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Summary record of the 759th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 11 October 2023, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Espinosa Cañizares (Vice-Chair) (Ecuador)

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In the absence of Ms. Ahmed Hassan (Djibouti), Mr. Espinosa Cañizares (Ecuador), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

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

General debate (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Ali Bandar** (Observer for the Comoros) said that over 110 million people throughout the world had become nomads, who wandered with fear, sometimes in their own countries, because of wars, conflicts and multifaceted violence. Most of them were vulnerable groups, including older persons, women and children, who were denied the right to live in dignity. The Comoros therefore welcomed the commitment made by international organizations, particularly the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to providing vital services and protection to families living in extreme poverty in theatres of war, conflict and devastation. As the current Chair of the African Union, the Comoros endorsed the policies and relevant instruments of those organizations in order to ensure that human rights were a core component of the action taken by the Government and the Union.
2. The Comoros had recently seen a massive influx of people from neighbouring countries taking dangerous sea routes and had opened its doors to UNHCR teams to deal with the situation. He urgently appealed to the international community to help African countries in general, his own country in particular, and all countries faced with adversity. He hoped that the Global Refugee Forum to be held in December 2023 would provide an opportunity to display the principles of solidarity and international cooperation that were enshrined in the Global Compact on Refugees.
3. **Mr. Czech** (Poland) said that he wished to express the condolences of Poland to the delegation of Israel concerning the recent heinous terrorist attacks and to the delegation of Afghanistan concerning the devastating earthquake.
4. Following the unprovoked and unjustifiable Russian aggression against Ukraine, Poland currently hosted about 1 million Ukrainian refugees. Thanks to the swift adoption of legal provisions, nearly 1.6 million Ukrainians had been granted Polish personal identity numbers and currently enjoyed the same access to education, health care and social benefits as Polish nationals. About 180,000 Ukrainian children and 400 Ukrainian teachers had been incorporated into the education system, and about 25,000 were enrolled in higher education institutions.
5. His Government also delivered humanitarian aid to Ukraine. It provided assistance to the health sector and had constructed temporary housing for 20,000 internally displaced persons in various locations. In addition, mobile medical units had been operating throughout the country since November 2022. The cost of humanitarian assistance had reached over €11 billion, which was equivalent to 2 per cent of the Polish gross domestic product.
6. Notwithstanding that financial and organizational burden, Poland had made donations in recent years to mitigate the impact of humanitarian crises in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan, Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen and, most recently, Armenia, which currently hosted an unprecedented number of refugees. In addition, Poland had provided in-kind bilateral and urgent humanitarian assistance.
7. **Mr. Scappini Ricciardi** (Paraguay) said that his Government expressed its sympathy for the victims of the recent attacks in Israel and profoundly lamented the impact on the civilian population.
8. According to the High Commissioner, 110 million people throughout the world had been forcibly displaced by violence, conflicts and persecution. It was a complex scenario and joint action was required to develop effective solutions. UNHCR played a crucial role in devising comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable responses by States, the private sector and the World Bank.
9. The region of Latin America and the Caribbean had invariably displayed solidarity in addressing such challenges and had provided protection for millions of people. However, host countries required multilateral and bilateral financial support.

10. Paraguay had recently enacted a law regulating the naturalization of stateless persons. It had also updated existing regulations in order to align migration procedures with the international treaties that it had ratified. Migrants and refugees had benefited from such measures in recent years.

11. His delegation looked forward to the celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to the Global Refugee Forum and trusted that the events would strengthen the multilateral system and promote human rights in the face of current global challenges. Appropriate care for displaced persons required the promotion of solidarity and shared responsibility.

12. **Ms. Stasch** (Germany) said that Germany condemned the heinous attacks by Hamas against Israel and expressed its deepest sympathy for the civilians who had been killed and injured in Israel and Gaza.

13. Germany also extended its condolences to the thousands of victims of the earthquake in Afghanistan. It had already provided emergency support for humanitarian efforts in the country, including through UNHCR.

14. The international community must work collectively to address the root causes of displacement and to meet the needs of refugees and host communities. Climate change had had a devastating impact on many countries. The Russian war of aggression had resulted in the largest refugee crisis in Europe in many decades and had greatly undermined global food security. In addition, prolonged and new conflicts such as that in the Sudan continued to force millions of civilians to flee.

15. The second Global Refugee Forum would provide an opportunity to promote global responsibility-sharing, particularly in support of countries and communities that hosted large numbers of refugees. It was also essential to support the inclusion of refugees in national systems, to foster economic empowerment, to protect displaced persons from gender-based violence and to promote more effective interaction between humanitarian development and peace efforts in order to offer durable solutions.

16. Germany had welcomed several million refugees in recent years and remained the second largest donor of humanitarian assistance and the largest contributor of flexible funding to UNHCR. Most of the funds were allocated to the most vulnerable populations in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. With a view to tackling the global funding gap, priority must be given to efficiency, coordination and cooperation in humanitarian, development, peace and climate action.

17. She highlighted the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Germany stood in solidarity with all members of displaced populations, regardless of their age, beliefs, gender identity and sexual orientation.

18. Her delegation included a refugee adviser, who had fled from Yemen and received protection in Germany.

19. **Mr. Rahman** (Bangladesh) said that new conflicts and climate-induced forced displacements were exacerbating the global situation and greatly increasing the need for international protection. Decisive action must be taken to address the root causes of forced displacement and to create an environment conducive to safe, voluntary and sustainable repatriation. Developing countries were hosting the largest number of refugees, and protracted refugee situations were seriously undermining host countries' efforts to promote peace and development. The response to such crises had been compounded by the debilitating impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war and the decline in funding with fewer unearmarked commitments. Equitable burden-sharing was essential, and UNHCR should focus on building partnerships tasked with creating the conditions for voluntary return.

20. Bangladesh had hosted about 1.2 million forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals during the past six years on humanitarian grounds. Primary and secondary education was provided for the Rohingyas in their native language and spacious new refugee camps had been built for around 100,000 Rohingyas. International support was required for further improvements in their living conditions. As the funding of only 34 per cent of the joint response plan for the

Rohingya humanitarian crisis had led to a 33 per cent reduction in food rations in the first half of 2023, Bangladesh urged all stakeholders to increase their contributions.

21. Waning hopes of an early return had led to criminal activities in some Rohingya refugee camps, and the risk of radicalization might undermine regional stability. Bangladesh therefore welcomed the recent decision by the authorities of Myanmar to enable displaced Rohingyas to return to their ancestral land in Rakhine State. It called on relevant international partners, regional countries and United Nations agencies to facilitate their voluntary return. In particular, it urged UNHCR to step up its activities in Rakhine State aimed at building resilience among communities.

22. Negative stereotyping of refugees and migrants was undermining the integrity of international protection procedures. It was therefore essential to provide support for marginalized and vulnerable communities in host countries and to secure their right of return in dignity and safety. The forthcoming Global Refugee Forum would provide an opportunity for making the necessary pledges of support.

23. **Ms. Fuentes Julio** (Chile) said that she wished to express the condolences of Chile for the tragic events in Israel that had claimed the lives of many victims. Chile expressed its solidarity with Israel and called for a cessation of the hostilities, which were fuelling a spiral of violence that primarily affected civilians in both Israel and Palestine.

24. Chile was commemorating 50 years since the coup d'état that had forced thousands of Chileans to flee from their country. Its debt of solidarity to the countries that had hosted them motivated its current willingness to host victims of forced displacement. There was a continuous increase in the number of displaced persons in the Americas, and Chile appreciated the support provided by UNHCR and humanitarian workers who sought to protect vulnerable groups such as women, children and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex persons.

25. In July 2023, her Government had launched a national policy on migration, which was implemented by State actors, civil society, the private sector and international organizations, including UNHCR. It had taken a human rights-based approach to that policy and during its pro tempore presidency of the Quito Process on the Human Mobility of Venezuelan Nationals in the Region and at the South American Conference on Migration.

26. In June 2023, Chile had accepted the invitation of UNCHR to lead the commemorative process of the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees together with Colombia and Brazil. The initiative would be launched on 12 December 2023 as a side event of the Global Forum on Refugees. Both events would provide an opportunity to renew pledges for the protection of refugees. Chile had complied with the pledges that it made in 2018, namely to abolish statelessness by 2024, to provide an inclusive environment for refugee workers and to promote refugee family reunification.

27. **Mr. Bálek** (Czechia) said he wished to express his delegation's firm and longstanding support for the State of Israel and its solidarity with all victims and their families. Czechia strongly condemned Hamas and its appalling terrorist acts.

28. Since the beginning of the Russian war of aggression, his country had provided €60 million in humanitarian aid. It had provided €1 million each to Moldova and Ukraine through UNHCR. Czechia had hosted more Ukrainian refugees, in per capita terms, than any other country, thanks to cooperation at all levels of public administration and an unprecedented wave of solidarity from civil society. The assistance provided to Ukraine had focused since 2014 on education, health and the public sector, and had recently been extended to include housing, medical equipment and energy. Czechia was also willing to provide assistance in other areas, such as cybersecurity and the building of resilience.

29. During the past decade, Czechia had allocated more than €20 million of assistance, in cooperation with UNHCR, to refugees from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Mali, the Niger, Pakistan, Serbia, Syria and other countries. In addition, €500,000 was currently being allocated to refugees in Armenia. Czechia also actively contributed to United Nations Volunteers.

30. **Mr. Eheth** (Cameroon) said that Cameroon was concerned about the proliferation of hotbeds of tension throughout the world, especially in Africa. Forced displacements were continuously increasing in response to armed conflicts and climate change. Cameroon currently hosted almost 500,000 refugees and about 9,000 asylum-seekers, in line with his Government's policy of hospitality, protection and non-refoulement and its compliance with its international obligations, including those assumed under the Global Compact on Refugees. The challenges faced in that context by countries with fragile economies must be addressed in a determined and resilient manner.

31. The Government was finalizing, in cooperation with UNHCR, a procedure for identifying refugees through the delivery of biometric identity cards that facilitated their integration into society. The First Lady of Cameroon was also involved, with the support of women's associations, in action to support refugees. Community facilities for refugees, such as classrooms, health-care centres, markets, water supply and solar energy, were being created under the recently established Education Reform Support Programme in Cameroon and the National Participatory Development Programme.

32. The first meeting of a multi-stakeholder dialogue on refugee management had been held on 25 November 2022 in Cameroon with the UNHCR regional office and other partners. The next meeting would be held in November 2023. The Government had also conducted an awareness-raising campaign to promote the integration of refugees accommodated by municipalities into the local economic and social systems. National consultations had been held in September 2023 to assess the country's compliance with the commitments that it had assumed during the first Global Refugee Forum in December 2019.

33. Bilateral negotiations were being conducted with Chad and Nigeria with a view to finalizing tripartite agreements on the repatriation of Cameroonian refugees. Cameroon had hosted in April 2022 a regional ministerial conference to address forced displacements related to the Central African crisis. Cameroon hoped to work with UNHCR and other States to facilitate the return of refugees to their countries of origin, but budgetary restrictions had unfortunately led to the suspension of numerous programmes and delayed the achievement of that objective. He therefore called for the strengthening of the UNHCR office in Cameroon.

34. Promotion of a worldwide response to the Global Compact on Refugees required burden- and responsibility-sharing. Cameroon remained open to diversified and constructive partnerships with that end in view.

35. **Ms. Al-Muftah** (Observer for Qatar) said that, according to the UNHCR Global Trends Report 2022, over 108 million people had been forcibly displaced as a result of persecution, conflicts, violence and human rights violations. Furthermore, 52 per cent of refugees and persons in need of international protection were from Syria, Ukraine and Afghanistan. The international community must therefore take vigorous action to address the root causes of displacement, namely conflicts, war, acts of violence, natural disasters and climate change.

36. Qatar was deeply concerned about the escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territories. Israel bore full responsibility for the escalation on account of its continuous violations of the rights of the Palestinian people, its racist policies, the repeated attacks on the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and its failure to respect international resolutions and the historical rights of the Palestinian people.

37. Stability and lasting peace in the Middle East could only be achieved by ending the Israeli occupation, achieving a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian issue based on the Arab Peace Initiative, establishing an independent Palestinian State based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and permitting the return of Palestinian refugees.

38. Qatar had provided support for refugees and the communities hosting them, including humanitarian and medical aid, by implementing relief and development projects, and by providing educational opportunities for children, especially in conflict areas, as well as employment opportunities for young people. It had also served as a mediator with the aim of terminating conflicts and promoting peace, stability and sustainable development.

39. Qatar was a strategic partner of UNHCR, and the aid to refugees provided by governmental and non-governmental agencies during the period from 2014 to 2022 had totalled about \$500 million. It was also a member of the UNHCR \$20 million club of donors and of the core group of the support platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries. Qatar urged all States and stakeholders to support the multi-stakeholder pledge for the Afghanistan situation (ReSolve – for Resilience and Solutions) that would be presented at the second Global Refugee Forum.

40. **Ms. Lozano Gallegos** (Observer for El Salvador) said that her delegation wished to express its condolences to the victims of the recent earthquake in Afghanistan and the civilian victims, including women and children, of the recent events in Israel and Palestine. She condemned the terrorist attack and called for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

41. El Salvador remained loyal to its principles in addressing gaps in protection and finding solutions for the issues faced by refugees, asylum-seekers, forcibly displaced persons and stateless persons. It benefited from the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS), which, together with assistance from the Office, had made it possible for the country to make great progress in implementing the pledges it had made in 2019 under the Global Compact on Refugees relating to employment, living standards, health and education. The Government had reviewed its standards and national policies in order to provide a better response to address the needs of persons who had been displaced, and it had strengthened its Commission for the Recognition of Refugee Status, whose responsibilities included the establishment of a model for integration.

42. The Government worked hand-in-hand with the private sector through its “My First Job” programme to provide employment to displaced persons, and had so far thus placed over 500 people, including 300 women, in jobs. It had also met with some success in implementing a programme establishing urban welfare and opportunities centres, which afforded opportunities to young people in art, languages, sports and fields in an effort to create alternatives to displacement and migration.

43. The second Global Forum on Refugees would provide an opportunity for countries and key stakeholders to go further in making pledges and specific contributions in order to strengthen implementation of the aims of the Global Compact. With the financial difficulties faced by the Office, the international community must strengthen solidarity and step up its support for its activities.

44. **Ms. Paumier López** (Observer for Cuba) said that her delegation was deeply concerned about the escalation of violence in Israel and Palestine, which was the result of 75 years of continued violations of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

45. Widespread poverty, inequality, food insecurity and other scourges had resulted in an unprecedented number of people seeking refuge around the world. Her delegation therefore attached particular importance to the Office’s mandate of international protection for the thousands of refugees, asylum-seekers and other persons of concern. The definitions and categories that entailed special protection must be preserved, and a distinction between refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants must be made, as each category of person required protection but of a different nature.

46. Duplication and waste of scarce resources for humanitarian coordination within the United Nations system, both in the field and at the highest levels of administration, must be avoided.

47. The adoption of the Global Compact for Refugees had established a new milestone in the coordination of international efforts to address the vulnerability experienced by millions of people. However, the search for durable solutions for refugees would not be effective unless all nations worked together. Greater efforts were required to assist Governments in fulfilling their international obligations, planning responses to refugee situations from the outset and eliminating the root causes of refugee movements. Undeniably, unilateral coercive measures, which were contrary to international law and caused economic and social hardship, contributed to an increase in human mobility.

48. Contrary to the image that was sometimes projected, developing countries were the ones that received the greatest number of refugees. In the light of the reduction in contributions to the Office, she called on all Member States, and developed countries in particular, to step up their efforts to support the Office's work with flexible, unconditional contributions.

49. Cuba had provided subsidies to thousands of children who were refugees, thus contributing to their personal development and the development of their communities. In Cuba, all refugees had access to education, from the primary to the upper secondary level, free of charge and at the same schools attended by Cuban citizens. The State also provided all refugees and asylum-seekers with free access to medical care in order to ensure their physical and mental well-being.

50. **Ms. Filipenko** (Observer for Ukraine) said that she wished to express her condolences to all those affected by the recent developments in the Middle East, including the victims of the horrific terrorist attack in Israel, and by the devastating earthquake in Afghanistan.

51. In 2022, the world had seen the highest-ever yearly increase in the number of forcibly displaced people owing to the armed aggression carried out by Russia against Ukraine, in gross violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. That aggression had triggered one of the largest and fastest-growing displacement crises of recent times, with a devastating impact stretching far beyond Ukraine. Some 20 months into the war, that crisis showed little sign of easing. More than 11 million Ukrainians remained displaced, including 5 million within Ukraine and a further 6.2 million who had sought safety abroad. As the invasion became protracted, so too did the displacement that had ensued.

52. By repeatedly targeting the civilian population and civilian infrastructure, Russia aimed to spread fear and terror among civilians, to make their life unbearable, thus wilfully fuelling the displacement crisis. That situation had led to increased vulnerability of the displaced people. For many of them, durable solutions were a distant prospect.

53. Ukraine was grateful to the Office for its assistance in addressing complex humanitarian and displacement challenges. Millions of people in Ukraine and abroad had been reached with the Office's life-saving assistance and protection services. The Office should continue its active engagement in humanitarian development action in Ukraine, in particular by supporting the newly adopted State Policy Strategy on Internal Displacement for the period up to 2025 and corresponding action plan and focusing on programmes that supported recovery and reintegration efforts. She urged the donor community to back the Office in its response by allocating the necessary funding.

54. She wished to express her delegation's sincere gratitude to all countries that provided temporary protection or similar national protection schemes to Ukrainians temporarily displaced by the war. Her delegation also welcomed the recent decision by the European Union to extend its temporary protection to Ukraine for an additional year, until 4 March 2025, benefiting more than 4 million displaced Ukrainians living in countries of the European Union. If the safety and security situation permitted, Ukraine would be ready to establish conditions enabling people temporarily displaced abroad to return home voluntarily. Such returns would be critical as the country set out on the path towards recovery and reconstruction.

55. Ukraine was deeply alarmed at the dire situation of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians, including children, who had been unlawfully deported from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to Russia, in violation of international humanitarian law. They had been placed in depressed and remote regions of Russia, with limited or no access to livelihood opportunities or critical services, and were pressed to assume Russian citizenship, failing which they faced restrictions.

56. Among the people thus deported, children were the most vulnerable. Russia violated the fundamental principles of child protection in times of war by issuing Russian passports to abducted Ukrainian children, stealing their identity, placing them in Russian families for adoption and indoctrinating them in special camps. She urged Russia to provide the Office with full and unhindered access to those people in order to facilitate their safe and dignified return to Ukraine, in accordance with international law.

57. **Mr. Hashim Mostafa** (Observer for Iraq) said that he wished to express the unwavering support of Iraq for the Palestinian cause. Iraq stood by the Palestinian people as they strived to realize their aspirations and their full legitimate and inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination, the right of return and the right to a Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital. The current situation was the natural result of longstanding, systematic repression of the Palestinian people at the hands of the occupying Power that had never complied with international resolutions. Injustice and the denial of rights could not lead to sustainable peace. His delegation called on the international community to put an end to those grave violations, to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and to restore the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, who continued to suffer from occupation, racial discrimination, blockades, the desecration of holy sites and violations of humanitarian values and principles. The continued escalation in the Palestinian territories could destabilize the entire region.

58. The continued increase in the number of refugees and internally displaced persons around the world had been fuelled by humanitarian crises resulting from armed conflicts, climate change, water scarcity and their ensuing socioeconomic and health implications. International cooperation and solidarity were critical to tackling long-standing crises as well as emerging ones. A new and innovative approach was required to address the root causes of those crises and the challenges facing the countries of the world, including host countries.

59. Iraq was a country of transit and destination of refugees. It hosted hundreds of thousands of refugees and it was committed to providing them with the assistance they required. The relevant national institutions provided health care, education and other services to ease the suffering of refugees and internally displaced persons and to find solutions to their problems, with comprehensive plans to care for refugees, in line with international standards, and with full respect for their human rights.

60. His Government took pride in the imminent end of internal displacement in Iraq, where solutions had been found for the cases of some 5 million internally displaced persons. The Government had promoted their access to social and economic rights and was currently cooperating with a Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Solutions to Internal Displacement in order to implement the national plan that it had launched in 2021. The authorities had continued to decontaminate liberated areas by removing explosive remnants of war and clearing mines and other explosive devices in cooperation with United Nations specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations.

61. Iraq was continuing efforts to repatriate all displaced Iraqis in the Al-Hol camp to their places of origin. An eleventh round of returns had started in September 2022, and more than 8,000 people had been repatriated so far. The Government had assigned responsibilities to the various State authorities to continue the process of transport, rehabilitation and reintegration of all Iraqi families returning from the camp. His delegation called on the international community to make concerted efforts to meet the challenges posed by the Al-Hol camp and to address their repercussions. That included the possibility that residents had been subjected to the influence of the radicalized ideology of ISIL, and that the danger that they might themselves later turn into terrorists. He called on all the countries concerned to repatriate their nationals to their places of origin and to make efforts to reintegrate and rehabilitate the camp's residents.

62. **Mr. Bin Khothaila** (Observer for Saudi Arabia) said that his delegation regretted the military escalation between the occupation authorities of Israel and Palestinian factions, which had exacerbated the situation, jeopardized the lives of civilians and threatened the stability of the region. He called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and the protection of civilians. Saudi Arabia reiterated its position that the explosion of the situation had been brought about owing to the continuous violation by the Israeli occupation authorities of the rights of Palestinians, the denial of their legitimate rights and the desecration of holy places. His Government would continue to stand with the Palestinian people in their quest to defend their legitimate rights and in their aspiration to have a life of dignity and to achieve a just and lasting peace. Saudi Arabia reiterated its call to the international community to assume its responsibilities and to start a credible peace process that would lead to a two-State solution.

63. He commended the Office and the High Commissioner for their dedication in performing their work and for their cooperation with Saudi Arabian national institutions. Such bodies continued to address the root causes of displacement, to support refugees and migrants and to improve their living conditions and ensure their well-being. In the near future, Saudi Arabia planned to start new activities with the Office. His delegation hoped that such cooperation would contribute to addressing the causes of displacement and to mitigating the suffering of forcibly displaced persons, especially those who were most in need.

64. The world was confronted with serious challenges, with unprecedented numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers who had been driven to flee by conflicts, climate change, war, desertification and the scarcity of resources. Comprehensive sustainable solutions to those challenges could be found only through concerted efforts and good offices to peacefully resolve conflicts and to address climate change, and through a humanitarian development approach.

65. Saudi Arabia was among the biggest donors and providers of humanitarian assistance. It also made efforts to address the situation of war victims and provide medical services. It had assisted a number of host countries and had thus shared with them the burden and responsibilities of hosting refugees and asylum-seekers, especially in the case of countries that faced economic hardship that hampered their ability to provide for them.

66. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he wished to thank Qatar for its support as a major donor, in particular for its contributions to the support platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees. Qatar was also the only State in its region that had made non-earmarked contributions, which were an extremely valuable form of support for the Office. Iraq had very recently been a country facing a severe emergency, with one of the largest internally displaced populations in the world, and it had now moved firmly into a phase of recovery and reconstruction, with an imminent end to the displacement of millions of people. He welcomed the fact that the Government of Iraq had expressed its willingness to work, in spite of all challenges, to find a solution to the complex situation at the Al-Hol refugee camp in the north-eastern part of the Syrian Arab Republic. He appreciated the appeal for peace in the statement by the representative of Saudi Arabia, which had shown leadership in trying to secure the peace both in its immediate region and in the Sudan, and he looked forward to increasing the Office's cooperation with that country.

67. He thanked the delegation of Paraguay for its recognition of the global role of the Office and welcomed the legislative measures taken in that country to address statelessness, asylum and other related questions. The statement by the delegation of Chile had highlighted the fiftieth anniversary of the tragic coup d'état in that country, which had led to long years in which Chile had been a country of origin of refugees. It had now become an advanced host country, and the Office would continue to work with the Government of Chile to strengthen its system of asylum. He welcomed the fact that Chile would take the helm of the commemorative process of the fortieth anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration, the Cartagena+40 process.

68. The need for coordination between countries of origin, countries of transit and host countries was particularly pronounced in the Central American region, as noted by the delegation of El Salvador. He thanked the delegation for mentioning the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework and the urban welfare and opportunities centre programme, which had impressed him as particularly innovative. The delegation of Cuba had eloquently recognized the Office's role and importance, highlighting the various categories of persons in situations of human mobility requiring international protection.

69. Bangladesh had for many years hosted Rohingya refugees, and since 2017 had taken in hundreds of thousands. As noted by the delegation of Bangladesh, the joint response plan for the Rohingya humanitarian crisis faced serious funding shortfalls, and he therefore appealed to all donors to provide support for it.

70. Poland had been among the countries that had received the largest number of Ukrainian refugees, and its reception of Ukrainians had been exemplary. It had also provided humanitarian aid for refugees and displaced people within Ukraine and in other countries, including Armenia. Germany had not only been the Office's second largest financial supporter, but a valuable ally in supporting its operations worldwide and one of the host

countries receiving the highest number of refugees. It had also provided precious support for particularly underfunded operations in Africa and the Middle East. He saluted the German delegation for including a refugee in its ranks. Czechia had also taken in a large number of Ukrainian refugees and it too had provided humanitarian assistance for displaced persons and refugees in Ukraine and Armenia. The delegation of Ukraine had described the tragedy experienced by her country, including attacks on civilians. The Office firmly intended to continue programmes that it ran with other organizations to provide humanitarian support to the affected population, with due attention to recovery and resilience. He had taken note of the points raised by the delegation about the plight of Ukrainian children. The Office worked under the leadership of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on that question.

71. The delegation of the Comoros had described the challenges that country currently faced. He hoped that the Comoros, as the current Chair of the African Union, would make use of its experience to address the complex question of mixed movements at the continental level, as it required a coordinated response. He congratulated Cameroon, which had received a large number of refugees, for its inclusive policy and its intention to finalize tripartite agreements with Chad and Nigeria on the repatriation of Cameroonian refugees.

72. **Mr. Yun Seong Deok** (Republic of Korea) said that a business-as-usual approach was no longer adequate to address the persistent and structural challenges posed by the rise in refugee numbers, complex crises and the significant funding gap. To address the latter issue, UNHCR must broaden its donor base and ensure more efficient and effective use of its predictable funding. Clearer, more comprehensive information on the Office's prioritization efforts would be welcome in the budget report. Enhanced performance and accountability would serve to strengthen trust among donors, thereby increasing the quality of funding, including unearmarked contributions. Efforts to strengthen results management and the quality of reporting, while abiding by the simplified reporting procedure approved under the Grand Bargain on humanitarian financing, should be continued.

73. In the light of growing demand for durable solutions and the need for greater investment in that area, UNHCR was encouraged to provide a comprehensive overview of its collaboration with stakeholders working in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, including the projects being carried out and their expected outcomes. Regarding the Office's internal reform and transformation process, he expressed the hope that the emphasis on diversity and inclusiveness would translate, among other things, into greater regional balance in professional and senior staff categories. While decentralization and regionalization were not the end goal, they were a means of promoting efficiency. More attention could be paid to identifying unexpected challenges or gaps in the reform process.

74. The second Global Refugee Forum would be an opportunity to reinvigorate global efforts to address refugee crises, identify ways to contribute to durable solutions and strengthen cooperation among participants. Similarly, UNHCR could facilitate change by improving its organization and activities, heeding the diverse opinions of States and other stakeholders and playing a more central and active role as the leading United Nations entity specializing in refugee issues.

75. **Mr. Da Conceição** (Mozambique) said that with the crucial support and assistance of UNHCR, Mozambique was hosting about 28,000 refugees and asylum-seekers and, in the first half of 2023, had facilitated the resettlement and voluntary repatriation of more than 300 refugees, representing a significant step forward in its implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees. His Government wished to express its gratitude for the support rendered by UNHCR to internally displaced persons in Cabo Delgado Province, including assistance for their reintegration into their places of origin. To date, 400,000 persons had returned safely to their homes; 800,000 displaced persons were still in need of assistance.

76. The Government of Mozambique had fulfilled the pledges it had made in 2019 and looked forward to reviewing progress made and planning future action to address refugee situations at the upcoming Global Refugee Forum. In that regard, it favoured a case-by-case approach to assisting refugees, tailoring approaches to the refugee trends, patterns and dynamics of the country concerned. In the case of Mozambique, voluntary repatriation was emerging as the most requested durable solution. Local integration was another durable solution, enabling refugees to rebuild their lives and contribute to the economic growth of

local communities and the host country's development. However, global solidarity to provide financial assistance for refugee protection had long been declining, affecting those developing economies hosting large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons. The situation of refugees required an urgent and coordinated response. His Government therefore called upon all parties to step up their efforts and unite to address that common challenge.

77. **Mr. Seck** (Senegal) said that worsening armed conflicts, combined with the effects of climate change and increased poverty, continued to force populations to flee their homelands, often at risk to their life. Now more than ever, there was a need for collective efforts to calm tensions, resolve conflicts and find solutions to the difficulties faced by refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons and stateless persons. It was time to revitalize multilateralism and strengthen international cooperation to address the various challenges. In that regard, he commended UNHCR and its partners for their work in the face of the complex emergency situations unfolding on the ground.

78. With the support of UNHCR, and in keeping with its tradition as a land of asylum and hospitality, Senegal had continued to take measures to improve the protection of refugees and safeguard their basic rights. Act No. 2022-01 on the status of refugees and stateless persons sought to prevent statelessness and provided for the right to family reunification. Under that Act, a person with refugee status was entitled to acquire Senegalese nationality, subject to certain conditions, and enjoyed the same rights as Senegalese nationals to obtain medical treatment and gain access to education, justice and basic social services.

79. As a result of awareness-raising and information campaigns, in the first half of 2023, some 5,000 asylum-seekers had registered for identity cards. Refugee families had also been able to obtain civil status documentation. A mass naturalization scheme was envisaged for the period 2024–2027, and Senegal would continue to make sustained efforts, through a socioeconomic programme, to enable internally displaced persons to return to their places of origin. His Government was committed to improving its asylum system, including by strengthening the institutional frameworks for the reception and management of refugees and stateless persons. The principle of non-refoulement was duly respected by the Senegalese authorities in accordance with domestic law and the international commitments of Senegal.

80. Lastly, he encouraged the international community to continue its efforts, in a spirit of solidarity and cooperation, to alleviate the suffering of refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons and stateless persons across the globe.

81. **Mr. Adejola** (Nigeria), calling for peace between Israel and Palestine and condemning violence in all its forms, said that the upward trend in the number of displaced persons globally was attributable not only to conflicts, but also the aftermath of floods, droughts, hurricanes, earthquakes and wildfires. No continent was immune, further underscoring the need for solidarity.

82. Since December 2022, Nigeria had been receiving thousands of refugees from neighbouring countries. The Government had maintained a friendly asylum regime, with zero tolerance for xenophobia, by streamlining asylum processes, in accordance with the principles of the Global Compact on Refugees. Among other relevant measures, it had put in place a strategic emergency preparedness plan to manage the influx of persons, strengthened refugee protection and registration, and included refugees in its national development plan.

83. In January 2023, Nigeria had participated in the third High-level Conference on the Lake Chad Region, demonstrating its partnership with the Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement and its commitment to addressing the needs of more than 2 million internally displaced persons in northern Nigeria. Moreover, it had established a presidential committee to facilitate the rehabilitation and return of those persons and of Nigerian refugees in neighbouring countries, in safety and dignity.

84. Nigeria had made strident efforts to fulfil the pledges it had given in 2019 at the Global Refugee Forum and would continue to honour those pledges and seek partnerships in the areas of self-reliance, health, education and peacebuilding at the forthcoming event. It called upon the global community, development partners and international financial institutions to respond to the plight of host countries in a spirit of burden- and responsibility-sharing.

85. He reiterated the concerns that had been raised by the representatives speaking on behalf of the Group of African States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation at the Executive Committee's 755th meeting (A/AC.96/SR.755) regarding the lack of transparency vis-à-vis the inclusion of non-consensual language in the programme budget for 2024 (A/AC.96/74/5), after it had been endorsed by member States at the 88th meeting of the Standing Committee. UNHCR would be measured by its commitment to upholding equity and promoting transparency.

86. **Mr. Tounkara** (Mali), conveying his Government's gratitude to its bilateral and multilateral partners for their efforts to foster peace, security and development in Mali and the Sahel, said that the National Commission for Refugees was responsible for all issues relating to the protection and assistance of persons of concern to UNHCR, including the implementation of refugee management policy. The Commission's activities included determining refugee status, providing identity documents, finding durable solutions and facilitating voluntary returns, in coordination with UNHCR.

87. In spite of the security crisis that had affected the country since 2012, Mali scrupulously observed its commitments to protecting and assisting those persons who fell under the Office's mandate. As at 31 August 2023, Mali had granted asylum to more than 65,000 refugees, with another 20,000 awaiting registration. However, the Commission had been unable to provide identity cards – enabling refugees to gain access to social services – to refugees in certain areas of the country owing to a lack of resources. It had nonetheless been working tirelessly to provide refugees with Convention travel documents so as to allow those wishing to travel abroad for professional, educational or medical reasons to do so. As of April 2023, there were 375,000 internally displaced persons in Mali.

88. On behalf of his Government, he welcomed the activities being carried out by various humanitarian organizations in Mali, including the UNHCR country office. His Government wished to express its gratitude to the international community for its work in the Sahel, despite the security challenges, while also encouraging it to maintain and intensify that support in the post-crisis reconstruction phase. He called for solidarity and international cooperation to support the Office's efforts to ease the suffering of persons under its mandate.

89. **Mr. Nguema Mbengono** (Observer for Equatorial Guinea) said that forced displacement and mixed movements presented complex challenges for countries of origin, transit and destination alike. Given that human mobility was increasingly being driven by war, climate change and natural disasters, there was a need for global solidarity and international cooperation, prioritization, innovation and resources. In the face of the ever-increasing global challenges, it was important to adopt policies aimed at strengthening protection and intensify efforts to find solutions at national and international levels and in a spirit of renewed cooperation and responsibility-sharing.

90. His Government was establishing an office for the management of migration affairs to facilitate the processing of asylum applications and the resettlement of refugees. The office would guarantee the protection and rights of those with refugee status, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons. Equatorial Guinea was committed to working closely with UNHCR and the African Union to improve standards for the treatment of refugees in receiving countries and with countries of origin to increase cooperation and solidarity.

91. Nobody chose to be a refugee. The human rights of refugees, as enshrined in international human rights conventions, must therefore be protected without discrimination. It was regrettable that, despite the efforts of UNHCR, refugees continued to suffer discrimination and the denial of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Equatorial Guinea called upon the international community to foster solidarity and shared responsibility, with a view to improving the situation of refugees and intensifying dialogue to address the root causes of the persistent rise in the scourge of displacement. The world could not remain indifferent to the tragedies unfolding in countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Palestine and Syria, where chaos and hardship had forced people to flee, with no solution in sight. In the words of former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, refugees were people like anyone else. They led ordinary lives before becoming displaced; their biggest dream was to be able to live normally again.

92. **Ms. Duncan** (New Zealand) said that New Zealand unequivocally condemned the terrorist attacks on Israel, the targeting of civilians and hostage-taking. It called upon all sides to show restraint and abide by the principles of international humanitarian law. It likewise continued to condemn the unjustified and unprovoked aggression of Russia, which had caused immense suffering, and wished to extend its condolences to the victims of the earthquake in Afghanistan.

93. Escalating conflicts, heightened food insecurity and climate change-induced natural disasters were exacerbating displacement. The persistent surge in forced displacement owing to armed conflict necessitated a genuinely global response. Given the protection needs and acute vulnerabilities of refugees and others under the Office's care, it was imperative to engage in cooperative efforts across the United Nations system and alongside civil society partners to safeguard their rights. The repercussions of compound humanitarian crises could set progress back for generations. Humanitarian action must therefore be grounded in a robust and all-encompassing protection agenda, providing adequate protection to all persons of concern, in particular vulnerable or minority groups, such as women, children, disabled people and LGBTQIA+ individuals.

94. UNHCR required flexible, reliable funding in order to effectively respond to emerging crises. To that end, New Zealand provided multi-year and unearmarked funding to UNHCR, as well as making additional contributions to the Office's humanitarian protection and assistance programmes for Rohingya, Sudanese and Ukrainian refugees. New Zealand was resolute in its commitment to the resettlement and social integration of refugees and the full realization of its Global Refugee Forum pledges. In recognition of the importance of refugee voices in shaping solutions and responses, it had established a refugee advisory panel to hear refugees' views on matters that directly affected them. Her Government wished to thank its international partners, including UNHCR, for their continued support in implementing the extended Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category pilot project.

95. **Ms. Díaz-Rato Revuelta** (Spain) said that her delegation strongly condemned the indiscriminate attacks by Hamas in Israel and deplored the deaths of civilians in Israel and Gaza. The current priority was to prevent further loss of life and ensure the de-escalation of violence. Spain reiterated its call on the parties to respect international humanitarian law and the need to ensure humanitarian access. It also wished to convey its condolences to the victims of the earthquake in Afghanistan earlier that week.

96. The seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the holding of the second Global Refugee Forum should mark a renewed commitment by Member States to respect and protect vulnerable persons. The 2030 Agenda and the multilateral system provided the only framework in which all parties could be heard and build consensus, a framework to which Spain remained firmly committed.

97. In recent years, there had been repeated and increasing violations of the Charter and of people's fundamental rights, coupled with a disregard for the need to care for the planet. Spain was committed to redirecting those trends. It had adopted a national strategy for humanitarian diplomacy and had pledged that, by 2030, it would allocate 0.7 per cent of its gross national income to official development assistance, of which at least 10 per cent would be earmarked for humanitarian aid. It would not tolerate discrimination of any kind and supported the independence and reporting powers of the High Commissioner.

98. The Government's pledges at the Global Refugee Forum would focus on both national capacity-building and international responses and were a reflection of the sentiments of Spanish society, thanks to which, in 2023, the non-governmental organization España con ACNUR had once again been the main private donor to UNHCR. In June 2023, the Spain with Refugees Forum had been held with the participation of non-governmental organizations, universities, companies, refugee associations, government officials and UNHCR representatives.

99. Spain echoed the High Commissioner's call to adopt the European Commission's new pact on migration and asylum. It viewed displacement as a shared opportunity and challenge. Persons fled for a wide variety of reasons, and it was becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between asylum-seekers and migrants. Accordingly, Spain was working with UNHCR and other international agencies to offer greater educational, vocational and social

opportunities to those forced to leave their countries, promote legal migration, including through complementary resettlement pathways for refugees, and support family reunification.

100. **Mr. Roach** (Australia) said that his country unequivocally condemned the attacks on Israel by Hamas, conveyed its deep condolences for the lives lost and called for the protection of civilians and the immediate release of all hostages. It also expressed its solidarity to those affected by the earthquake in Afghanistan.

101. Australia acknowledged the tireless efforts of UNHCR staff to deliver crucial protection and humanitarian assistance to the rising number of displaced persons globally. Over the previous 12 months, it had responded to requests for humanitarian assistance from the United Nations in relation to more than 20 crises, including in the Horn of Africa, the Sudan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. In the 2022/23 financial year, its predictable and flexible core contribution to UNHCR of 25 million Australian dollars (\$) had been supported by further contributions totalling \$A 27.5 million.

102. Australia remained deeply concerned by the significant funding gap faced by UNHCR. The Global Refugee Forum would provide an opportunity to demonstrate that responsibility-sharing had to become a reality. Australia was committed to providing assistance that supported refugee and host community resilience and had taken co-leadership roles in the pledges on resettlement and gender equality and protection from gender-based violence.

103. In June, Australia had released its new international development policy, which focused on supporting a peaceful, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific region while contributing to solutions to collective global challenges. The policy prioritized gender equality, social inclusion, locally led action and prevention and risk reduction, recognized climate change as a powerful driver of displacement, aimed to address the root causes of crises and aligned humanitarian, development, peacebuilding, diplomatic and security efforts.

104. The country's response to the Rohingya crisis was a collective effort with Association of Southeast Asian Nations and donor counterparts and the Government of Bangladesh. Australia called for accountability for human rights violations in Myanmar and remained committed to providing humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya and their host communities in Bangladesh and addressing needs in Myanmar.

105. Australia was also developing a humanitarian strategy and would work with partners to ensure that the strategy supported the Global Compact on Refugees. It had recently announced an increase in the scope of its humanitarian programme to 20,000 places in 2023 and 2024, which would represent its largest intake in a decade. It had assumed the Chair of the Consultations on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways in June and looked forward to assuming the Chair of the Global Task Force on Refugee Labour Mobility in April 2024. It continued to advance meaningful refugee participation through the creation of the Refugee Advisory Panel and would be proud to include a refugee adviser in its delegation to the Global Refugee Forum and other future high-level meetings.

106. **Ms. Arias Moncada** (Observer for Honduras) said that, unless priority action was taken to address the structural causes of forced displacement, from a development model that disproportionately affected natural resources to conflicts and the growing precariousness of working conditions, it would be difficult to find sufficient financial resources to meet humanitarian and international protection needs.

107. Honduras, as a country of origin and transit for thousands of people travelling to North America, faced great challenges related to internal displacement and consequently urged the international community to continue to seek innovative solutions and creative partnerships aimed at promoting human dignity. Her delegation wished to highlight the exemplary work carried out by UNHCR in Honduras, including in collaboration with the Government, which was grateful for the assistance provided by the Office in the design and adoption of the Act for the Prevention of Internal Displacement and the Protection and Care of Internally Displaced Persons.

108. Honduras reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening international coordination, including through the comprehensive regional protection and solutions framework, and joined the High Commissioner's call to address the gap in funding needed to guarantee international protection for refugees. It encouraged States members of the Executive Committee to share responsibility for refugees and make efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts. As the Global Refugee Forum approached, it remained fully committed to sharing best practices and experiences.

109. **Mr. Virabutr** (Thailand) said that, in the light of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it was time for the international community to make a real difference and ensure that no one was left behind. New and existing crises had put stress on the international protection system, particularly on low- and middle-income refugee host countries, reinforcing the need for international burden- and responsibility-sharing. Despite a welcome increase in States' contributions over the previous year, a funding gap remained. Thailand therefore supported the participation of the private sector and social enterprise in humanitarian responses. As a host and transit country, it continued to uphold the principle of non-refoulement and provide assistance and shelter to various groups in need, including 77,000 displaced persons from Myanmar, for whom it looked forward to finding durable solutions through partnerships with resettlement countries.

110. It was an exciting time for Thailand, which had recently launched, on a pilot basis, a national screening mechanism for persons fleeing persecution, under which protected persons were granted access to health care and, in the case of children, education. It was counting on the expertise and support of UNHCR during the pilot phase, in particular to strengthen the mechanism's infrastructure, build the capacity of officials, formulate standard operating procedures and define the modalities for data-sharing. Thailand was committed to bolstering its referral and protection system and looked forward to collaborating with partners in that regard, including through the Asylum Capacity Support Group.

111. Thailand was deeply concerned about the deteriorating conditions in Rohingya camps in Bangladesh, especially the decreasing budget for food rations. The previous month, Thailand had contributed \$28,500 to the World Food Programme to alleviate the crisis. It called on the international community to address the funding gap as a matter of urgency and to provide assistance and solutions to host and transit countries in South-East Asia.

112. It looked forward to sending a strong message of commitment at the Global Refugee Forum, including through collective pledges, and to welcoming the High Commissioner in a week's time. His visit would be a manifestation of the long-standing and close collaboration between UNHCR and Thailand.

113. **Ms. Kjær** (Denmark) said that Denmark offered its condolences for the lives lost following the earthquake in Afghanistan and in Israel and Gaza as a consequence of attacks by Hamas terrorists.

114. In a year of record high global displacement driven by conflict, instability and climate change and fuelled by the illegal war of aggression waged by Russia against Ukraine, the upcoming Global Refugee Forum was an opportunity to step up collective efforts to strengthen the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees and provide support to host countries. Denmark was committed to making the Forum a success and would focus on the areas of economic inclusion, climate action, nexus approaches, education and refugee youth empowerment. For years, it had been among the top donors to UNHCR. It was proud that the vast majority of its funding was multi-year and unearmarked or flexible and called on other States to provide UNHCR with adequate funding.

115. Denmark was deeply worried about the many persons who put their lives in the hands of human smugglers, often with disastrous consequences. It welcomed the High Commissioner's reference to the need for holistic, whole-of-route approaches and wished to create a fairer and more humane asylum system in Europe, with a focus on addressing the root causes of irregular migration. In the face of increasingly complex drivers of displacement and more protracted crises, integrated approaches with a sustainable development perspective were crucial. Denmark therefore welcomed the continued focus of UNHCR on expanding partnerships with development actors, including international financial institutions. It also stood ready to support the Office's efforts to reduce environmental degradation in

displacement settings and enhance the preparedness and resilience of displaced persons and host communities.

116. Denmark wished to underline the importance of protecting and seeking solutions for persons of concern without discrimination on any grounds. An age, gender and diversity approach was key to providing a truly inclusive and sustainable refugee response.

117. **Mr. Yamazaki** (Japan) said that Japan offered its condolences to those bereaved in the clashes between Israel and Palestinian militants and those affected by the earthquake in Afghanistan. It was deeply concerned that the number of forcibly displaced persons continued to rise and that crises were becoming increasingly prolonged and multi-layered, as exemplified by how the ongoing and unprovoked aggression against Ukraine by Russia had aggravated the global food security crisis, especially in developing and least-developed countries.

118. As global displacement reached unprecedented levels, there was a need for more innovative approaches to identifying sustainable solutions for persons forced to flee. While it was essential to deliver emergency humanitarian assistance promptly, it was equally important to meet the needs of displaced persons and host communities in a more sustainable manner through mid- to long-term development cooperation, with an emphasis on peacebuilding to tackle challenges in countries of origin and promote durable solutions.

119. Japan was a firm proponent of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and believed that the second Global Refugee Forum could serve as an opportunity to promote it. Accordingly, Japan had launched a multi-stakeholder pledge to strengthen the nexus and looked forward to working closely with interested parties in that regard. The pledge embodied a whole-of-society approach by serving as a platform for all actors to contribute to achieving the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees in line with their respective capabilities.

120. Japan shared concerns about the growing gap between humanitarian needs and funding. As Chair of the Group of Seven (G7) Hiroshima Summit, it had promoted discussions on multiple humanitarian crises. It believed that the Global Refugee Forum should be used to draw attention to crises that received limited media coverage and saw the value of flexible funding in response to underfunded crises. The Government had revised its Development Cooperation Charter earlier that year and had announced a policy of providing quality and flexible funding when necessary. It had also secured a budget for UNHCR cooperation for the period from January to September 2023 that was 13 per cent higher than the budget for all of 2022. It appreciated initiatives to enhance organizational and operational cost efficiency, including the UNHCR business transformation programme and United Nations fleet.

121. Recognizing the need for burden- and responsibility-sharing to address humanitarian crises, Japan extended its appreciation to all refugee-hosting countries and reaffirmed its continuing strong commitment to supporting refugees and affected populations. The second Global Refugee Forum would be a key moment for international solidarity. As a co-convener, Japan had been working with partners to ensure the Forum's success. It looked forward to the High Commissioner's upcoming visit to Tokyo, which would facilitate the preparations.

122. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he wished to congratulate Honduras on adopting the Act for the Prevention of Internal Displacement and the Protection and Care of Internally Displaced Persons, which would improve the country's response to destabilizing flows of displaced persons.

123. He also wished to thank Spain for speaking in support of the multilateral system, adopting a national strategy for humanitarian diplomacy, increasing its humanitarian aid budget, cooperating with his Office during its presidency of the European Union and pushing for the adoption of the European Commission's new pact on migration and asylum.

124. Denmark had always been one of his Office's most supportive partners and had taken concrete measures in countries, including Kenya, and in situations of displacement exacerbated by climate change. UNHCR would continue to liaise with the Government of Denmark on domestic asylum issues.

125. He wished to thank Thailand for continuing to host refugees from Myanmar and echoed its call for solutions to be found in that respect. Thailand was also to be congratulated for having established a national screening mechanism and for having contributed financially to the efforts of the World Food Programme in Bangladesh.

126. He was grateful to New Zealand for its unearmarked, multi-year contributions, which facilitated his Office's planning, for creating the Refugee Advisory Panel and for continuing to invest not only in resettlement but also in community sponsorship.

127. Australia was a big financial contributor to UNHCR and a strong resettlement partner, as illustrated by the expansion of its humanitarian programme to an impressive 20,000 places in 2023 and 2024. He wished to salute his Office's renewed dialogue with Australia, including on complex asylum issues, and the agreement reached on the growing need for a route-based approach. Australia was also to be commended for having set up its own Refugee Advisory Panel.

128. The representative of the Republic of Korea, which remained a strong donor country, had raised a number of administrative issues. His Office would continue to strive to be accountable through reporting and considered the strengthening of humanitarian and development links to be a major priority. He would be interested to learn more about the representative's strong appeal for UNHCR to play a more central role.

129. He appreciated the efforts made by Japan in many forums, not least the G7, where it had used its time as Chair to put refugees on the agenda, setting an example that he hoped future Chairs would follow. The concept of human security underpinned the humanitarian-development link of which Japan had been one of the most vocal champions and provided a solid foundation for peacebuilding efforts. He was grateful to the Japan International Cooperation Agency for its participation in many comprehensive refugee response frameworks and to Japan for its excellent choice of pledges for the Global Refugee Forum and its decision to provide flexible funding.

130. He had taken note of recent improvements in the situation in Mozambique, where his Office would continue to contribute to ongoing efforts to reduce internal displacement. He had been invited by the President to visit the country and hoped to do so as soon as possible.

131. His Office stood ready, where conditions allowed, to continue to work on solutions for Nigerian citizens who were displaced internally or were refugees in neighbouring countries. He wished to commend Nigeria for its choice of pledges for the Global Refugee Forum.

132. Some months previously, he had enjoyed a productive visit to Senegal, whose naturalization programme set an excellent example for the rest of the continent. He was glad to note improvements in the country's already advanced and liberal reception and asylum system and encouraged continued efforts in that direction.

133. He wished to thank Mali for the steps it had taken to improve its reception of refugees and the internal displacement situation. His Office continued to be concerned about the security of humanitarian operations and access to persons of concern in the country and counted on the support of the national authorities to ensure the safety of all humanitarian actors.

134. In recent years, Equatorial Guinea had played a leading role in the African Union in the area of displacement. He therefore counted on the country's continued support in that regard and wished to commend its establishment of a migration management office.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.