



General Assembly

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Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Sixty-eighth session

Summary record of the 709th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 6 October 2017, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. McCarney (Canada)

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

Meetings of the Standing Committee in 2018

Consideration of the provisional agenda of the 69th session of the Executive Committee

1. **Ms. Duong** (Rapporteur) said that she wished to draw the attention of delegates to draft decisions 2 to 5, which addressed the Standing Committee's programme of work in 2018; observer participation in meetings of the Standing Committee in 2017-2018; the provisional agenda of the 69th session of the Executive Committee; and the participation of intergovernmental organizations in private meetings. The decisions would be annexed to the report of the current session, which would be submitted for adoption at the end of the meeting.
2. **The Chair** said that, regarding the draft decision on observer participation in meetings of the Standing Committee in 2017-2018, the following States had submitted official requests for observer status: Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, Honduras, Iraq, Myanmar, Nepal and Zimbabwe. As the requests were acceptable, she suggested that the names of those States should be added to the final text of the decision.
3. *It was so decided.*
4. **The Chair** said that she took it that the Executive Committee wished to adopt the four draft decisions.
5. *It was so decided.*

Election of officers

6. **Ms. Khan** (Fiji) nominated Ms. Dalil (Afghanistan) for the office of Chair of the Executive Committee.
7. **Mr. Staur** (Denmark) seconded the nomination.
8. *Ms. Dalil (Afghanistan) was elected Chair of the Executive Committee by acclamation.*
9. **Mr. Johnson** (Togo) nominated Mr. Delmi (Algeria) for the office of Vice-Chair of the Committee.
10. **Ms. Bard** (Sweden) seconded the nomination.
11. *Mr. Delmi (Algeria) was elected first Vice-Chair of the Committee by acclamation.*
12. **Mr. Staur** (Denmark) nominated Mr. Muylle (Belgium) for the office of Vice-Chair of the Committee.
13. **Mr. Batora** (Ethiopia) seconded the nomination.
14. *Mr. Muylle (Belgium) was elected second Vice-Chair of the Committee by acclamation.*
15. **Mr. Briceño Salazar** (Peru) nominated Mr. Moreno Gutierrez (Colombia) for the office of Rapporteur.
16. **Ms. Shino** (Japan) seconded the nomination.
17. *Mr. Moreno Gutierrez (Colombia) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.*
18. **Ms. Dalil** (Afghanistan) thanked members for the confidence placed in her and assured them of her commitment. She would endeavour to follow the inspiring example set by Ms. McCarney as Chair.

Any other business

19. As no delegation wished to take the floor, **the Chair** declared the agenda item closed.

Adoption of the report of the sixty-eighth session of the Executive Committee

(document without symbol distributed in the meeting room)

20. **Ms. Duong** (Rapporteur), introducing the draft report of the 68th session, said that sections I and II provided an overview of the work undertaken during the session; section III covered all of the decisions taken by the Executive Committee during the session and was followed by the conclusion on machine readable travel documents; the list of decisions taken by the Standing Committee in 2017 and the Chair's summary of the general debate were included as annexes.

21. Presenting the conclusion on machine readable travel documents, she said that the text sought to recognize the importance of travel documents for facilitating the movement of refugees and stateless persons, to establish machine readability as a requirement based on new international travel standards and to request States parties to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons to envisage taking all necessary measures for the issuance of machine readable travel documents. The conclusion welcomed the good practices already implemented in that regard and called on member States of the Executive Committee to strengthen international solidarity and to exercise their responsibilities and share the burden more equitably.

22. *The draft report of the 68th session of the Executive Committee was adopted.*

Closing of the session

23. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that receiving and protecting refugees was a fundamental obligation of the international community. He noted with satisfaction that many delegations had reported the efforts made by their countries to strengthen asylum systems and build progressive domestic policies; and he particularly thanked the countries and regions that had already implemented the comprehensive refugee response framework. The countries and communities that received refugees had shown remarkable generosity. However, those pillars of the international protection system would not be able to continue their work if they were not supported and if the principle of burden sharing was not respected. It was important to establish new financing tools, to guarantee the early engagement of development actors and the private sector, to increase the number of solutions for third countries and to address the reduction in the number of resettlement places recorded in 2017.

The levels of financing for most humanitarian crisis operations were a cause for concern, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Humanitarian activities carried out in the Central African Republic received only 9 per cent funding and those carried out in Burundi only 11 per cent. In South Sudan, the figure was barely 31 per cent. The resources allocated to humanitarian action in the Syrian Arab Republic were also well below past levels. The management of the new wave of refugees from Myanmar to Bangladesh would also need significant funding. He therefore wished to thank the delegations that had undertaken to make non-earmarked, flexible contributions.

In addition, many countries were at once humanitarian donors, providers of bilateral and multilateral development support, resettlement countries, host countries and countries of origin for refugees. He therefore once again called upon the international community to adopt a government-wide refugee protection strategies in order to improve the coherence of policy management in those different areas.

Noting that mass displacements continued while international cooperation was fragmented and certain States prioritized policies developed at the national level to advance short-term political agendas, he recalled that his mandate remained a critical instrument. Given that the humanitarian community was involving more and more actors and entities in the management of refugee flows, the working methods of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees should be re-examined so that the organization could continue to play a leadership role in the new environment. States should therefore support its activities on the ground and provide it with funding, services and material support.

24. Following an exchange of courtesies, **the Chair** declared closed the 68th session of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.