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### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PROGRAMME OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

Fifty-sixth session

#### SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 596th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Thursday, 6 October 2005, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. MARTABIT (Chile)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 am.

REPORTS ON THE WORK OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE (agenda item 5)

(a) INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION (continued) (A/AC.96/1007, 1008, 1017, and 1018)

1. Mr. MOSSELMANS (United Kingdom) welcomed the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to consolidate protection in its activities, particularly the introduction of Project Profile, which dealt with the registration of refugees. There was a shortage of protection staff on the ground, and management must make protection a priority when allocating posts. Assistance to urban refugees continued to be a source of concern that called for an imaginative approach by UNHCR. To that end, the United Kingdom favoured the current revision of guidelines on urban refugees and hoped that that process would be endorsed at the highest levels.
2. Coordination between UNHCR and its partners was sometimes less than optimal. In countries where refugees were returned, it had often been the case that other United Nations bodies had not been ready to take over, forcing UNHCR to continue its assistance; that could mean considerable investment in human and financial resources in areas in which UNHCR had no comparative advantage. Close cooperation within the United Nations Development Group would therefore be necessary, and UNHCR should draw attention to the need for a joint United Nations response.
3. He welcomed the strengthening of the Office's role in international migration activities. UNHCR should become actively involved in the ongoing debate on protection in societies in conflict and propose changes to increase protection accorded to internally displaced persons (IDPs). Improved protection of refugees should be an integral part of the debate on United Nations reform, including proposals to establish a Peacebuilding Commission.
4. At the European level, the United Kingdom endorsed the European Commission's proposals for Regional Protection Programmes, which sought to improve the protection capacity of regions to the benefit of refugees and the communities hosting them. At the national level, the United Kingdom had created a migration fund, with objectives that included the financing of projects to improve the protection of refugees in regions of origin. The fund could be used to test areas of the Convention Plus initiative, such as the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Somali Refugees and the Strengthening Protection Capacity Project.
5. UNHCR should intensify efforts to bring about durable solutions. His delegation considered voluntary return to be the preferable solution; the United Kingdom's voluntary return programme provided advice and counselling before departure and had a strong reintegration component that gave returnees access to training programmes and enabled them to start their own businesses. A refugee integration strategy had been added in March 2005 to help refugees make a positive contribution to the social and economic life of their new communities.
6. Mr. HUGHES (Australia) said that the Asian and Pacific region was continuing to shelter large groups of refugees, and he welcomed the contributions made by many countries of the region, including those like Thailand and Indonesia that had been severely hit by the recent

tsunami, to find durable solutions for those refugees. He also commended UNHCR activities in the region. Australia had contributed to those efforts, particularly through a resettlement assistance programme. Australia actively supported regional dialogue on issues of asylum and migration within the framework of regional consultation.

7. Ms. POLLACK (United States of America) said that protection was at the core of the UNHCR mandate, entailing responsibilities for the Organization as a whole and its Member States. Protecting IDPs was a natural extension of the Office's mandate, but that should not distract Member States from their commitment to refugees. Host countries should ensure that refugees' requests for protection were correctly evaluated, and there should be a renewed commitment to defending refugees' rights until durable solutions were possible, since refugees in protracted situations were too often denied their rights to freedom of movement, education and work. Moreover, Member States should be ready to provide financial support to help UNHCR meet its expanded responsibilities for IDP protection. Donor contributions in support of that role must come in addition to - and not take away from - contributions for refugee protection and assistance.

8. The Office's new role meant that a stronger and more coherent protection policy and field support structure was needed. The establishment of the post of Assistant High Commissioner for Protection was a step in that direction, as it would allow greater protection advocacy on issues such as non-refoulement and refugee rights, and would help UNHCR to manage protection staff more effectively in the field and in emergency deployments. Associated restructuring should also help UNHCR improve refugee registration. The United States endorsed the proposal to establish, as part of that restructuring, a resettlement service to manage the diverse, often complex protection needs of individuals and families.

9. Ms. HALLSTED-BJORKLUND (Sweden) said that there was a need for efforts to stimulate institutional and cultural changes within UNHCR in order for the organization to discharge its protection mandate more effectively. She expressed hope that the proposed reform, including the establishment of the post of Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, would help to bridge the gap between protection and operations and between headquarters and the field.

10. Sweden welcomed the current session's two thematic conclusions on local integration and complementary forms of protection. The adoption of a thematic conclusion on local integration was particularly welcome, given the range of responses it elicited. There was a pressing need to extend international protection to cases not covered by the 1951 Convention, such as persons whose life or physical safety were placed at risk by armed conflict. Although the text had not gone as far as had been hoped, it was a significant starting point.

11. Mr. THIRD (New Zealand) said that New Zealand supported the call for States to support UNHCR by providing the human and financial resources required in a timely fashion and announced that New Zealand planned to increase its financial contribution to UNHCR. In order to contribute to capacity-building in the Asian and Pacific region, New Zealand had seconded an officer to UNHCR in Papua New Guinea. New Zealand had recently assisted Papua New Guinea in reviewing its legislation in the areas of international protection and general immigration.

12. New Zealand had commenced a fundamental review of its own immigration legislation in order to determine what improvements could be legislated to enhance the country's commitment

to its international obligations. New Zealand had launched a multifaceted national settlement strategy for immigrants in 2004, which covered, inter alia, protection of ethnic identity, integration, participation, employment, improvement of language skills and access to information and services. An asylum forum had been established two months previously to bring together representatives of government agencies, UNHCR, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and asylum-seekers in order to propose solutions. New Zealand fully agreed that abuse of refugee status was unacceptable as it prevented legitimate refugee claimants from accessing protection. His delegation urged States to give proactive support to multilateral initiatives to combat and punish such abuse.

13. Mr. KNIAZHINSKY (Russian Federation) said that the use of standardized criteria made it possible to reduce abuse of the asylum system significantly. He urged UNHCR to take measures against abuses of international protection and to disseminate methodological documents on the subject. He expressed the hope that UNHCR would contribute in the near future to a naturalization process for stateless persons in Estonia and Latvia, since such persons would otherwise be deprived of their economic and social rights. Efforts to combat statelessness should be a priority of the future Assistant High Commissioner for Protection. Clumsy attempts by Latvia to create a hitherto non-existent international situation by contemplating the establishment of a new legal status of “stateless persons” or “non-citizens” were not exempt from criticism. It was well known that the goal of those attempts was to remove the 480,000 individuals without citizenship living in Latvia from any internationally recognized category or to legalize blatant discrimination against them.

14. The Russian Federation’s view on the question of statelessness was apolitical and motivated by humanitarian considerations. The question of stateless persons in Latvia and Estonia was a pressing issue that he hoped would be considered by UNHCR objectively and concretely. Just as the Office considered the problems of refugees in other countries without any objections being raised, or provided assistance to IDPs in a country when the State was unable to act, UNHCR should provide concrete assistance to persons without citizenship living in Estonia and Latvia, and should undertake a comprehensive analytical and statistical study to that end. All aspects of the question should be taken into account in future UNHCR documents. The Russian Federation was prepared to provide UNHCR with financing for any activities it carried out in that area.

15. Ms. AUCOIN (Canada) said that Canada condemned those States that continued to flout the principle of non-refoulement. While welcoming the decline in the number of refugees and asylum-seekers, she drew the Committee’s attention to the fact that that trend could be reversed at any time and urged Governments to take the necessary steps to end trafficking in persons. Canada invited UNHCR to draw up guidelines on protection and interception immediately, as called for in the Agenda for Protection. Canada supported the idea of a consolidated report on implementation of the Agenda and planned, within the framework of its own yearly review, to consult with NGOs with a view to including their activities in the report. She requested that UNHCR should do the same.

16. UNHCR should take a global approach to strengthening its refugee protection capacities while ensuring refugees’ physical safety and legal protection. The safety of staff in the field must also be better guaranteed, and it was essential that the Office’s various services should work together efficiently, particularly if UNHCR was required to manage IDP camps. Refugees must

be more involved in decisions that directly affected them, and although IDP movements in rural areas were being better managed, work remained to be done in cities where such movements were more frequent.

17. Her Government encouraged UNHCR to optimize refugee registration and to continue its resettlement efforts. Accordingly, it welcomed with optimism the Executive Committee's adoption of its first conclusion on local integration and hoped that the Office would imitate Canada by transferring resources to its offices in countries where the need for refugee assistance was most acute. Reliable information must be shared efficiently so that the right decisions could be taken on individual requests from refugees for protection and resettlement. The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada had recently taken innovative measures to optimize the processing of requests for asylum, and the initiative had been a great success. She concluded by reaffirming Canada's support for UNHCR efforts to make protection its primary concern.

18. Mr. BARIMANI (Islamic Republic of Iran) welcomed the strengthening of UNHCR protection capacity and stressed the need, in the case of mixed population movements, for consultations with host countries so that a distinction could be made between genuine refugees and persons who did not deserve international protection. As opportunities for resettling Afghan refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran were negligible, Governments should establish resettlement priorities, giving priority to the most vulnerable groups, such as the sick or persons with disabilities. The selection of refugees to benefit from resettlement measures must be governed by rigorous and fair criteria.

19. Mr. FARHANE (Morocco) welcomed the success of UNHCR voluntary repatriation programmes and commended the establishment of a global refugee registration system, a fundamental tool for assessing assistance and protection needs. Questions relating to movements of refugees or asylum-seekers called for the adoption of a multilateral agreement that would make it possible to reconcile control of migration flows with refugee protection. States must recognize that movements of refugees and migrants, far from being the cause of insecurity, ought to be viewed as factors of development. He reiterated the proposal to establish a special fund to promote durable solutions to refugee situations, which would be managed exclusively by UNHCR.

20. Ms. WELLESLEY-COLE (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom), delivering the common NGO statement on agenda item 5 (a), welcomed the fact that an increasing number of countries were offering resettlement programmes but said that such programmes must not replace obligations to asylum-seekers. Resettlement schemes should not select refugees according to integration criteria, labour market needs or other factors. Refugees such as the Vietnamese Montagnards in Cambodia were forced to resettle in the absence of any other viable option for survival.

21. NGOs shared the High Commissioner's concerns regarding the increasing intolerance in modern society, where refugees and asylum-seekers were sometimes considered agents of insecurity, a situation that encouraged racism and xenophobia. Resources should be made available to UNHCR, States and NGOs to undertake public education and awareness campaigns to combat that trend. The decision to repatriate asylum-seekers should be based on substantive consideration of the individual circumstances of each asylum-seeker rather than on general information on a country's safety or on bilateral or multilateral agreements between States.

The increasing use of mandatory and indefinite detention to punish new arrivals was also troubling. UNHCR should help States implement its revised guidelines on detention and combat arbitrary detention.

22. NGOs welcomed the draft conclusion on complementary protection, which would facilitate better recognition of the needs of persons not covered by the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol, and looked forward to cooperating with UNHCR in developing criteria in that area. They regretted that the guidelines on procedural standards for refugee status determination were too broad and that no independent appeal system existed. UNHCR should make annual protection reports and country of origin information available to its partners.

23. The draft conclusion on local integration marked an important step forward. It was in the interest of host countries to draw on the skills of refugees and involve them in their development plans. The draft conclusion recognized the value of self-reliance for refugees, but self-reliance must be understood as a tool for finding a durable solution and not as a solution in itself. Marginalized groups for whom self-reliance was not an option required special assistance.

24. NGOs were concerned about the more than 165,000 Saharan refugees in Algeria who lacked any form of livelihood and were confined to camps. The World Food Programme (WFP) and UNHCR risked exacerbating the situation by reducing humanitarian assistance by almost half and should reconsider their decision. Congolese refugees in three camps in the north-west part of the United Republic of Tanzania were facing similar difficulties, as WFP had reduced food rations at the end of 2004. The situation was such that women were forced to exchange sex for food. The international community must adhere to the commitments it had made concerning refugee food security. Many urban refugees had been rendered completely invisible to the protection and assistance of the international community. NGOs called on States to protect the rights of urban refugees. NGOs appreciated the Office's consultations with them during the revision of its urban refugee policy and urged States, particularly countries of first asylum and resettlement countries, to respond to the problem of violence against refugee and displaced women and girls, who were often raped and subsequently rejected by their communities. Those victims should at least have access to medical and psychosocial services.

25. All actors involved should intensify their efforts to assist the millions of Palestinians who lacked access to any form of international protection. Governments, UNHCR and other United Nations agencies should ensure the protection of Palestinian refugees under article 1 D of the 1951 Convention. The humanitarian situation in the Caucasus remained troubling. The extreme living conditions and difficulty of access to the region did not permit a true assessment of the situation. The lack of security made things even more difficult for humanitarian organizations, and the risk of kidnapping and difficulties in movement seriously endangered humanitarian programmes.

26. Lastly, the NGOs welcomed the outcomes of the 2005 World Summit, particularly the commitment to attaining the Millennium Development Goals, but regretted that refugee concerns had not been truly addressed. They also endorsed the decisions to establish a Peacebuilding Commission and strengthen human rights mechanisms by establishing a Human Rights Council. The international community should ensure that those measures strengthened the protection of persons of concern to UNHCR.

27. Ms. KRESSEL (Estonia), speaking in exercise of the right to reply, said that she wished to address some of the comments made by other delegations regarding the problem of statelessness. In 1992, shortly after Estonia gained its independence, 32 per cent of the population had consisted of stateless persons, whereas such persons accounted for only 9.8 per cent of the population in September 2005. The significant improvement in that situation was due in part to thoroughgoing legislative reforms undertaken by the Government with a view to facilitating the acquisition of nationality through naturalization and to promoting the integration of new Estonian citizens. The number of stateless persons in Estonian territory remained high, but most stateless persons held permanent residence permits and enjoyed the same rights and access to social services as all Estonians.

28. Ms. FELLER (Director, Department of International Protection) briefly reviewed the comments made by delegations concerning international protection and thanked countries for their unconditional support of the UNHCR protection mandate and the new guidelines introduced by the High Commissioner in his opening statement. She took note of the interest expressed by delegations in the draft conclusion on local integration and said that UNHCR had much to learn from countries such as New Zealand concerning integration. She agreed with the representative of the United Kingdom on the need to attain the Millennium Development Goals and stressed that UNHCR was doing its utmost to create synergies between its programmes and those goals.

29. The project to reinforce UNHCR protection capacities was a source of great interest. Implemented in four countries, it included a number of highly specific measures, with the Office's priority being the achievement of a consensus in the field with all the players involved. UNHCR had begun revising the guidelines on urban refugees and should have completed the process by the end of 2005. The guidelines would provide specific information about the types of assistance to be offered to urban refugees and would stress the need for cities to provide a minimum level of essential services for refugees.

30. She noted the interest shown by some delegations in training activities in the area of refugee rights and said she was happy to announce that UNHCR planned to increase those activities and address more political and less technical issues. She noted that the delegations of Sweden and the Islamic Republic of Iran wanted the Convention Plus initiative to result in more specific measures in the field. With regard to the problem of statelessness, she drew the attention of the delegations concerned to the revised guidelines on the applicability of the exclusion clause in the 1951 Convention in the context of massive population movements. She noted with interest the proposal of Canada that member States and UNHCR should consider producing a single report on the implementation of the Agenda for Protection. UNHCR would carefully study the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal, but she feared that it might entail additional costs. UNHCR was particularly interested in the measures taken by Canada to simplify procedures for determining refugee status.

31. She shared the concern of some delegations concerning trafficking in persons and noted that UNHCR field offices had organized consultations with their intergovernmental and non-governmental partners to better combat that scourge. Lastly, she noted with great interest the many subjects raised by the NGOs, and she hoped to have an opportunity to discuss them with the NGO representative.

(b) PROGRAMME BUDGETS, MANAGEMENT, FINANCIAL CONTROL AND ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT (A/AC.96/1006, 1010, 1012 and 1019)

32. Ms. CHAMBERLIN (Deputy High Commissioner) said that a review of resource allocation processes had enabled field managers to conduct comprehensive needs assessments with all partners, thus giving donors a more accurate image of the existing gap between the needs of refugees and the UNHCR budget and putting a figure to the contributions of host countries and refugees themselves. The biennialization of the 2008-2009 budget had the advantage of bringing the budget cycle into line with that of the United Nations system and promoting the institutionalization of results-based management. The pilot phase of Operational Reserve Category II had been extended to allow the Office to gather more complete financial data in order to conduct the comprehensive evaluation requested by the Committee.

33. The most important component of the comprehensive information technology strategy for 2005-2007 was the Management Systems Renewal Project (MSRP), which had been implemented in 39 European offices, while the Financial and Supply Chain modules had been deployed at headquarters; UNHCR had begun to see the results of those efforts. Modernization of the human resources management and payroll information systems was nearly completed; the PeopleSoft module facilitated workforce analysis and planning through automation.

34. The most important asset of UNHCR was its staff, which should be sufficiently flexible to adapt to operational needs. There had been some encouraging developments in that area in 2005: improved staff morale, more balanced staff profiles and greater workforce flexibility; a strengthening of training programmes in management, negotiation skills and accountability; greater transparency in human resources management through, inter alia, limitations on the duration of temporary assistance arrangements to prevent the opening of any gaps between notional and real staffing figures; and the adoption of clear guidelines on the recruitment and management of external consultants.

35. On the subject of accountability, she said that she had asked all managers early in the year to hold refresher sessions on the Code of Conduct at headquarters and in the field. In a separate initiative, UNHCR had in April 2005 launched an initiative to combat harassment and abuse of authority as the result of an inter-agency process within the United Nations Development Group. UNHCR advocated a zero-tolerance policy for workplace harassment. All UNHCR staff were expected to take a mandatory computer-based training course on the subject in 2005 and 2006. In 2005, UNHCR had reduced the number of staff between assignments, launched a staff awards programme to recognize exceptional performance and introduced an exam-based entry system. The Office had also devoted a considerable amount of time to audit and oversight matters. The Oversight Committee had systematically reviewed internal audit reports rated "below average" to ensure appropriate follow-up on all recommendations.

36. Despite financial constraints, UNHCR would be able to attain its financial goals thanks to fiscal discipline and the support of its donors and partners. However, it still needed \$49 million in fresh contributions to bridge the funding gap in its 2005 annual programme budget.

37. Mr. ZAMAN (Bangladesh) said that Bangladesh joined the consensus on the creation of the post of Assistant High Commissioner for Protection. He wished to know what the implications of the voluntary financing of that post would be (in terms of duration and



earmarking of resources, for example) and what procedure would be used to fill the post. He would also like to know the total cost of such a post and to have a complete and detailed list of posts within UNHCR financed by voluntary contributions. The publication of such a list would be a step towards greater transparency.

38. Mr. IVERSEN (Denmark), speaking also on behalf of Finland, Norway and Sweden, said that the Nordic countries supported UNHCR capacity-building initiatives which sought to meet IDP needs more effectively through new sources of funding so that the Office's work with refugees would not be undermined. They also supported all UNHCR efforts to include refugees and returnees in development strategies at the global and local levels and welcomed the Office's mainstreaming of the Convention Plus approach.

39. In order to share the burden and responsibilities associated with the refugee situation, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden had provided 15 to 20 per cent of all voluntary funding for UNHCR for some years. They urged those members of the Executive Committee that contributed disproportionately small amounts to the budget that was about to be approved to apply the baseline contribution system as a minimum. The 2006 budgetary situation should improve as a result of the inclusion of supplementary budgets in the annual programme budget. All UNHCR activities should be fully funded, regardless of the origin of the funds. UNHCR should do everything in its power to narrow the gap between the minimum standard and actual levels of refugee assistance. Adopting a needs-based budget would be the best approach.

40. Attaching great importance to gender equality, the Nordic countries encouraged UNHCR to mainstream the gender perspective in its management and operations. They welcomed the establishment of a Results-based Management Board chaired by the Deputy High Commissioner, which would help to institutionalize that management method. They noted that UNHCR had followed the recommendation to involve the highest levels of management in the formulation of strategic goals and the results-based budgeting process.

41. Ms. van AARDENNE (Netherlands) welcomed the measures taken by UNHCR to follow up on the recommendations made by the Board of Auditors and was particularly interested by those dealing with management and governance reform. UNHCR should actively pursue results-based management. The Netherlands was concerned by the decrease in audit certificates for implementing partners' expenditure and urged UNHCR to remedy that situation. The Netherlands supported the biennialization of the budget and the establishment of regular mechanisms that would make mid-course corrections possible.

42. The Netherlands could adopt the revised programme budget for 2005 and the proposed programme budget for 2006 and could accept the administrative and financial decisions and the decision to create a post of Assistant High Commissioner for Protection under the conditions mentioned. The real challenges remaining were the mainstreaming of protection in field operations, the employment of qualified staff in the field and the Office's increasing involvement with IDPs without endangering its mandate or financial stability. Concerning the 2006 budget, she said that her delegation would like UNHCR to indicate separately the costs of implementing MSRP and the number of temporary staff involved in the Project. Although the implementation costs were still high, those funds would become available for other purposes after 2007.

43. Mr. THOMPSON (United States of America) said that the country assessments that would be used in preparing operation plans and the budget in the future should not only be comprehensive and uniform in preparation but should provide clear and useable information about needs, priorities and gaps. The most persuasive argument that UNHCR could make for increased donations was a clear and convincing picture of the refugee needs it was able to meet at each funding level, which crucial services would be cut if the budget was not fully funded, and what basic needs would not even be included as UNHCR sought to limit budget growth. That was the only way that UNHCR could hope to meet the challenge of the 16 per cent larger budget that the Executive Committee was about to approve.

44. His delegation supported the biennialization of the budget, which should allow more time for other activities and would help UNHCR focus greater attention on meeting the needs of the 19 million persons of concern. UNHCR would also have to ensure that any funding gaps were spread evenly throughout the biennium. If mid-course budget corrections became necessary, UNHCR should seek the approval of the Executive Committee. In addition, donors should be urged to provide additional resources for IDPs. In the field, UNHCR needed reliable partners as well as supportive host Governments and donors. He wished to assure UNHCR of his country's support.

45. Ms. NELLTHORP (United Kingdom) said that her delegation commended the results-based approach taken by UNHCR in preparing the budget but wished to see more fine-tuning indicators with specific, time-related objectives. Future budget proposals should contain targets for efficiency savings, and a code of conduct for private-sector fund-raising should be developed in the near future.

46. Moving towards a performance-oriented culture meant clearly defined responsibilities and authorities for all staff and performance assessment linked to career development. A proper assessment of needs was essential for UNHCR budgeting and planning activities. Field visits undertaken by the United Kingdom had shown that many country offices did not see any value in carrying out joint needs assessments with their partners, insofar as budgets were concerned. The practice of advising country offices in advance of indicative budgets reinforced that impression. UNHCR should take the issue seriously and provide updates on what was being done to address it.

47. Ms. BRAGG (Canada) welcomed the inclusion of follow-up to the observations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) in the 2006 budget, as well as achievements already noted; her delegation eagerly awaited the comprehensive review of Operational Reserve Category II, the outcome of which was to be submitted to the Standing Committee in March 2006. Her delegation supported the decision to introduce a biennial budgetary cycle by 2008 and believed it was necessary to continue consultations with all stakeholders with a view to its implementation; Canada hoped to be able to supply multi-annual funding in the future. Canada also supported the Advisory Committee's call for clear ethical guidelines on private-sector fund-raising in the form of a code of conduct inspired by practices already in force in other United Nations bodies. Canada welcomed the proposal to implement thematic coordination groups for populations affected by crises, such as IDPs. It was important for donors to be able to participate in the process and for Executive Committee members to understand how the proposal was implemented and what its effect on the budget, administration and human resources would be. UNHCR, whose experience in the field of standard-setting,

monitoring and the dissemination of good practices would be helpful in bridging the gaps identified during the assessment of humanitarian operations while enhancing predictability and responsibility, should ensure that assistance to IDPs was not funded from resources earmarked for refugee protection and assistance. While Canada remained concerned by the projected shortfall, it welcomed the approach taken with regard to risk management. Executive Committee members should do everything in their power to balance the books and offset any negative impact on refugees.

48. Canada, an advocate of multilateralism, had continued to provide the largest share of funding for the protection and care of refugees through UNHCR. It had contributed 34.6 million Canadian dollars at the start of 2005, an increase of 10 per cent over 2004 levels, while increasing the amounts not earmarked for specific countries and for operations in Africa. Canada also provided significant political and diplomatic support and had set up an active resettlement programme.

49. The establishment of a Results-based Management Board chaired by the Deputy High Commissioner should facilitate the institutionalization of that method and promote concrete, measurable results as well as responsibility and transparency. Canada had wholeheartedly supported the ACABQ recommendation to harmonize the terminology used, particularly from the standpoint of the adoption of a biennial budget. Canada welcomed the progress made in MSRP implementation, which should make it possible to link resource allocation with strategic objectives and indicators.

50. With regard to agenda item 6, she said that Canada supported the draft decision to strengthen the Inspector General's Office that was before the Executive Committee, in particular the provisions aimed at ensuring its independence and the measures intended to increase transparency and responsibility. Many of the offices inspected during the period under review respected the minimum operational safety standards or were endeavouring to do so. However, it was unacceptable to cite budgetary constraints as an explanation for security failures, and the Senior Management Committee should ensure that necessary funds were made available to ensure the safety of staff. Canada supported the proposal to review the 2002 evaluation policy and to professionalize the evaluation team in 2005 or 2006.

51. Ms. CHAMBERLIN (Deputy High Commissioner) said that the post of Assistant High Commissioner for Protection would be financed from voluntary contributions and proposed that donors should make annual contributions for that purpose. As the High Commissioner had noted, the headquarters restructuring that would result in the creation of that post would be carried out on a zero-growth basis, i.e. within the framework of the existing budget, by reclassifying a D-2 post at the Under-Secretary-General level and by downgrading a P-5 post to a P-4. The necessary additional resources would amount to \$32,000, which could be appropriated from the budget. Currently, 2,000 headquarters posts, all in the area of management and administration, were financed from the regular budget.

52. The effect of integrating extrabudgetary funds in the regular budget would be evaluated in due course. Needs-based assessment was a priority initiative, since it was a fundamental condition for the implementation of results-based management. The strategy and mechanisms required for a reliable assessment at the global level would be fine-tuned by work in the field.

53. UNHCR shared the concerns of the Netherlands regarding the need for better auditing of operational partners; that would be a priority in the coming years. Concerning the cost of MSRP, she said that the funds required would decrease in 2007, once the implementation deadlines had been reached. The needs assessment objectives proposed by the United States of America would be taken into consideration, as they seemed to be excellent. UNHCR was currently working to draw up clear criteria for conducting the assessment and would report on the progress achieved in that regard. Reliability and predictability were inseparable: UNHCR must be reliable and predictable in the mobilization of resources, and donors should be the same in order to ensure harmonious, uninterrupted management. Proposals to enhance predictability for operational partners were being considered.

54. UNHCR agreed that the indicators for needs assessment needed to be fine-tuned and used to measure and verify the results obtained. The working group on the code of conduct for private-sector fund-raising would report on its work as soon as sufficient progress had been made. Indicative budgets for 2005 and 2006 had been formulated on the basis of projected income and the needs of the regional offices. By 2007, assuming that results-based management was in place, budgets would no longer be based on forecasts but on calculated needs and actual income, which would represent a radical cultural change in resource planning.

55. Mr. KARKLINS (Latvia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, noted that the representative of the Russian Federation had used the term “segregation” and had compared the situation in Latvia to that in Chechnya, which was shocking and unacceptable. Unlike the Russian Federation, Latvia had enjoyed exceptional social stability since regaining its independence and had never experienced any inter-ethnic tension or violence. It appeared that by that statement the Russian Federation wished to incite such tensions in Latvia. The provisions of international law cited by the representative of the Russian Federation required that country to recognize the reality of the occupation of Latvia by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, of which the Russian Federation was the successor. In order to face the consequences of 50 years of illegal occupation, Latvia had elaborated, adopted and implemented the necessary legal measures in close cooperation with many international organizations. The international community, with the exception of one Government, had recognized that Latvia had fully complied with its international obligations under international law and could serve as an example to others. The facts spoke for themselves: thanks to the Latvian Government’s integration policy, the number of non-citizens had decreased by half since 1991. Latvia was certain that UNHCR would avoid falling into the trap laid by the Russian Federation, which clearly sought to influence its views on the question.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.