fragmentation of solutions was fuelling tension and division, it would be short-sighted to focus solely on the provision of assistance and to ignore the symptoms of various crises that currently confronted the human family. For that reason, the Holy See suggested that there should be deeper collective reflection on the root causes of forced displacement.

60. **Mr. Diarra** (Mali) said that the deep-rooted, multidimensional crisis that had begun in Mali in 2012 had led to the mass displacement of people inside and outside the country's borders. Notwithstanding the efforts and progress made by the Government and its partners in the intervening period, Mali continued to face a complex humanitarian crisis that was linked, among other things, to the adverse effects of climate change, which triggered population movements; persistent insecurity; and widespread food insecurity and malnutrition, which affected women and children in particular. As in other parts of the Sahel, the security situation was characterized by the presence of various armed, primarily terrorist, groups that carried out indiscriminate attacks; intercommunal conflict; the destruction of villages and theft of livestock; and banditry and widespread crime.

61. As at August 2022, more than 422,000 internally displaced persons were being sheltered in one of the more than 260 sites around the country, where they were living with families or host communities or in ad hoc camps. The Government, in partnership with the Office, had launched a project aimed at improving the management and coordination of those sites. In addition, there were around 182,000 Malian refugees in neighbouring countries, while there had been almost 85,000 voluntary repatriations since 2014.

62. Despite the burden of the ongoing security crisis, Mali continued to meet its own obligations to refugees and asylum-seekers, hosting 51,000 persons from several countries. It was currently facing an influx of refugees, from Burkina Faso and the Niger, to whom the Government had granted prima facie refugee status. Registration processes had been carried out, in cooperation with the National Commission for Refugees and UNHCR. As at April 2022, more than 27,000 new refugees, including 15,000 women, had been identified.

63. However, owing to a lack of resources, the Commission was struggling to deliver identification cards to refugees, which, it was feared, could weaken their protection and compound the challenges they faced in the light of growing insecurity. In an effort to find durable solutions, the National Commission for Refugees was moving forward with measures to promote repatriation, in particular of Ivorian refugees. In total, 2,000 Ivoirians had been repatriated, 500 of them since the cessation of refugee status for Ivorian refugees. His Government would therefore be grateful to receive technical, logistic and financial support to enable the Commission to carry out its duties. He wished to assure Member States that the Malian transitional authorities would spare no effort in strengthening security and access to basic social services. His Government wished to express its profound gratitude for the assistance provided by humanitarian partners and friendly countries and to encourage the international community to intensify its support in respect of the security situation in the Sahel.

64. **Mr. Arslan** (Türkiye), speaking on behalf of Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Türkiye and Australia (MIKTA), said that it had been yet another challenging year for the UNHCR. New refugee situations had emerged and intensified, existing challenges had become more protracted and forced displacement now affected more than 100 million people. In 2022 alone, the war in Ukraine had triggered one of the largest refugee crises witnessed in Europe. In that regard, the mobilization of the international community and the generosity of host and donor countries had been remarkable. Nevertheless, existing or emerging crises elsewhere must not be forgotten. Continued support for the Office's efforts to address myriad challenges, including sexual and gender-based violence, was critical, as was increased support for people living in vulnerable situations or facing heightened

protection risks. Ahead of the second Global Refugee Forum, greater burden- and responsibility-sharing and meaningful solidarity were needed, as 86 per cent of the world's refugees were being hosted by low- and middle-income countries.

65. Crises were increasing in number and in complexity. In addition to conflicts, other challenges, such as climate change, food insecurity and environmental degradation, had emerged. Such issues also had a displacement dimension and that vulnerable persons, including displaced persons, were particularly affected. The MIKTA group wished to encourage the international community to step up its collective efforts to address the root causes of forced displacement and achieve durable solutions. They were concerned at ever-growing humanitarian needs and the constant funding gap faced by the Office. Notwithstanding the efforts of UNHCR in that regard, a broader donor base, more flexible funding and greater collaboration with development actors and international financial institutions were needed. Moreover, the members of the MIKTA group were of the view that the international community should shoulder more of the responsibility with regard to reversing current trends, reducing displacement levels and adopting preventive approaches.

66. **Ms. López Córdoba** (Observer for Panama) said that, as a country of transit for migrant and refugee flows, Panama was working to strengthen the principle of shared responsibility between other countries and to guarantee adequate conditions for persons requiring international protection. In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant border closures, her Government had striven to provide comprehensive responses to those persons who had fled their countries of origin. Among other measures, it had increased technical capacity-building for public officials and increased the number of personnel in border areas. It has likewise taken steps to enhance the employability of refugees, asylum-seekers and host communities, provide access to vocational training and recognize stateless persons. In terms of health, the Government had ensured an inclusive roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines to cover all persons who were within the national territory. In addition, a protocol on mental health care for refugees and migrants had been devised and a special framework had been put in place for the protection of women fleeing persecution.

67. She wished to reaffirm her country's commitment to providing protection to those persons who had been forced to leave their homes and to leaving no one behind. The support provided to that end by the Office and by civil society organizations was to be commended. Now was the time for Member States and international organizations to provide effective regional and global responses to the challenges that displaced persons faced owing to the pandemic. Lastly, she noted the importance of the Plan of Action of the Quito Process on the Human Mobility of Venezuelan Nationals in the Region and of the comprehensive regional protection and solutions framework (MIRPS). In 2023, Panama would be assuming the MIRPS pro tempore presidency.

68. **Mr. Matembo** (Zambia) said that his country was currently home to more than 94,000 asylum-seekers, refugees and former refugees from Angola and Rwanda. As persons of concern, they were hosted in one of three designated refugee settlements, although many lived in urban areas. The settlements were located in rural areas with limited or inadequate infrastructure or access to basic social services owing to low levels of investment. For that reason, such settlements were unattractive, which was why the majority of refugees in Africa, including in Zambia, opted to live outside them, thereby causing the movement of people from rural areas to the cities and limiting their full enjoyment of life.

69. The Government was embarking on a project to modernize refugee settlements with a view to enhancing the quality of life, resilience and self-reliance of persons of concern and encouraging displaced persons from other nations, such as Ukraine, to seek asylum in Zambia. The Government's overarching vision was for every part of the country, including refugee settlements, to benefit from development. Support in that endeavour would be welcomed from the donor community.

70. Measures were also being taken to integrate former refugees. A model on regularizing their status had been drafted and persons of concern had now been included in development programmes, national statistics and planning, including in the recent national census. In an effort to find durable solutions for refugees, a national refugee policy was being drawn up and the Government was aiming to repatriate around 10,000 Congolese refugees who had

expressed a willingness to return to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. To date, the return of more than 5,000 persons had been facilitated.

71. In support of the global campaign to end statelessness within a decade, a draft national action plan on statelessness was being finalized and steps had been taken towards acceding to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Lastly, his Government wished to convey its gratitude for the support of the international community and UNHCR and expressed the hope that such support would continue as the Government began its refugee settlement modernization project.

72. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he appreciated the comments made by the representative of Türkiye, speaking also on behalf of Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea and Australia, and welcomed the reference to the need for a broader focus. The emphasis placed on finding durable solutions was also appreciated. He hoped that the group of countries would continue to raise issues of displacement, population flows and refugees in international forums, including with other Group of 20 members, to ensure that such issues received sufficient political attention and financing.

73. Mali was facing an extremely dangerous security context linked to the situation in the Sahel, as well as considerable political challenges. He wished to reassure the Government of Mali that his Office and its humanitarian partners remained steadfast in their commitment to mitigating the humanitarian consequences of population displacements. He noted, however, that it remained difficult to gain access to areas that were controlled by armed groups. It had also proved challenging to mobilize development aid, which was sorely needed as the subregion also faced challenges in terms of development and climate change. It was to be hoped that the transition process would pave the way to an environment that was conducive to mobilizing the resources needed.

74. He wished to acknowledge the long tradition in Zambia of hosting refugees from surrounding countries. In the light of the new trends, challenges and population flows affecting the Southern African subregion, he agreed that new approaches should be studied. He was interested to hear about the new initiatives being taken by the Government of Zambia, in particular with regard to refugee settlements, and looked forward to discussing them further. It was important to keep in mind that, when it came to refugee camps and settlements, inclusion and openness remained the best options. Making open settlements, which existed in a number of countries, including Zambia, and thus making them more attractive was to be commended. The parallel measures for refugees willing to integrate in Zambia were also welcomed. The Office would continue to advocate development as well as humanitarian support.

75. He welcomed the progress that had been made by the Government of Panama to strengthen the management of population flows, which were particularly complex in Panama. The measures taken to ensure the inclusion of refugees in terms of health, mental health and other aspects was to be commended. He agreed that a regional response was needed and noted with interest that, in 2023, Panama was assuming the MIRPS pro tempore presidency and the presidency of the Regional Conference on Migration, thus providing an opportunity to develop synergies with regard to migration and refugees, both of which were highly relevant to the Central American context.

76. Turning to the statement from the Holy See, he said that the highly valuable leadership of Pope Francis, who had spoken in such clear terms about many global challenges relevant to the situation of refugees, such as poverty, inequality and climate change, and had voiced strong opposition to war, violence and conflict. He agreed that a more serious discussion on the root causes of forced displacement was needed and that the importance of reconciliation should be highlighted. Indeed, it was through reconciliation that a solution had been found for Ivorian refugees. He noted the comments made about the sometimes challenging discussions surrounding the conclusions of the Executive Committee and recalled that he had recently held a fruitful dialogue with the Holy See on how some of those challenges could be overcome. Lastly, he wished to express his gratitude to the Government of Norway for the extraordinary support it had provided for refugees worldwide and thanked it for speaking up

for the disenfranchised and for victims of human rights violations, conflict and displacement during its membership of the Security Council. He would like to reassure Norway that the Office was committed to implementing the Action Agenda on Internal Displacement and stood ready to provide protection for vulnerable groups.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.