



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
13 January 2012  
English  
Original: French

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## Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

### Sixty-second session

#### Summary record of the 648th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 3 October 2011, at 10 a.m.

*Chairperson:* Mr. Badr..... (Egypt)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.*

### **Opening of the session**

1. **The Chairperson** declared open the sixty-second session of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and welcomed the new members of the Executive Committee, namely, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Croatia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Togo and Turkmenistan. The presence of 85 members on the Executive Committee ensured wide geographical representation and demonstrated that the situations confronting the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) were a matter that involved the entire world and that must be addressed through concerted and far-reaching responses. The year 2011 marked the sixtieth anniversary of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the fiftieth anniversary of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, the fundamental instruments on international protection, yet, conflict, violence and persecution continued to engender forced displacement.

2. He drew attention to the mission that he had undertaken in Ethiopia and Kenya from 25 to 28 September 2011 in order to express solidarity, on behalf of the Executive Committee, to the Governments and populations confronting significant influxes of Somali refugees and to keep the crisis in the public eye following the High Commissioner's visit to the Horn of Africa at the end of August 2011. In Dollo Ado (Ethiopia), where, at the height of the crisis, 2,000 people had been arriving each day in June 2011, he had been struck by the speed (two to three months) with which refugee camps to accommodate 45,000 people had been set up and by the positive relations established between UNHCR personnel, UNHCR partners and the local authorities, notwithstanding the difficult conditions. The hard work of humanitarian workers and the hospitality shown by the authorities and local communities had brought about a significant improvement since June 2011 in the health and nutritional status of children in the area, where mortality rates had previously been high. That said, the local authorities needed support, particularly to prevent environmental degradation and to improve access to water.

3. During his stay in Ethiopia, he had met with senior officials, notably from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs, who had drawn attention to the problem of environmental degradation in refugee-hosting areas and to the fact that the ongoing conflict in the Blue Nile zone threatened to exacerbate the plight of Sudanese refugees. He had met with the Vice-Chairperson of the Subcommittee for Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons and the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union, who had told him that, at the first ever African Union pledging conference on the Horn of Africa, the member States of the Union and the African Development Bank had pledged to contribute US\$ 350 million in humanitarian aid and development aid for use by UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations to provide emergency assistance. UNHCR and the African Union had signed a memorandum of understanding on a sum of US\$ 300,000 out of a total of US\$ 500,000 that the Union would pay UNHCR under the Horn of Africa appeal. The Union would also continue to work with the United Nations to mobilize additional resources so as to boost the capacities of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which had already restored security in much of Mogadishu, and to support mediation between the different parties in Somalia.

4. In Kenya, he had made it clear to the authorities that humanitarian action was only one part of the answer to the Somali refugee problem; the root causes needed to be addressed and political solutions found. He had furthermore suggested that the authorities might consider how development resources could be mobilized to build bridges between refugees and host communities. The Minister of State for Immigration and Registration of Persons had confirmed that his country pursued an "open door" policy and was committed

to cooperating with UNHCR in order to meet the needs of Somali refugees, of whom close to a thousand continued to arrive each day. He had said that he was apprehensive, however, that troublemakers would use the famine and drought as a pretext for gaining admission to Kenya and stirring up security problems. The Minister had furthermore presented plans on reducing overcrowding at the Dadaab camps and sending new refugees to Turkana.

5. The Chairperson had concluded his mission with a visit to the Dadaab camp, which held around 500,000 refugees, mostly women and children from Somalia, who were generally in good health. He welcomed the decision of the Kenyan Government to address the problem of overcrowding at the camps by utilizing new sites and placing newly arrived refugees at Ifo2. He recalled that security remained a concern for personnel of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), who had asked for security to be stepped up outside the camps following the disappearance of a driver and a vehicle. He urged UNHCR officials to speed up the introduction of security measures and called on the members of the Executive Committee to make generous contributions to fund those measures. The living conditions of UNHCR should furthermore be improved. Indeed, several UNHCR staff had stated that the decision of the General Assembly to reduce the pay and benefits of field staff would make it more difficult to retain qualified and experienced personnel in such difficult locations.

6. He concluded by recalling, firstly, that the situation of Somali refugees could not be resolved by humanitarian agencies but rather by politicians, who ought to redouble their efforts to tackle the root causes of the problem and support development in the zones that were worst affected and most vulnerable. Everyone agreed that efforts were needed to strengthen AMISOM in order to increase stability in Somalia. Secondly, he urged the international community to contribute generously to UNHCR programmes in Kenya and Ethiopia. Thirdly, he welcomed the “open door” policy pursued by the Ethiopian and Kenyan Governments and their tireless efforts to assist thousands of Somali refugees and he appealed for additional financial and material support to be provided. Fourthly, he recalled that local communities which had generously hosted Somali refugees needed to be provided with assistance, particularly through development aid and projects that fostered harmonious coexistence between the groups. Fifthly, he pointed out that UNHCR field staff must be allowed to continue to work in very difficult conditions without their pay and entitlements being reduced.

#### **Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (A/AC.96/LXII/1)**

7. *The agenda was adopted.*

8. *A short film on the field activities of UNHCR was shown.*

#### **Statements by the High Commissioner and by the guest speaker**

##### *High Commissioner's opening statement*

9. **Mr. Guterres** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) paid tribute to UNHCR staff in general for their commitment and courage and to the 53 United Nations staff in particular who had been killed in 2011. During the current anniversary year, emergencies in Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and Somalia had provided a reminder of the essence of the UNHCR mission: to protect refugees. In Côte d'Ivoire, following the disputed elections at the end of 2010, more than 200,000 Ivorians had sought asylum in neighbouring countries, mainly Liberia, while hundreds of thousands had been displaced, particularly around Abidjan and in the western region. In conjunction with national and international partners, UNHCR had had to scale up its presence significantly at the border between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. At the height of the Côte d'Ivoire crisis, around one and a half million people, including migrants and refugees, had been leaving Libya in order to flee from the

violence. In March 2011, between 15,000 and 20,000 people a day had been crossing into Tunisia and Egypt. In the context of a humanitarian operation organized jointly by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR, 157,000 third country nationals living in Libya had been able to return home. Tens of thousands of refugees and migrants had fled by boat across the Mediterranean, many of them perishing on the way. Those most vulnerable to the violence in Libya had been — and continued to be — people from sub-Saharan Africa, many of them from war-torn countries. He appealed to the National Transitional Council to ensure their safety and recalled that refugees and migrant workers must not be confused with mercenaries.

10. On top of those two crises had come the drought in Somalia, a country already worn down by a protracted conflict. The total number of Somali refugees in the region now stood at 900,000, while another 1.5 million Somalis were internally displaced. That meant that nearly a third of the population of Somalia had been forced from their homes. Kenya, Ethiopia, Yemen and Djibouti had generously borne the brunt of that mass exodus. The overcrowded Dadaab camp was receiving hundreds of refugees and levels of mortality and malnutrition at the Dollo Ado camps were still high. In Somalia, UNHCR led the protection cluster and provided internally displaced people with emergency relief; its assistance now reached nearly 400,000 people. During the first nine months of 2011, UNHCR had deployed more than 600 emergency staff to 36 countries – two and a half times as many as in previous years. UNHCR had airlifted 70 tons of shelter and other relief items each week in 2011, more than triple the volume dispatched in 2010.

11. Displacement continued to grow worldwide as new conflicts multiplied and old ones failed to be resolved. Some 43.7 million people were now uprooted due to conflict and persecution, the highest number in some 15 years. In 2011 alone, 750,000 people had become refugees. In situations of drawn-out conflict, durable solutions were becoming more and more difficult to achieve. Seventy per cent of refugees of concern to UNHCR — more than 7 million people — now lived in prolonged situations of exile. That bleak picture showed how important it was to intensify the implementation of the UNHCR Global Plan of Action on protracted refugee situations. In all situations, like the one in Somalia, probably the most complex situation in the world, the solution was always political and could not be achieved without active involvement by key national, regional and global actors. On the positive side, the determination of the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia to resolve the refugee situation in the region once and for all was very encouraging. Those efforts required the support of the international community.

12. Because of old and new conflicts, voluntary repatriation figures were at their lowest in 20 years. Fewer than 200,000 refugees had chosen to return home in 2010, compared with an annual average of over a million in the past two decades. In that context, resettlement had become even more vital, even if resettlement opportunities still fell far short of needs. The number of places made available over the previous three years had remained at about 80,000. Globally, resettlement needs surpassed the annual capacity of receiving States by a ratio of 10 to 1. To avoid building up too large a backlog, UNHCR had reduced the number of resettlement submissions from 128,000 in 2009 to 108,000 in 2010. In the same year, only 73,000 refugees had departed for resettlement, 14 per cent fewer than in 2009. The utilization of resettlement as an emergency response had proved challenging, due to rigid quotas, lengthy processing times and profile requirements.

13. To mitigate those difficulties, resettlement countries should consider the idea of establishing a pool of emergency slots to be activated during dramatic outflows. UNHCR continued to assist refugees to prepare for local integration in various parts of the world. It supported self-reliance programmes in a growing number of situations in order to allow refugees to contribute to the development of their host countries. Innovative responses by

the Governments dealing with the protracted Afghan refugee situation were now creating new opportunities. The bold approaches being taken in different areas should be matched by international solidarity. To that end, UNHCR and the three Governments concerned were developing a multi-year strategy for Afghan refugees in the subregion for presentation at an international conference due to be held in early 2012 in Tokyo.

14. Local integration and self-reliance solutions posed enormous challenges for host States, particularly in the Global South. Developing countries currently hosted 8 out of every 10 refugees. Development assistance targeting refugee-hosting areas was key to ensuring better burden sharing. Resettlement was also essential, as were mobility and managed migration policies.

15. In 2010, UNHCR had provided protection and assistance to some 14.7 million people in 29 countries. In the same year, some 2.9 million internally displaced people had been able to return home, most of them in Pakistan, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Uganda. Six years after the introduction of the cluster approach, UNHCR was fully engaged in the reform efforts led by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to improve leadership, coordination, accountability, preparedness and communication. There had been intense discussions in 2010 of the role that UNHCR should play in protecting people displaced by natural disasters. As agreement had not yet been reached on a more predictable engagement in leading the protection cluster at country level in natural disasters, UNHCR would continue to operate on a case-by-case basis, as in the past.

16. The internal reform process on which UNHCR had embarked five years previously had reduced headquarters costs from 14 to 9 per cent of overall expenditure and staff costs from 41 to 27 per cent. In 2010, the savings from outposting to Budapest had amounted to US\$ 15 million. By the end of 2011, 49 information and communications technology posts would have been moved from Geneva to Amman, Budapest and Panama City, which would allow UNHCR to bring information technology support closer to the field and to strengthen its response capacities. With regard to human resources, the Joint Advisory Committee was now being consulted on the proposed policies for recruitment, conversions, contracts and a new strategy to reduce the number of staff in between assignments.

17. As announced in 2010, recent priorities had included strengthening protection and emergency response capacities. Hence, in late 2010, 14 protection posts had been created in the Sudan and 32 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, in early 2011, 42 new protection posts had been created across the globe. With the establishment of the global stock management system, UNHCR could now rely on a centrally managed network of seven supply hubs located in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. The network had made it possible to achieve significant savings on airlifts and to intervene within 72 hours to provide emergency assistance to up to 600,000 persons. Staff deployment mechanisms had been broadened to include all headquarters departments and field operations in an emergency roster.

18. In order to further enhance the organizational response to emergencies, UNHCR was developing a new system that would allow not only for quicker staff deployments at the outset of a crisis but also for a more structured transition to the post-emergency phase. UNHCR also intended to establish a faster internal resource allocation mechanism and would allow refugee funding appeals to be issued within three days of an emergency being declared. UNHCR would reinforce coordination and support capacities to facilitate more predictable and more transparent inter-agency engagement in refugee outflows. It was also making a robust investment in its information management capabilities. The volume of UNHCR activity had nearly doubled over the past five years, with only a marginal global increase in staff and a significant reduction in Geneva. In that context, UNHCR had decided to strengthen its accountability system, financial controls and risk management

programmes and management. An independent audit and oversight committee would shortly be established, and UNHCR intended to bring its oversight mechanisms to a level that reflected the significant increase in its budget. Lastly, strong efforts would be made to simplify internal processes and promote innovation systematically.

19. Donors had provided unprecedented levels of contributions to UNHCR. In 2010, they had again increased their support, providing US\$ 1.86 billion in voluntary contributions. UNHCR would intensify its efforts to broaden its donor base. In the private sector, those efforts had resulted in a level of contributions that was nearly four times as high as in 2005. Income from pooled funds and other multilateral sources had furthermore grown for the fifth consecutive year in 2011. Only around 18 per cent of income in 2010 had been totally unrestricted, while 55 per cent had been tightly earmarked. More donor flexibility was critical to ensuring comparable levels of assistance across all operations. UNHCR currently had almost 900 implementing partners, 60 per cent of them national NGOs. Nearly 38 per cent of the UNHCR budget was used by those partners, US\$ 350 million more than in 2005.

20. NGOs were not mere implementing partners; they were increasingly becoming strategic partners in policy development, joint planning and action on the ground. Cooperation with United Nations operational agencies was still of vital importance. The memorandum of understanding with the World Food Programme (WFP) had been updated to include new priorities, and a new framework had been agreed with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to strengthen the predictability and effectiveness of collaboration in refugee emergencies. Lastly, the annual dialogues on protection challenges had led to substantial policy changes on mixed migratory movements, protracted refugee situations and urban refugees.

21. The commemorations in December 2011 would offer States an opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to the principles of refugee protection. UNHCR hoped that States would make pledges on specific actions to improve the international protection regime at home and abroad. In 2011, UNHCR had made enormous efforts to put statelessness — an issue confronting an estimated 12 to 15 million people worldwide — more prominently on the international agenda. In many countries, the changes required were simple: action was needed to ensure that women could transmit their nationality to their children in the same way as fathers. There had been steady progress on reducing statelessness in the past few years, particularly in Asia and the Middle East. Since 2009, close to 300,000 people around the world had acquired a nationality. In addition, the number of States that had become parties to the statelessness conventions continued to grow.

22. All the neighbouring countries in the zones hit by crises in 2011 deserved the gratitude and solidarity of the international community for their enormous generosity and respect for the values of international protection. Liberia, Ghana, Guinea and Togo had all kept their borders open when more than 200,000 Ivorian refugees had fled their country. All the countries bordering Libya had shown their commitment to providing protection to hundreds of thousands fleeing the conflict. It was important to recognize Italy and Malta, which had received nearly 30,000 people fleeing from Libya. Further east, Turkey and Lebanon had also kept their borders open. Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Yemen, the neighbours of Somalia, had continued to take in all those arriving at their borders. Even in countries that continued to experience dramatic internal turmoil, such as the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, refugee protection had been fully assured. However, in many parts of the world, racism and xenophobia were not the preserve of extremists or terrorists. Populist politicians and irresponsible elements of the media expressed racist sentiments directed against refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons. In the current context of

uncertainty, multiplying crises, ever more complex conflicts and ever more elusive solutions, States must recognize their shared responsibility and make a shared commitment.

*Statement by the guest speaker*

23. **The Chairperson** said that, before giving the floor to the interim President of the Republic of Tunisia, he wished to state that the guest speaker's presence sent an important message to the international community, since the Arab revolutions which had promoted the values of freedom and dignity across the world had begun in Tunisia. Notwithstanding the difficulties involved in establishing a system of democracy, Tunisia had generously hosted numerous refugees fleeing persecution in Libya without making any distinction among them based on race, religion or origin.

24. **Mr. Mebazaa** (President ad interim of the Republic of Tunisia) said that his country was grateful to the High Commissioner and all UNHCR staff for their effective work at the borders between Tunisia and Libya, the scene of a recent humanitarian crisis, and also at the sea borders, where UNHCR had taken rapid action to deal with the crisis involving Tunisian irregular migrants.

25. Tunisia had surprised the whole world with its revolution of 14 January 2011, which had passed off peacefully and without any outside intervention of any kind. Cooperation between Tunisia and UNHCR had gained new momentum following the revolution: the Tunisian Government had immediately given its approval for the establishment of a UNHCR bureau in Tunis and had signed a headquarters agreement. Tunisia was committed to establishing a partnership with UNHCR that would allow the country to play a role as a regional hub for humanitarian cooperation. The Tunisian Government was committed to bringing Tunisian legislation into line with international instruments on asylum by, for example, remedying the problem of the absence of a national refugee status determination procedure in Tunisia.

26. The humanitarian crisis at the border between Tunisia and Libya had been resolved as a result of close cooperation with UNHCR and an outpouring of solidarity by Tunisian nationals, who had come to the aid of Libyans, refugees and displaced persons of various nationalities across the country. In that regard, he wished to reiterate his country's appeal to the international community to find a prompt solution to the situation of the some 4,000 refugees who were still living in camps in Tunisia and were unable to return to their home country. At a time of economic recession and social unrest, it was no easy matter to manage an inflow of 900,000 refugees.

27. He drew attention to the imbalance in responsibility and burden sharing that prevailed both in terms of the hosting of refugees and the funding of assistance activities. He recalled that the humanitarian challenge could only be met through joint action and deplored the fact that billions of dollars could be spent on war, while the victims of crises, whom military operations were supposed to protect, received only crumbs. The values of solidarity and cooperation should be better defined and incorporated into the relevant international instruments so as to promote global solidarity and greater involvement on the part of developed countries.

28. **Mr. Guterres** (High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he had been deeply moved by the "Jasmine Revolution" in Tunisia, which had reminded him of the transition to democracy in his own country, Portugal, following the "Carnation Revolution" in 1974. He hoped that the international community would support the transition to democracy in Tunisia, Egypt and other Arab States, as the triumph of democracy was important not just for the people but also for regional and global peace and security. During a visit to Tunisia he had seen how Tunisians had welcomed thousands of Libyan refugees in the early days of

the crisis when international organizations and UNHCR did not have the means to provide them with adequate assistance.

### **General debate**

29. **Mr. Robinson** (United States of America) said that the year 2011 had witnessed new crises and also new opportunities, with the prospect of democracy throughout the Arab world. UNHCR assistance to those seeking protection from the civil unrest in the region was to be commended. However, it was the human tragedy in Somalia and in the Horn of Africa that prompted him to make five observations. First, refugee protection must be the fundamental goal of the international community and UNHCR must always be ready to act. Second, UNHCR must establish partnerships with other organizations so as to be able to intervene on many fronts and meet a wide range of humanitarian assistance and protection needs. Third, UNHCR must strengthen its capacity through a human resources policy that delivered good performance in emergency situations. Fourth, organizational inertia must not be allowed to stand in the way of an analysis of progress and impact that could lead to better prioritization of interventions. Fifth, humanitarian diplomats and humanitarian implementers must work hand in hand to resolve long-standing refugee situations. All parties must be advocates for victims of persecution, violence and human rights abuses.

30. In 2011, the United States would provide more than US\$ 680 million to support UNHCR in four areas: refugee assistance, refugee returns and reintegration, the internally displaced, and stateless persons.

31. **Ms. Mabusela** (Lesotho), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that she wished to commend UNHCR for its efforts to deal with several displacement challenges in Africa and other parts of the world and to thank the countries of North Africa that had taken in thousands of displaced persons at the height of the Libyan crisis. The Group of African States appreciated the solidarity shown by the countries bordering Somalia which had opened their borders to thousands of refugees fleeing the humanitarian crisis.

32. While refugee numbers were on the decline globally, there was still a need to search for durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement. That protracted refugee situations in some parts of Africa had been exacerbated by drought and famine was a cause for concern. The Group of African States appealed to the international community to address the root causes of those situations and to ensure that adequate assistance was provided to host countries, most of them developing and least developed countries, whose contribution should not be taken for granted.

33. The Group of African States appreciated the efforts of UNHCR to enhance its oversight activities by, for example, establishing an independent audit and oversight committee. It urged UNHCR to address the disparities in the geographical distribution of posts, especially at the higher levels (P-5 to D-2).

34. Speaking on behalf of her own country, she said that Lesotho hosted very few persons of concern to UNHCR but, like the other States Members of the United Nations, it was concerned about mass movements of refugees and stateless persons. Protracted refugee situations remained a serious problem that needed to be addressed through efforts to deal with the underlying causes and to search for comprehensive solutions. The situation of internally displaced persons needed to be addressed through practical measures. Lesotho had taken note of all the reforms being introduced by UNHCR and hoped that they would lead to greater organizational fairness, independence, responsibility and transparency.

35. **Mr. Linklater** (Canada) said that his country was planning to reform its immigration and refugee protection system so as to improve the integrity of the system, including through the prompt removal of failed candidates and a substantial increase in the



number of refugees that Canada resettled. The country had introduced legislation to prevent human smugglers from abusing the Canadian immigration system but ensure that protection was available to those in need, particularly refugees. Canada encouraged member States that had not already done so to accede to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Optional Protocol and urged all States to abide by the core principles of protection enshrined in those instruments.

36. Canada remained committed to supporting durable solutions, including for North Korean refugees. It had increased the number of resettlement places that it provided by 20 per cent and encouraged other member States to institute resettlement programmes and increase resettlement capacity. Canada recognized that the goals of protection and access to durable solutions could not be attained without the support of an effective UNHCR and the strong commitment of the member States concerned. It commended the organization on its reforms, which had helped improve efficiency and increase the share of resources used directly to meet the needs of beneficiaries. It urged UNHCR to continue its work of forging partnerships with all stakeholders and consultation mechanisms and developing cooperation with implementing partners with a view to improving the quality of its work on the ground.

37. **Mr. Abdollahi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the problem of protracted refugee situations was a particular challenge for his country. Beginning in the late 1970s, millions of people had sought refuge in Iranian territory and, 30 years on, many refugees and displaced persons were still living there. In 2011, the Government had conducted a census of refugees and displaced persons, updated its data and issued residence cards to about 1 million persons. It had formulated a plan to identify vulnerable people in 11 groups, such as women heads of household and children without a guardian. With assistance from the UNHCR bureau in the country, it had furthermore established a programme to cover the medical costs of refugees.

38. The Islamic Republic of Iran spent US\$ 5 billion on average out of its budget on refugees (health, training, employment and security). While it was grateful to UNHCR for the increased assistance that it had provided over the past two years, the US\$ 39 million that the organization would provide in 2011 would not even meet the needs of a million refugees in a single day. It was therefore vitally important to increase international assistance for the refugees.

39. Most of the refugees residing in the Islamic Republic of Iran came from Afghanistan, a country that needed international assistance in order to improve livelihoods and meet the needs of a very large refugee population. Assistance could be channelled directly through the Afghan Government, which would reduce the chances that resources would be wasted and help provide suitable conditions for sustainable development and voluntary repatriation of the refugees. Paltry cash and in-kind assistance offered no inducement for voluntary repatriation and therefore policies on voluntary repatriation needed to change. If resources could be spent on resettlement arrangements in the main destinations of return or if reintegration costs were to be paid in cash under certain circumstances, more Afghan refugees would return home.

40. The presence of millions of refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran had had a profound impact on the country, particularly on its social, economic, security and health structures. The State looked to the international community to provide it with assistance and to facilitate the resettlement of the refugees in third countries. It called on UNHCR and donor countries to develop resettlement quotas that were commensurate with the number of refugees. International cooperation with the country of origin was needed in particular to facilitate voluntary repatriation and reintegration.

41. **Mr. Guterres** (High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he agreed with Mr. Robinson about the primary importance of refugee protection and wished to assure him that

UNHCR would not be guilty of inertia, particularly when it came to results-based management. Responding to the statement made on behalf of the Group of Africa States, he noted that Africa had gone through numerous crises in 2011 and African States had demonstrated great generosity in the delivery of refugee protection. The cooperation that UNHCR enjoyed with the African Union and other regional organizations, particularly in West Africa, was exemplary. Through its new human resources policy, UNHCR was able to ensure equitable distribution in its staffing arrangements. The cooperation established with Canada, which influenced UNHCR policy, was greatly appreciated. To provide the strengthened protection which UNHCR envisaged measures would be taken to increase the number of protection staff, provide staff training and reinforce partnerships. Responding to the statement by Mr. Abdollahi, he said he agreed that paltry sums of financial assistance would not induce refugees to return to their home country. Reintegration projects like the Reintegration Plus Project, which had been designed with the United Nations Development Programme and implemented in African States, would help to create the right conditions for return and for durable resettlement of refugees. He welcomed the policies established by the Iranian Government to conduct a census of refugees, issue them with residence cards and provide medical insurance coverage for Afghan refugees.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*