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Summary record of the 752nd meeting

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Chair: Mr. Baddoura..... (Lebanon)
later: Ms. Stasch (Vice-Chair)..... (Germany)

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

General debate (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Cessouma** (Observer for the African Union) said that the African continent continued to face large-scale humanitarian emergencies in certain countries and regions, which had led to an increase in forced displacement. The humanitarian challenges stemmed from the persistence of armed conflicts, terrorist activities, insecurity, political instability, climate change, disasters, floods, cyclones, droughts and locust invasions that affected food security. The Horn of Africa region and the Sahel region were currently experiencing the worst droughts in the past 40 years. Countries in southern Africa were also experiencing increased humanitarian needs.

2. The African Union and its member States continued to take vigorous action to find a lasting solution to humanitarian crises through the prevention and resolution of conflicts and through disaster risk reduction and management. In May 2022, the African Union had held an Extraordinary Summit on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government and an Extraordinary Humanitarian Summit and Pledging Conference in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. The African Union and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had organized a high-level side event on the outcomes of the two summits.

3. The substantial decrease in the allocation of funds to deal with humanitarian disasters and displacement in Africa was a major concern. Only 22 per cent of the funding needs of the regions of East Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes had been met as of 30 July 2022. The Sahel region was experiencing a similar situation. He therefore renewed his appeal to the international community to support action to address the humanitarian emergencies in Africa.

4. **Mr. Cassayre** (Observer for the International Development Law Organization) said that the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) had found that when civil or customary justice systems failed to address land disputes, the disagreements lead to violent confrontations and an increase in criminal cases. The climate crisis risked exacerbating such trends. Similarly, the failure of criminal justice systems to adjudicate cases fairly or expeditiously could fuel extremism, violent conflict and displacement. In addition, a growing global trust deficit between people and their Governments had exacerbated a sense of disenfranchisement, injustice and discrimination and drove extremism, conflict and displacement. IDLO therefore encouraged Governments to render their institutions more inclusive, equitable, accountable and transparent. In particular, refugees, internally displaced persons, migrants and stateless persons needed to have access to justice mechanisms.

5. IDLO was working with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and national partners in the Philippines, Kenya, Mali and Sierra Leone to undertake comprehensive reviews of legislation that discriminated against women and girls. IDLO provided support for legal aid services in Uganda in order to support pathways to justice for refugees who required expedited legal recognition and to resolve disputes with host communities. In cooperation with Honduran institutions and civil society, IDLO helped to reduce social insecurity and rebuild trust and confidence in public institutions, thereby reducing the impetus to migrate. IDLO had launched an initiative in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone to promote more effective joint action to investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate human trafficking cases.

6. IDLO had supported the amendment of the Somali Refugee Act and cooperated with the National Commission for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in adopting laws, policies and administrative regulations that increased the level of protection for internally displaced persons and refugees. As direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, race, religion or language was one of the main causes of statelessness, IDLO was pleased to have partnered with UNHCR in developing a policy brief about the importance of the rule of law in addressing the issue of statelessness.

7. **Ms. Sarr** (Observer for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)) said that ECOWAS had produced a plan for the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees in the region, which would probably be adopted, at ministerial level,

in early November 2022. ECOWAS was implementing a regional project aimed at incorporating the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons into domestic law, primarily on behalf of nine member States that had undertaken in October 2019 to adopt the procedures for the determination of statelessness. The ECOWAS Commission had conducted missions to Burkina Faso, Togo and Ghana to support the ratification and incorporation into domestic law of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. The partnership agreement between ECOWAS Court of Justice and UNHCR had recently been renewed. The Court could invite UNHCR to provide expert advice in cases involving persons within its jurisdiction or request it to act as *amicus curiae*. ECOWAS was seeking to prevent situations conducive to population displacements in countries of the Sahel and to assist in resolving existing conflicts. The Department of Human Development and Social Affairs of the ECOWAS Commission had intervened jointly with the UNHCR regional office before the ECOWAS Parliament to discuss the matter in June 2022. The Parliament had subsequently adopted a series of measures to address relevant issues. The forthcoming adoption of the ECOWAS Standardized Emergency Management System would provide an opportunity to boost collaboration between ECOWAS, UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies.

8. ECOWAS commended UNHCR and the authorities of Côte d'Ivoire and other countries on the important action taken to repatriate refugees. ECOWAS facilitated the resettlement of refugees and contributed financially and materially to the care of displaced persons in every member State. It was also considering the possibility of providing psychosocial care, especially for women and children.

9. **Ms. Baghli** (Observer for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)) said that the gap between soaring humanitarian needs and available funding had never been so high. The principle of burden- and responsibility-sharing enshrined in the Global Compact on Refugees was therefore more valid than ever.

10. As many countries of origin and destination of refugees were OIC member States, the Organization had expanded its regional offices and sought to promote the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, or triple nexus approach, with the assistance of the Islamic Development Bank and the Islamic Organization for Food Security. The OIC Independent Permanent Commission on Human Rights had recently organized a seminar with the Government of Malaysia, which had led to the adoption of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Rights and Access to Education for Refugees. OIC had recently cooperated with the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre in delivering non-food items to meet the basic needs of drought victims in Somalia and in implementing an emergency food aid project for flood-affected families in Afghanistan during the period 2022–2023.

11. OIC had signed in September 2022 a Joint Humanitarian Plan of Action with UNHCR for 2022–2025 aimed at consolidating their cooperation. In addition, an agreement had been signed between UNCHR and the Islamic Development Bank to launch the Global Islamic Fund for Refugees. OIC was engaged in peace processes in many OIC countries and was developing mediation tools to defuse tensions. It was also planning to convene a donors' conference for refugees and internally displaced persons in the Sahel region and the Lake Chad Basin.

12. **Ms. Dimitriadou** (Observer for the World Bank) said that the World Bank stood ready to support UNHCR in reenergizing their joint action aimed at measuring the cost and impact of hosting and protecting refugees and at promoting more equitable responsibility sharing. Vigorous action should be taken to support the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees, to fulfil the commitments made at the Global Refugee Forum and the 2021 high-level officials meeting, to resolve conflicts, to prevent further displacement and to address the socioeconomic impact on host communities and refugees of climate change and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

13. As forced displacement continued to grow as a result of ongoing conflicts around the world, it was imperative to focus on resolving the root causes of conflicts and displacement. The World Bank would continue to provide support through its International Development Association (IDA) for the poorest countries, especially those facing conflict risks. In addition, resources were available under the Global Concessional Financing Facility for middle-

income countries that hosted refugees. It was essential to ensure access to education and health-care services and to protect jobs and livelihoods. Governments in hosting countries were encouraged to facilitate green, resilient and inclusive development, and many had made important policy commitments.

14. UNHCR and the World Bank had worked jointly to ensure that the Refugee Policy Review Framework achieved the maximum impact. Building on its strong operational partnership across various regions, the International Finance Corporation, a private-sector member of the World Bank Group, was also cooperating with UNHCR in promoting private-sector solutions to forced displacement. The World Bank was in close contact with the Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement and supported the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement.

15. **Ms. Ferris** (Observer for the International Olympic Committee (IOC)) said that IOC played its role in the Global Compact on Refugees by supporting the Olympic Refugee Foundation. One of the recommendations outlined in the Olympic Agenda 2020+5 concerned support for displaced populations through sport. In addition, Olympic Solidarity provided scholarships to refugee athletes who wished to join the IOC Refugee Olympic Team at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris.

16. In February 2022, the IOC Executive Board had established the Solidarity Fund for the Ukrainian Olympic Community, to which \$7.5 million was currently allocated. A total of \$1.8 million had been used to meet the humanitarian needs of Ukrainian elite and high-level athletes affected by displacement. The Olympic Refugee Foundation had invested more than \$6 million in programming and technical resources and had supported 13 safe sport programmes in 10 countries on behalf of around 100,000 young people affected by displacement.

17. Analysis of data from the Ugandan sport for protection programme showed a 67 per cent decrease in levels of anxiety and a 69 per cent decrease in depression. One in five people living in displacement contexts experienced a mental health issue and the role of physical activity and sport in responding effectively to such issues was being increasingly recognized. The Sport for Refugees Coalition launched in 2019 comprised more than 80 organizations that were committed to ensuring access for all refugees to safe and inclusive sporting facilities and their participation in sporting events and competitions at all levels.

18. IOC commended UNHCR and its partners for including sport in the Ukrainian Regional Refugee Response Plan.

19. **Mr. Kammer** (Observer for the Sovereign Order of Malta) said that the Order of Malta's national associations and its international relief agency, Malteser International, had been operating in Ukraine and its neighbouring countries since the beginning of the conflict. Several hundred volunteers involved in Malteser Aid Service Ukraine were providing humanitarian aid, shelters and food to the internally displaced in about 65 urban areas. Psychosocial and therapeutic care programmes were being scaled up, and medical and rehabilitative care was provided for persons wounded in the war. Some 3,000 people trained in first aid and medical equipment were serving Ukrainians in Poland. Temporary accommodation was being provided to refugees in Hungary. First aid and food were provided at border crossing points in Romania, and integration and other services were offered to refugees in Lithuania and Slovakia. The Order of Malta was also supporting Ukrainian refugees in other European countries.

20. The Lebanese Association of the Order of Malta had been providing emergency relief and medical support for Syrian and Iraqi refugees and vulnerable Lebanese people since 2013. Palestinian refugees in Lebanon had been relegated for decades to communities at the margins of society because of political considerations. Minorities from Myanmar in Thailand were in a similar situation. The Order of Malta ensured that such groups received medical and social care. Malteser International helped displaced Iraqi minorities to return to their homes and reintegrate into society. It also sought to improve health-care and living conditions for internally displaced persons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

21. Refugees from South Sudan were currently hosted by the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With a view to meeting the country's growing needs, the Order of Malta was

implementing humanitarian activities for internally displaced persons in the health and nutrition sectors. It also provided support for refugees fleeing from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Uganda. Malteser International continued to provide emergency aid and integration support for refugees and migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in host communities in Colombia.

22. **Mr. Jacqueson** (Observer for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that there was a dire need for decisive action by the international community to address record levels of protracted displacement, widespread conflicts and the impact of climate change. More than 100 million people were currently displaced and living in situations of acute food insecurity. FAO was working with its partners to invest in long-term solutions for displacement. In East Africa, for example, millions of people lived in situations of protracted displacement, and many refugees were experiencing acute food insecurity exacerbated by rising food prices and food ration cuts. FAO was working in Turkana, Kenya, together with the World Food Programme, the European Union and UNHCR, to reduce the reliance of refugee populations on food assistance and to increase their ability to meet their own food security and livelihood requirements. As such an approach enabled refugees to rebuild their lives with dignity, FAO was committed to working with its partners to ensure that it became the new norm.

23. **Ms. Elliott** (Observer for the World Food Programme (WFP)) said that some 345 million people in 82 countries were projected to be acutely food insecure in 2022, and refugees and forcibly displaced persons were among the most vulnerable. WFP worked closely with UNHCR and other partners to ensure food security for vulnerable populations.

24. Despite the generosity of donors, resourcing was increasingly inadequate. WFP and UNHCR were therefore extremely concerned about future underfunding of refugee operations. Food rations had been cut and refugees received less than the minimum standard to meet their food needs in at least 19 out of 42 countries where WFP provided assistance to refugees. Some refugees were receiving only 50 per cent of their minimum food requirements. While WFP joined UNHCR in advocating for increased funding for refugees and displaced persons, it was also paramount to carefully prioritize the limited assistance that was available.

25. Established in 2020 and funded by the United States of America, the Joint UNHCR-WFP Programme of Excellence and its Targeting Hub was designed to identify and assist the most vulnerable. In Mauritania, for example, WFP, UNHCR, the World Bank and the Mauritanian Government had developed two national social protection programmes for Malian refugees that provided cash transfers to vulnerable households. In Rwanda, WFP and UNHCR had identified different levels of needs among refugees in order to tailor responses to their specific food requirements. Vulnerable refugee households received humanitarian-focused food and nutrition transfers, while others received livelihood support to enable them to engage in market-based activities that would gradually reduce their reliance on humanitarian relief.

26. **Mr. Riera-Cézanne** (Observer for the University for Peace) said that the University for Peace had launched the Latin American Observatory on Human Mobility, Climate Change and Disasters and was currently a member of the Advisory Committee of the Platform on Disaster Displacement. The region of Latin America and the Caribbean was highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change and disasters, and was one of the most active migration corridors on the planet. Populations exposed to environmental risk factors had been forced to migrate within their countries or to emigrate, or had been forcibly displaced or relocated to safer locations, generating new challenges for the States of the region and North America.

27. The Observatory focused on increasing data and analyses, and on creating networks of Latin American universities and relevant think tanks. The aim was to raise awareness in the general public and among Latin American opinion leaders and policymakers, and to document challenges and perspectives, especially concerning the most vulnerable. There was an urgent need to generate scientifically supported evidence and data in order to monitor human mobility dynamics triggered by climate change and environmental degradation. The University for Peace planned to continue its work with the UNHCR Regional Bureau for the

Americas and to create a Sérgio Vieira de Mello Chair on protection of forced migrants, in close cooperation with the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection.

28. **Ms. Ali** (Observer for the Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative) said that she was delivering the statement on behalf of a wide range of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The dominant model of indefinite cycles of emergency humanitarian aid was increasingly obsolete and inadequate. It was time to design equitable policies and programmes enabling refugees to rebuild their lives, support themselves and their families, and contribute to their communities. Humanitarian aid delivery, including for vulnerable populations, should move beyond “care and maintenance” models towards leveraging refugees’ capacities. Enhancement of self-reliance opportunities laid the foundation for durable solutions. For example, the Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative, the Poverty Alleviation Coalition and the Prospects Partnership helped to shift the forced displacement response paradigm. Positive examples of budget planning, funding facility models and host country policies recognizing the multi-dimensional aspects of refugee inclusion should form part of the discussions at the upcoming Global Refugee Forum and High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges.

29. UNHCR, States, donors and civil society should share evidence on the positive impact of self-reliance approaches adopted by refugee hosting countries, and should advocate for and commit to multi-year funding for programmes that expanded access to livelihood opportunities for refugees. It was also essential to build a robust evidence base. UNHCR, States, donors and civil society should promote a shared understanding of self-reliance with a view to operationalizing the Global Compact on Refugees and setting feasible targets and goals for enhancing self-reliance, including through meaningful participation by refugees. Common multisectoral indicators should be developed to chart global progress in self-reliance and to provide the basis for pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum. Priority should be accorded to the funding of research on refugee perspectives of self-reliance. The results would contribute to programming design, demonstrate the impact of self-reliance approaches in the early stages of humanitarian response and promote localized approaches to durable solutions.

30. Refugees should be involved in decisions that affected them at various levels and stages of policy and programme cycles. Several organizations had developed guidelines, including for children and youth, which provided useful frameworks and starting points for discussions on self-reliance. UNHCR and States should involve refugees, including adolescents, in national refugee advisory boards and should include refugee advisors in all official delegations to international refugee system meetings. Staff at all levels should be urged to promote approaches based on meaningful participation, particularly in settings where refugees faced barriers to engagement and where participation in humanitarian and development responses was limited. They should also be urged to promote policies aimed at facilitating such action.

31. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he fully agreed that self-reliance was of paramount importance and that the cycle of emergency aid and of care and maintenance was quite unhelpful in protracted situations. Nevertheless, it would be difficult to break the cycle in the current context of diverse emergencies, in which conflict prevention was crucial. There was a great deal to be learned from the challenges stemming from the adoption of an approach based on self-reliance at the beginning of an emergency. He also agreed that refugee participation was of great importance. He appreciated in that context the fact that some delegations included refugees.

32. Referring to the statement by the African Union, he said that Africa unfortunately continued to be a major theatre of UNHCR operations in response to multiple displacement crises. He was grateful to the African Union for having convened the Extraordinary Humanitarian Summit and Pledging Conference in Malabo and was pleased to continue building on its conclusions, especially in terms of funding. Resource mobilization challenges in Africa and existing imbalances needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

33. Turning to the statement by the representative of ECOWAS, he said that West Africa was a crucial region, both in terms of positive experiences, such as the application of the cessation clause to Ivorian refugees and the reduction of statelessness, and in terms of major

emergencies, particularly in the Central Sahel, climate challenges and violence by armed groups. UNHCR cooperation with ECOWAS would continue to be of the greatest importance.

34. Many OIC member States were countries of origin of refugees, countries of destination, host countries in need of resources and important or potential donor countries. He encouraged OIC to promote solidarity with UNHCR activities and programmes in host countries. UNHCR counted on cooperation with the OIC secretariat in mobilizing support for the Global Islamic Fund for Refugees so that it could produce proceeds for investment in refugee operations.

35. The brief analysis by FAO and the WFP of the food insecurity crisis that was prevailing in many parts of the world was a matter of grave concern. The situation was exacerbated by the impact of the war in Ukraine and by climatic and other factors. The statistics provided by WFP concerning the link between food insecurity and displacement were also very worrying, as were the cuts in food rations for refugees, especially in Africa and the Middle East. While some States, such as Ethiopia, had sought to mitigate the situation in collaboration with donor States, he considered that more coordinated action should be taken by UNHCR, FAO, WFP and donor States. UNHCR and WFP were organizing a side event on the issue at the General Assembly.

36. The World Bank had become a vital partner of UNHCR in the area of resource mobilization. In some countries, like Uganda, billions of dollars had been mobilized in recent years on behalf of refugees. The role of the World Bank was complementary to that of UNHCR and could be extremely productive in terms of analysis, research and the compilation of data. For instance, they ran a Joint Data Centre on Forced Displacement in Copenhagen.

37. The International Olympic Committee was a long-standing partner of UNHCR. The IOC Refugee Olympic Team had competed in the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro and in the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo. It would also compete in the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris. Action was being taken at the grass-roots level to promote sports for inclusion and protection. He encouraged member States to support the Olympic Refugee Foundation.

38. He agreed with the International Development Law Organization that shortcomings in the areas of justice and the rule of law were a frequent motive for displacement and for the flight of refugees and constituted a deterrent to their return. It was thus essential to encourage their return not only by investing in housing and agriculture and by providing livelihoods and services, but also by promoting justice and the rule of law. UNHCR looked forward to continuing its cooperation with IDLO.

39. He thanked the University for Peace for highlighting the link between climate change and displacement and the need for appropriate research and data. Cooperation with academic institutions was a key element of the Global Compact on Refugees and would be showcased at the Global Refugee Forum in 2023.

40. He commended the Sovereign Order of Malta on the humanitarian action taken by Malteser International in many refugee situations. Reconciliation and peaceful coexistence played a key role in confidence-building in such situations.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

41. **Mr. Atroshenko** (Russian Federation) said that the politicized and unfounded allegations made by a number of delegations against the Russian Federation frequently addressed issues that were entirely unrelated to the agenda and the UNHCR mandate. His country could not remain indifferent to the fate of residents of Donetsk and Donbas, discrimination against Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine and the unwillingness of the Ukrainian authorities to comply with the Minsk arrangements. The forced displacement of residents of Donetsk and Luhansk was due to the deployment by Ukrainian combatants of Western weapons against civilian populations, who were used as human shields.

42. More than 3.5 million refugees had voluntarily left Ukraine, fearing for their lives, since the launching of the special military operation. UNHCR staff had witnessed the action taken by the Russian Federation to provide them with shelter and other necessities. In

addition, the current food and energy crises were not due to the special military operation but to the economic and food policy errors perpetrated by major Western countries, including the unilateral sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation.

43. The referendums in Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia had been held in full compliance with international law and the people had exercised their legitimate right to self-determination. Following the incorporation of the four regions into the Russian Federation, the residents were entitled to exercise all their rights under the country's domestic legislation.

44. **Ms. Georgantzoglou** (Greece), referring to the statement made by the representative of Türkiye at the Executive Committee's 751st meeting (A/AC.96/SR.751), said that her country rejected categorically the unsubstantiated Turkish allegations concerning so-called pushbacks. The Greek Government had exercised its sovereign right and constitutional duty to protect its borders, and its enforcement of border surveillance at sea was in full conformity with its obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea and the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue. The Turkish authorities had systematically facilitated illegal crossings of the Greek borders, for instance along the Evros River and land borders in February and March 2020. Greece urged Türkiye to fulfil its obligations under the Palermo Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the European Union-Türkiye statement of 2016, and to take effective action to prevent and combat the smuggling of migrants. It should also cease the instrumentalization of migrants for political purposes.

45. **Ms. Youssef** (Syrian Arab Republic), referring to the statement made by the representative of Türkiye at the Executive Committee's 751st meeting (A/AC.96/SR.751), said that her country categorically rejected the reference by Türkiye to so-called opposition areas or areas under the control of the "interim government" and their linkage to durable solutions, in particular voluntary repatriation. Türkiye continued to undermine the unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic through its occupation of parts of the country and its establishment of criminal and terrorist entities. Its policies contravened the procedural frameworks of voluntary repatriation established by international law. The Syrian Arab Republic urged all States to reject such abhorrent tampering with humanitarian issues, including those that fell within the mandate of UNHCR, because it prolonged humanitarian suffering and impeded the resolution of the humanitarian crisis.

46. **Mr. Bulanek** (Observer for the European Union), referring to the statement made by the representative of the Russian Federation, said that the European Union had the utmost respect for the humanitarian character of the Executive Committee. The European Union was committed not only to protecting and assisting refugees, but also to solving refugees' problems. As the number of refugees worldwide stood at 100 million, it was patently clear that UNHCR and States in every region must strive to address the root causes of displacement. Ironically the call to tackle those causes had also been heard from the delegation of the Russian Federation and yet there was obviously only one solution to the ongoing displacement crisis in Europe. The Russian Federation must immediately end the war against Ukraine. There was no justification for that war which was causing immense suffering not only in Ukraine and Europe; it was affecting innocent people and countries all over the world. The European Union was appalled by the Russian missile attacks on Kyiv and other cities in Ukraine and it resolutely condemned the Russian Federation's indiscriminate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, which were war crimes. Those responsible for them would be held accountable for their actions in accordance with international law. The European Union resolutely supported Ukraine's inherent right of self-defence and its armed forces efforts to defend Ukraine's territorial integrity and its population in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. The European Union condemned in the strongest possible terms the illegal sham referendums that had been conducted in parts of Ukraine that were currently partially occupied by the Russian Federation. The European Union urged the Russian Federation to refrain from attempts to politicize the humanitarian discourse in Geneva by spreading disinformation.

47. **Mr. Smith** (United States of America) referring to the comments made by the representative of the Russian Federation, said that the Russian Government's attack on

Ukraine was unprovoked and unjustified. President Putin had chosen to engage in a premeditated war that had brought a catastrophic loss of life and human suffering. The Russian Federation was alone responsible for the attendant death and destruction and the world must hold the Russian Federation to account. Its actions constituted a clear violation of Article 2 of the Charter, which stated that all Members must refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. The United States called upon the Russian Government to immediately cease its use of force against Ukraine and to refrain from any further unlawful threat or use of force against any State Member of the United Nations. His delegation joined the Secretary-General's urgent plea that the Russian Federation immediately withdraw all its military forces from the territory of Ukraine.

48. **Mr. Dogan** (Türkiye) referring to the statement made by the representative of Greece at the Executive Committee's 746th meeting (A/AC.96/SR.746) and to the unfounded claims made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic at the Executive Committee's 750th meeting (A/AC.96/SR.750), said that Türkiye had tried to help its Syrian brothers and sisters by providing support and protection. It categorically rejected all the claims made by Greece. Türkiye had an enduring humanitarian tradition that was anchored in its history and culture. Opening its doors to those in need was part of that tradition. It was currently hosting more than 4 million refugees from different places of origin. Its track record was crystal clear with regard to granting asylum or providing support services to those in need of protection. Its commitment to that cause was well known to the international community, including UNHCR. It could not be accused of instrumentalizing migrants or politicizing migration. The statement made by the representative of Greece had tried to give the impression that there had been no pushbacks or ill-treatment of migrants and asylum-seekers. The address given by the representative of Türkiye had been entirely truthful. The unlawful practices of Greece were unfortunately turning the Aegean Sea into a graveyard for refugees. Incidents where tens of thousands of people had been pushed back by Greece at sea and on land in recent years were well-documented. Greece was not displaying any accountability in respect of that issue. Even human rights defenders and non-governmental organizations that were working to protect the rights of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants were being put under severe pressure in an atmosphere of fear. Türkiye recognized the challenges posed by cross-border movements of people, as it was also one of the countries at the forefront of that phenomenon. Yet it managed them effectively, efficiently and in line with international law. Thanks to its efforts, irregular crossings to Europe had been reduced by 92 per cent since 2015. Without Türkiye's efforts, millions would have reached the European Union. In that context, it expected to see similar responsible action from all the States concerned. Unfortunately, there was a very dangerous trend towards normalizing practices that ran counter to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. They had become State policies and took various forms including the outsourcing of international responsibility, or the denial of asylum and they were starting to be presented as ways of preventing abuse of asylum. Türkiye would like to see all States display the same level of commitment as that shown by the countries, most of which were in the low or medium-income bracket, which were hosting 86 per cent of the world's refugee population. What was needed was more burden-sharing not the shifting of responsibility or short-sighted policies and definitely not practices undermining or violating the 1951 Convention.

49. **Mr. Youssef** (Syrian Arab Republic), referring to the statement made by the representative of Türkiye at the Executive Committee's 751st meeting (A/AC.96/SR.751), said that the linkage of the so-called opposition areas or areas under the control of the "interim government" to the issue of durable solutions, in particular voluntary repatriation, was categorically rejected. It was a blatant example of the Turkish practice of misinterpreting the principles and provisions of international law, including international refugee law, with regard to such matters as protection and the achievement of durable solutions. It also demonstrated Türkiye's malign role in undermining the unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic through its continued occupation of parts of Syrian territory and the establishment of illegal entities with a well-known criminal terrorist character. The delegation of Türkiye plainly wished to use the platform offered by the Executive Committee to promote such policies as humanitarian, although they ran counter to the provisions and procedures for voluntary repatriation established by international law. It was an attempt to

invent a new version of them that fitted into concepts that contradicted international law. Türkiye based its policies on that version. He would not delve into Türkiye's role in the emergence of the humanitarian crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic and how it had used that emergency to pursue its interventionist policies and regional ambitions and to seek economic and political gains at the expense of the suffering of refugees who had become a political pawn in the hands of the Turkish Government. He called on all States to distance themselves from that abhorrent example of tampering with humanitarian issues, including those that fell within the mandate of UNHCR, because it prolonged human suffering and hampered the resolution of humanitarian crises, although the latter should be the goal of the Executive Committee's work.

50. **Ms. Georgantzoglou** (Greece) referring to the statement made by the representative of Türkiye, said that the relentless efforts of the Greek authorities to render assistance under extremely harsh conditions to all persons found in distress and preserve human life at sea had been widely recognized. The unwavering humanitarian commitment of the authorities had saved thousands of migrants' lives at sea since 2015. It was difficult to hear a State like Türkiye, which persistently committed flagrant violations of international law, such as encouraging irregular departure and operating a smugglers' network that pushed migrants to the borders of her country, talk about breaches of international law. Any effort to instrumentalize the suffering of human beings as a political strategy for geopolitical purposes was utterly unacceptable.

51. **Mr. Dogan** (Türkiye) referring to the statement made by the representative of Greece, said that, in 2020, Greece had pushed back over 17,000 persons. In 2021 that figure had been more than 16,000 and in the first nine months of 2022 it had reached almost 21,000. The Greek authorities had pushed back not only persons on the move but also persons from camps within the country. Any attempts to conceal those illegal practices and violations of international humanitarian law were futile. Reports from just one source might be regarded as questionable, but his Government had received information from a variety of local and international sources, most of which was in the public domain. Türkiye called for action if there was a sincere wish to save human lives. The accusations that migrants were being instrumentalized, that humanitarian measures were being politicized, that laws had been passed to restrict access to asylum, that international refugee law had been violated, or that asylum-seekers or other persons had been left in vulnerable situations, should not levelled against Türkiye. The representative of Greece was resorting to such rhetoric in order to cover up for her own authorities' unlawful actions. Pushback practices were clearly violations of international and European Union law. Türkiye called on Greece to respect human rights and abide by international law.

52. *Ms. Stasch (Germany), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

Consideration of reports on the work of the Standing Committee

(a) International protection (A/AC.96/1221, A/AC.96/1222 and A/AC.96/1228)

53. **Ms. Triggs** (Assistant High Commissioner for Protection) said that the words "100 million people forcibly displaced" had reverberated throughout the general debate at the current session. The world was facing a humanitarian protection crisis on an unprecedented scale. Its root causes were inequality, poverty, discrimination, food insecurity and a lack of adherence to the rule of law. Each of those was exacerbated by climate change and the lingering economic and social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The overwhelming majority of people were displaced by conflict and persecution. Their numbers were growing every year and the plight of the displaced was becoming more desperate. It was therefore time for some original thinking and strategies to promote peace and protection. More displacement was giving rise to ever greater protection needs. Sadly, 42 per cent of forcibly displaced persons were children who were especially vulnerable to exploitation. Conflicts were preventing millions of children from attending school and therefore depriving them of the opportunity to reach their full potential. The inability of refugees to register births and obtain documentation in the midst of a conflict increased their risk of statelessness. Gender-based violence, the sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls and human trafficking were underreported consequences of displacement. Displaced persons were often forced to

take dangerous measures, to go without food, to take out loans at exorbitant interest rates, to resort to forced and child marriage and to send their children out to work, to beg or to engage in prostitution.

54. During a visit to Ukraine with Raouf Mazou, the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, she had seen the impact of destruction on the lives of about 7 million Ukrainians who had been displaced within their country. Many would be unable to return to their destroyed homes and villages for many months – even years – and were in desperate need of warm, dry accommodation. Repairs to shelters and the supply of blankets and cash assistance would be critical to saving lives over the winter, to enabling self-sufficiency and alleviating the misery of displacement. She had been struck by the plight of older women and men, and of people with disabilities, most of them poor, who existed in the shadows of war and were truly left behind.

55. An age, gender, and diversity lens for their protection was therefore vital. At a centre near Vinnytsia it had been heartening to see the great personal resilience shown by mothers and grandmothers and also that children had access to digital learning and could attend the local school. It had been a joy to see those children playing with a dog, as part of “canine therapy” that brought some semblance of normality to their lives.

56. The war in Ukraine had paradoxically shown why, after 70 years, the principles of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees continued to save lives. The activation, for the first time, by the European Union of Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof and the hospitality extended to Ukrainian refugees by nations throughout the world had demonstrated that the right to claim asylum was both a necessary and a widely respected principle of international law. The global response to the Ukrainian protection crisis showed that countries and their citizens had welcomed millions of persons in distress.

57. However, many protection challenges still lay ahead. Some countries that were hosting refugees had been abiding by the principles of refugee law for many years, while others were continuing to deny access to asylum at their frontiers. Pushbacks at sea and land borders continued. The instrumentalization of refugees for political purposes was troubling. UNHCR expected a rise in the mixed movements of refugees that would include migrants seeking a better life, a phenomenon that, while not new, would require better collaboration with a whole-of-society approach that encompassed governments, the private corporate sector, local communities, and development partners and closer coordination of measures under the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees. The growing impact of climate change would boost the demand for international aid and require stringent adaptive and preventive measures. Food insecurity for millions, rising fuel and energy prices and intercommunal competition for water and arable land were creating a pernicious cycle of hunger and conflict that gave rise to further refugee displacement and protection needs. There was growing pressure on refugees to return to their countries of origin as host nations buckled under the burden of protecting unprecedented millions. Yet in protracted conflicts, where schools, clinics and houses were destroyed and livelihood opportunities were few, returning might be unsafe and well-nigh impossible, although most refugees did fervently wish to go home. UNHCR was significantly scaling up its responses to those mounting protection needs. The High Commissioner had identified eight areas for additional, accelerated, and targeted action over the coming four years. UNHCR was committed to the age, gender, and diversity approach and to gender equality. It advocated the inclusion of refugees in social systems and pleaded for the protection of people with specific needs such as the elderly and those living with disabilities. It had the legal and policy tools for effective international protection and was committed to implementing them with innovation, and creativity.

58. Its first strategic priority, which remained at the core of its mandate, was to ensure respect for the right to seek and enjoy international protection. The efforts of a small number of States to adopt extreme policies as a means of avoiding their international obligations were troubling. For those countries, deterrence had become a priority and despite the failure and expense of such policies, continued efforts were being made to transport refugees to other

countries, thousands of miles away, for processing. Such extreme and inhumane policies might seem attractive to some governments because national asylum processes had become slow and had been clogging up domestic administrative authorities and courts for years. It was also true that they faced real impediments to returning to their countries of origin people who, after fair legal processes, were found not to need international protection. Nevertheless, the High Commissioner had made the point that it was the management of asylum that required reform not the principle of asylum itself. Efforts to externalize asylum processes, to deny access to asylum at the border, to push them back or to adopt draconian deterrent policies were not the answer. UNHCR was working with governments to improve the efficiency of asylum systems. The work of the Asylum Capacity Support Group was bearing fruit and had great potential to promote fair and fast systems.

59. The second strategic priority was to strengthen accountability to the people served by UNHCR, especially women and children. In January 2022, UNHCR had launched a five-year plan to strengthen that accountability. It was working with its partners and local communities to improve access to information and to community-based protection in all its field locations. It had launched helplines that had received over 10 million visits in the first half of 2022. As UNHCR was fully committed to the Grand Bargain process, it was striving to increase direct funding to local community-based NGOs which were on the front line of protection. It had established the NGO Innovation Award and the Refugee-led Innovation Fund and was working with persons who had experienced forced displacement and statelessness to establish a refugee advisory board. A core element of meaningful accountability was the participation of persons served by UNHCR in all decisions affecting their lives. The inclusion by the United States of America, Germany and Canada of a refugee in their delegation to the Executive Committee was therefore most welcome.

60. The third strategic priority was to step up efforts to prevent gender-based violence and upgrade risk mitigation and responses. In conflicts, women were disproportionately exposed to deep-rooted discrimination and were highly vulnerable to gender-based violence and trafficking. For that reason, UNHCR was continuing to scale up prevention, risk mitigation and responses to those forms of violence and to ensure that displaced and stateless women were fully covered by national social safety nets. It supported innovative approaches using mobile units to operate in remote areas and along movement pathways to ensure that refugees could obtain help, such as the “blue buses” in Guatemala and the 36 Blue Dot hubs jointly established in Europe with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in response to the war in Ukraine.

61. The fourth strategic priority was resettlement and complementary pathways. The aim of the three-year strategy on resettlement and complementary pathways (2019–2021) was to expand third-country solutions for refugees so that by the end of 2028, 3 million refugees would be resettled or would have benefited from complementary or regular pathways through labour mobility, education scholarships, community sponsorship and family reunions. She urged States to explore resettlement and complementary pathways as alternatives to dangerous journeys that so often led to tragic deaths. UNHCR was also increasing its efforts to meet its resettlement targets. In fact, it would probably meet its target for 2022. Access to livelihoods and employment through labour mobility programmes was one of the most exciting regular pathways to protection at a time when the ageing of many developed nations’ population meant that there was a growing need for labour in the health-care, agricultural, hospitality and industrial sectors. Well-educated refugees with technical and professional skills were keen to be self-sufficient and to contribute to the countries that had provided them with sanctuary. The challenge was to match refugees’ skills and experiences with the needs of the corporate sector. However, an increase in work visas for refugees must not lead to a decline in resettlement places. Resettlement places could not replace the obligation to offer asylum at a state border, nor should they be employed as a bargaining chip in negotiations with other countries.

62. Another strategic objective was to mainstream the work of UNHCR into that of its development partners. One of the Office’s most fruitful initiatives over the past few years had been its work with the World Bank and regional financial institutions. Its presence in 580 field locations worldwide gave it a deep understanding of local needs – knowledge that could be invaluable for development actors. The billions of dollars released to Governments

through those partnerships had been used for the humanitarian-peace-development nexus and had ensured that many of the root causes of displacement could be addressed as soon as an emergency arose. Protection data and analysis lay at the heart of an effective protection response ranging from the emergency itself to long-term development. Bold thinking and initiatives were required to advance development financing. It was to be hoped that the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges: Development Cooperation would stimulate fresh investment, come up with new protection solutions and foster inclusion.

63. The sixth strategic priority was protection and solutions for internally displaced persons. The number of persons forcibly displaced in their own country, about 60 million, was daunting. The Office's policy was to support governments, since they were primarily responsible for their citizens, but at the same time to recognize the severe political and security challenges they faced. It sought to enhance protection by supporting services such as documentation, child protection, legal aid, shelter and camp management and camp coordination, to ensure that the specific needs of older persons, persons with disabilities and persons subject to sexual and gender-based violence were met. Encouraging progress had been made in that area. The value of the work done by UNHCR in that respect stemmed from its operational experience in the field and its unique expertise in the law and policy protecting internally displaced persons. The Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement was helping to expand solutions for internally displaced people. In 2021, over 3.7 million internally displaced persons had returned to their homes and about a million had been brought within the cover of national social services.

64. The seventh strategic priority was to redouble efforts to eliminate statelessness. Despite the vision and ambition of the I Belong campaign, statelessness would not end by 2024. accessions to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness had increased and procedures to determine statelessness had been established. Progress had been made in enabling those caught up in a conflict to register the birth of their children and nationality laws which denied women the right to pass on their nationality to their children were being reformed. UNHCR was currently prioritizing 33 operations to stimulate reforms. The efforts of UNHCR to end statelessness would not be confined to the I Belong campaign. The next stage would be to establish a global alliance in 2024 to maintain the momentum in ending statelessness. All the same, vigilance would still be necessary, because without legal safeguards, birth registration and documentation, statelessness would remain an invisible barrier to inclusion in society and to the effective protection of the most vulnerable.

65. The last strategic priority was to mitigate the impact of climate change. The climate crisis was a protection crisis, since it had a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable and it had a multiplier effect in that it forced people to flee to safety. Some 80 per cent of people displaced by conflict and violence came from countries that were most exposed to climate change. Climate change, drought, and floods often led to food insecurity that, in turn, led to forced displacement and the need for further protection. For those reasons, UNHCR was reducing its own environmental footprint, while also seeking sustainable, green solutions for people displaced in urban areas or remote camps. One particular aim was to ensure that women did not have to risk sexual assault when they collected firewood in surrounding woods. The Strategic Framework on Climate Action would guide the Office's work.

66. The current global protection crises could not be resolved unilaterally but required collaborative effort. The Secretary-General's report entitled "Our Common Agenda" provided a road map and, if implemented, the recommendations it contained would address many of the protection needs of the persons served by UNHCR. The whole-of-society approach set out in the Global Compact on Refugees meant that the expansion of partnerships was of fundamental importance to the work of UNHCR and to the achievement of an equitable sharing of responsibility.

67. **Mr. Da Silva Nunes** (Brazil), speaking on behalf of the members of the Quito Process on the Human Mobility of Venezuelan Nationals in the Region, said that the Quito Process was an intergovernmental initiative for the exchange of information, good practices and joint programmes with a view to safeguarding the dignity of the 6.8 million Venezuelans who had left their country, 5.7 million of whom were in transit and destination countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

68. The joint statement issued at the eighth International Technical Meeting on Human Mobility of Venezuelan Citizens in the Region reaffirmed the commitment of the Quito Process to supporting joint solutions and exchanges of good practices at the regional level on issues such as socioeconomic integration, asylum, migratory regularization, temporary orientation and reception centres, the COVID-19 pandemic, education, gender equality, protection of childhood and adolescence, family reunification, human trafficking and HIV/AIDS. Brazil had organized a technical visit to the city of Boa Vista in the State of Roraima in order to highlight the implementation of good practices on behalf of Venezuelan migrants in the region.

69. He commended countries that were implementing large-scale migration regularization programmes and policies. Members of the Quito Process were committed to promoting family reunification of Venezuelan migrants and refugees through policies, exchanges of good practices and international cooperation. They were also improving asylum and refugee systems and the services provided in orientation and reception centres. However, the members reiterated their concern about the human mobility crisis in the region, which increased the vulnerability of migrants. They were also concerned about the prevalence of human trafficking and migrant smuggling by transnational criminal organizations and reiterated their willingness to support action aimed at dismantling the criminal networks.

70. The support of the international community, for instance through the Global Compact on Refugees, was necessary to guarantee the financing of humanitarian operations in the region and to reduce the impact on national health, education and social welfare. Increased support was also required for the organization of the International Donors' Conference in Solidarity with Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants to be held in early 2023. Canada, in its capacity as coordinator of the Group of Friends of the Quito Process, had promised to cooperate with other donors and members in supporting the organization of the Conference. Members of the Quito Process was confident that, with the support of the international community in a context characterized by multiple, long-term and mutually reinforcing crises, they would fulfil their objective of providing protection for the most vulnerable Venezuelan citizens.

71. **Ms. Atteya** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of Arab States, expressed deep concern about the continuous increase in the number of refugees, asylum-seekers and persons of concern to UNHCR as a result of the international humanitarian crises that had prevailed during the past year. The Group reaffirmed its commitment to the hosting and protection of refugees, in accordance with its international obligations. Arab States continued to provide them with health care, vaccinations against the COVID-19 pandemic, educational and social welfare services and psychosocial support. They also protected people with special needs and older persons, provided employment opportunities, and supported entrepreneurship in cooperation with UNHCR and donor countries. The Group stressed the need for international support to alleviate the burden on host countries and to promote a sustainable sharing of responsibilities.

72. UNHCR should refrain from addressing controversial issues and using unacceptable terms in its documents in order to avoid generating deep divisions. For instance, the note on international protection ([A/AC.96/1222](#)) did not necessarily reflect the views of member States. The Group expressed reservations, in particular, about the dubious terms used in paragraphs 14, 29 and 47, and requested that its reservations should be reflected in the report on the current meeting. The Group reaffirmed the need for a comprehensive and just international response to the current humanitarian crises in a manner that preserved the sustainability of UNHCR programmes and the available funding in different regions.

73. **Mr. Dávalos** (Ecuador) said that he was concerned about the fact that UNHCR had declared 60 new emergencies in 39 countries since early 2021. Although about 100 million people had been forced to abandon their homes, a number of countries denied them the right to refuge and asylum, conducted mass expulsions and criminalized displaced persons. Such policies violated international humanitarian and human rights law, in particular the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. It was essential to protect the lives, integrity and dignity of persons requiring international protection in a manner that reflected the principle of shared responsibility enshrined in the Global Compact on Refugees. All States

should comply with the Compact provisions for the integration of refugees into their economic, labour, educational, health and social welfare systems.

74. Ecuador was committed to ensuring compliance with the highest standards of international protection and with the principle of non-refoulement. It had a solid legal framework for the protection of refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons. The refugee status determination system ensured timely access to the territory and the requisite procedures. Digitalization of refugee and asylum systems expedited the procedures and permitted the implementation of differentiated procedures, particularly on behalf of women, children and adolescents.

75. Ecuador currently hosted 74,000 refugees, which was the largest number of refugees in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean. As it was essential to promote integration programmes in host communities, Ecuador requested UNCHR to encourage donors to expand integration services not only during emergencies but also on a long-term basis in order to improve the quality of life of refugees and host communities.

76. **Mr. Chaudhary** (Observer for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)) said that he was concerned about the direct and indirect references in the note on international protection ([A/AC.96/1222](#)) and the UNHCR programme budget for 2023 ([A/AC.96/1224](#)) to controversial terms such as sexual orientation and gender identity. It reiterated that such notions and concepts were not universally endorsed and were incompatible with the national laws, customs, morals and cultural sensitivities of OIC countries. In addition, they did not reflect any branch of international law.

77. The OIC Group had expressed concern to UNHCR at previous meetings of the Executive Committee and the Standing Committee. OIC countries had outlined their views on the controversial concepts in a letter dated 2 August 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan on behalf of the OIC Group to the High Commissioner, contained in document [A/76/913](#).

78. The OIC countries reiterated their call for the use of universally agreed terms in UNHCR texts so that the Office remained apolitical and faithful to its mandate and to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. A clear distinction should be drawn between documents with which member States were requested to associate themselves and others that did not fall into that category. A footnote stating that a given document did not represent the views of all member States should be inserted in non-negotiated reports submitted to the Standing Committee and the Executive Committee.

79. OIC countries hosted more than two thirds of the global refugee population. They viewed the protection of refugees as a religious, moral and legal duty based on principles of Islamic law, international humanitarian law, international refugee law and other international obligations.

80. **Mr. Bahreini** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his country had hosted and provided protection, for almost half a century, for millions of refugees and other displaced persons from Afghanistan and other countries, who had arrived in its territory legally or illegally. Refugees and all undocumented Afghan nationals had been included in national education programmes, regardless of their legal status, and had been provided with public health insurance and preventive care and medical treatment, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Islamic Republic of Iran had also taken significant steps to prevent and reduce statelessness, including by the adoption of a new Nationality Act in 2019.

81. The Islamic Republic of Iran had endured exorbitant costs in dealing with refugees and unauthorized border crossings, and international organizations and donor countries had allocated very limited resources. It was therefore essential to establish an effective mechanism for measuring hosting costs, in line with the principle of fair, equitable and predictable sharing of responsibility. According to the report of the Special Rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures, the economic impact of sanctions had adversely affected the capacity of the Islamic Republic of Iran to protect humanitarian actors' ability to implement projects, including the provision of basic goods and the construction of schools and health centres.

82. The volatile security situation in Afghanistan continued to limit the prospects for sustainable repatriation in the region, and the low rate of voluntary repatriation of refugees in recent years should send an alarm to the international refugee protection system.

83. **Ms. Ndiaye** (Senegal) said that the international community was confronted with conflicts, famine and an upsurge in racism and all kinds of discrimination. The number of displaced persons had increased from about 89.3 million in 2021 to more than 100 million. Refugees were entitled to be granted asylum and to enjoy all the safeguards foreseen in international legal instruments.

84. Senegal, which attracted a very large number of asylum-seekers, had invariably hosted and facilitated the integration of foreign nationals, primarily from West African countries that were experiencing insecurity and instability, in compliance with article 34 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. However, developing countries that hosted refugees found it increasingly difficult to provide support and basic social services to persons who were traumatized by insecurity and instability, particularly children who had been denied access to education and training.

85. Human rights violations on international borders reflected countries' failure to respect the international legal principle of non-refoulement, which prohibited the extradition or expulsion of persons to countries where they were liable to be subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment. Senegal condemned such discrimination and urged all countries to treat persons fleeing from conflicts without discrimination on grounds of race, nationality or ethnicity.

86. **Ms. Mendonça** (Observer for Angola) said that a strong refugee status determination system was crucial for ensuring international protection. There was also an urgent need for creative, innovative and sustainable solutions, not only for people of concern in emergency situations but also for people in prolonged humanitarian situations, in order to facilitate their inclusion and active participation in host communities.

87. The humanitarian-development nexus could have a significant impact on burden- and responsibility-sharing. Comprehensive responses to displacement situations were at the heart of the Global Compact on Refugees and played a key role in finding long-lasting solutions for displaced populations. The Angolan authorities had developed the integrated "Cafu Channel" project with a view to reducing the negative impact of the drought in Cunene Province in the south of the country. Its main objective was to reduce migration and border-crossing by affected populations and to create conditions that enabled them to become self-reliant and to contribute to the economic development of the region. Angola encouraged UNHCR to strengthen its cooperation with other United Nations agencies in order to increase the development component in its cooperation with member States.

88. **Ms. Mascoll** (Canada) said that she welcomed the protection cluster approach taken by UNHCR to growing humanitarian needs. Canada would continue to provide the Office with flexible and predictable funding. Canada would also continue to provide durable solutions to refugees in both protracted and emerging crises, as it had done throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The country had renewed its multi-year resettlement commitments focused on regions with the greatest needs, including programmes to resettle 10,000 refugees from Africa by the end of 2023, and to address needs across Asia, including those of Rohingya refugees. In September 2022, Canada had officially welcomed the 20,000th Afghan refugee since August 2021.

89. In response to Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, Canada had offered temporary resident status to Ukrainian nationals through the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel.

90. Her country continued to support the strengthening of the capacity of asylum systems in Central and in Mexico and Colombia. As Chair of the MIRPS Support Platform for twelve months from July 2021, it had focused on the protection and empowerment of women and girls on the move.

91. As the first Chair of the Global Task Force on Refugee Labour Mobility, Canada continued to promote the goal of the Global Compact on Refugees to expand refugees' access to third-country solutions through a multi-stakeholder and partnership approach. It planned

to increase the scope of its innovative pilot project on economic mobility to welcome 2,000 qualified refugees who could help to overcome labour shortages in certain sectors.

92. Humanitarian assistance should respond to the needs and priorities of people in vulnerable situations, especially women and girls, and take into account vulnerability linked to sexual and gender diversity. Canada accorded high priority to the inclusion of advisers who were familiar with the experience of refugees and encouraged UNHCR to promote the inclusion and leadership of the voices of refugees and other forcibly displaced people in all its activities.

93. **Mr. Mailu** (Kenya) said that the Horn of Africa was currently experiencing a severe drought, which was exacerbating the protection needs of vulnerable persons, since they were exposed to insecurity as they moved through hostile regions in search of food, water and settlement areas for themselves and their livestock. The livelihoods and access to health care of agricultural and other communities had been severely undermined.

94. Kenya called for greater burden- and responsibility-sharing and more active involvement of the international community. It also called for stronger support for peace process initiatives in the countries of origin of forcibly displaced persons in order to achieve sustainable and durable solutions, including the dignified and safe return of refugees. Refugees had been included in the planning process in Kenya at both the national and county level so that governmental services could be accessed by refugees and host communities. Integration programmes had also been expanded through the provision of additional areas of protection, including more land for refugee schemes and host communities. Kenya had enhanced access to refugee identification documents, birth certificates, work permits, travel documents and business permits, thereby facilitating refugees' access to education, employment, business opportunities and travel.

95. Refugees had been integrated into the national education system, and students with travel documents were offered support for higher education and for the recognition of educational certificates acquired in their respective countries. Kenya called for greater international support for the education of refugees and other persons of concern, particularly up to university level. Kenya continued to support refugees' voluntary repatriation to their countries of origin and encouraged third countries to provide resettlement spaces for refugees.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.