

**Executive Committee of the  
High Commissioner's Programme**

Distr.: General  
8 September 2023

English only

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**Standing Committee**

**Eighty-seventh meeting**

**14–16 June 2023**

Held at the Hôtel Mercure, Geneva

**Summary record,\* Thursday, 15 June 2023, at 3:10 p.m.**

*Chairperson: Mr. Cristian Espinosa Cañizares..... (Ecuador)*

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**3. Regional activities and global programmes (continued)**

**b. The engagement of UNHCR with internally displaced persons**

1. The representative of the **European Union** thanked UNHCR for its role, advocacy and policies, and strongly encouraged it to engage in an open dialogue with its Members and partners in that process. The European Union was following the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) assessment, and looked forward to its recommendations. It welcomed the Office's efforts to address internal displacement challenges based on field realities and strong inter-agency partnership, with each actor contributing in line with their respective core strengths, mandates and cluster responsibilities. It noted the ambitious Memorandums of Understanding and cooperation frameworks with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and expressed its support for their implementation based on concrete actions. The European Union also looked forward to the review later in the year of the implementation of the 2014 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs-UNHCR joint note on mixed situations. It underlined the importance of addressing internal displacement through a humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach, and encouraged UNHCR to further strengthen its cooperation with development partners as part of its contribution to the implementation of the United Nations Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement. It also highlighted the importance of local actors, who played a crucial role in the protection and assistance to internally displaced persons, and hoped that the European Union's new localization guidance could also contribute to further bolster the Office's promising work on localization.

2. As part of the United Nations Action Agenda on Internally Displaced Persons, the European Union had committed to support internal displacement solution advisers in Nigeria and Colombia, and would follow with great interest the results of the independent review of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) response to internal displacement. She commended the participation of UNHCR as a core member in the Steering Group on solutions to internal displacement. The European Union fully supported the UNHCR-World Bank Joint Data Center, and welcomed its focus on socioeconomic data and advocacy for the inclusion of internally displaced persons in national policies, development and humanitarian operations. The European Union and its Member States reiterated the Office's key role in preserving the centrality of protection for internally displaced persons. It was critical to address the specific vulnerabilities faced by internally displaced persons, including gender-based violence, child protection issues, and access to documentation, education and health, including mental health and psychosocial support. The European Union had welcomed the policy on durable solutions from the start. It encouraged new partnerships for innovative solutions to expand access to livelihood and employment opportunities beyond immediate humanitarian assistance. Assistance investments in anticipatory action and risk reduction measures to strengthen displaced communities' resilience were needed. The European Union would welcome more precise information on UNHCR expenditure on internal displacement through the improved financial tracking as of 2022.

3. Finally, climate change had had an increasing impact on internal displacement, and was a risk multiplier. The European Union's current tenure as Chair of the Platform on Disaster Displacement had seen the conclusion, as well as the launch, of several ambitious initiatives, such as the preparation of large-scale regional development programs in both Asia and sub-Saharan Africa to tackle climate-induced displacement. The European Union counted on the Office's continued engagement and expertise in the Platform on Disaster Displacement framework.

4. The representative of **Norway** thanked UNHCR for the report on its engagement with internally displaced persons at a time when forced displacement had reached record levels worldwide. The concerning trend of annual increases of internally displaced persons would not be reversed without strengthening the international efforts relating to situations of internal displacement. Regarding the United Nations Secretary General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, Norway commended UNHCR for its valuable contribution and, as a core member of the Steering Group, recognized the Office's efforts to better resolve, prevent and address internal displacement crises, and encouraged UNHCR to further strengthen its cooperation with development partners in that field. Norway contributed to the realization of the Action Agenda by supporting solution advisers in pilot countries and by contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals Fund window on internal displacement. It had welcomed the UNHCR policy on durable

solutions from the start, and it urged UNHCR to leverage its cluster coordination roles to encourage that approach across the system-wide response. Engaging with authorities on solutions to international displacement was key, and Norway also emphasized the importance of engaging with internally displaced communities and encouraging dialogue between all levels of government and with internally displaced persons themselves.

5. The representative of **the Netherlands (Kingdom of)** agreed with the statement made by the European Union. In light of its commitment to “leave no one behind”, the Netherlands (Kingdom of) was very concerned with a large and rapidly growing number of internally displaced persons. Internally displaced persons made up to a quarter of people in need of humanitarian assistance and therefore meriting attention. The Netherlands also welcomed in that regard the Office’s work with such people in urgent need. The needs of internally displaced persons spanned the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding divide, and therefore should be addressed through a nexus approach which included, but was not limited to, seeking collaboration with development actors and international financial institutions. To that effect, the Netherlands (Kingdom of) also supported the IASC review on internal displacement, and was very happy to host the Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on durable solutions to internal displacement, Mr. Robert Piper. The Netherlands (Kingdom of) was also a large humanitarian donor and provided more than 200 million euros in unearmarked humanitarian funding to the United Nations family. It had put its trust in the different United Nations agencies to better cater to the humanitarian needs of internally displaced persons as well as to improve coordination.

6. Lastly, the Netherlands welcomed an increased voice and involvement of internally displaced persons themselves in finding durable solutions, and encouraged UNHCR to continue its work on locally-led humanitarian action and on accountability to affected populations.

7. The representative of **Burkina Faso** thanked UNHCR for the very comprehensive update on its actions for internally displaced persons. Handling the needs of internally displaced persons was in today’s world a genuine problem in terms of governance for those countries most affected by that phenomenon. At a time when the countries of the Sahel, particularly Burkina Faso, were afflicted by one of the most overlooked security and humanitarian crises in the world, Burkina Faso wished to echo and fully endorse the concerns that had been raised concerning the lack of financing, as highlighted in the UNHCR report. Despite the unprecedented degradation and deterioration of the situation of internally displaced persons in sub-Saharan Africa, which hosted 80 per cent of the world’s internally displaced persons, the report made it abundantly clear that the funds made available to meet the needs of that segment of the population bore no resemblance to their growing needs. That led to the pressing and prevailing need to work more closely with existing donors to ensure the mobilization of additional funds, from existing as well as from new partners, in order to reverse the trend of funds not matching needs, which was so harmful for that vulnerable population.

8. The support of the international community in addressing that phenomenon needed to be carried out with sincerity, respect and with dignity and humanity, as well as with non-discrimination of the people who were in such distress. In order to find a definitive response to the key concerns of internally displaced persons, Burkina Faso welcomed the roll-out of a new triple nexus approach bringing together the humanitarian, peacebuilding and development aspects. That would place it in a better position to be able to provide adequate and lasting solutions to meet the needs of such people. Burkina Faso particularly commended UNHCR activities on promoting and protecting the rights of internally displaced persons through the roll-out of new legal and policy instruments for their protection, including actions to ensure the ratification of the Kampala Convention.

9. Reiterating its commitment to multilateralism, Burkina Faso remained firmly persuaded that it was through a pooling of efforts of all stakeholders, in a spirit of solidarity and shared responsibility, that it believed would usher in a world free of conflict and of climate vulnerability, which were the main drivers of forced displacement.

10. The representative of **Ethiopia** thanked the Principal Adviser for the updates, and said that the 2023 Global Report on Internal Displacement from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre indicated that the number of internally displaced persons stood at 71.1 million at the end of 2022, a 20 per cent increase from 59.1 internally displaced persons the year before. The number of disaster displacements had also risen by 40 per cent compared to the previous years, reaching 32.6 million. The Horn of Africa was severely affected by the worst drought in 40 years. From its perspective, behind every displacement there was climate change. The figures clearly reflected the scope of the challenge. At the present time, a series of crises had pushed millions across the Horn of Africa to the precipice of a long protracted drought that had exacerbated acute food shortages and insecurity.

Conflict in neighbouring countries had also had a devastating impact on vulnerable populations, including internally displaced persons and refugees. The people were suffering due to the consequences of climate change. It was neither their failure, nor their fault. It was a global problem that required a global response and durable solutions. Without a collective response, Ethiopia did not believe it would be possible to reach the required goals.

11. Ethiopia was aware that humanitarian assistance alone was insufficient. What was needed was to invest in long-term solutions that fostered resilience, stability and prosperity. The focus should be on development-oriented actions rather than treating the symptoms of the crises.

12. Ethiopia was extending a welcome to refugees while it had millions of internally displaced persons due to conflict and the prolonged droughts. Legal and policy frameworks were being put in place with data addressing internal displacement-related issues comprehensively and implementing various projects in affected areas to bring durable solutions. Ethiopia was working on the implementation of the Secretary General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, working closely with the Secretary General's Special Adviser on durable solutions to internally displaced persons. Internal displacement could not be durably resolved until solutions, responses and preventions were adequately addressed. Protection mechanisms needed to be strengthened as the multifaceted difficulties that internally displaced persons were facing required a comprehensive solution at all levels. Tackling the problem of internal displacement in all its dimensions required a huge concerted effort at both the state and international level.

13. Finally, Ethiopia expressed its appreciation for the support extended by UNHCR and its partners, as it continued to request more support for its own government's efforts to address the challenges faced by internally displaced persons.

14. The representative of **Colombia** thanked the UNHCR for the work it was carrying out, in partnership with other United Nations agencies and other key international stakeholders, to support meeting the needs of the victims of internal displacement in Colombia. As stated in the Global Report this year, the number of internally displaced persons in Colombia continued to be very high. Following the visit of the Chair of the Executive Committee to Colombia, it had become abundantly clear that internal displacement was a latent problem throughout the country. Illegal armed groups sought to continue to control large swathes of the country and carry out their criminal and nefarious activities, and the most vulnerable to their depredations were those most affected by them. Returning to their places of origin was of course the ideal outcome, but the security situation did not allow that at present, because many displaced persons did not yet wish to return. The recently adopted development plan included reparation for victims of the armed conflict.

15. The goals Colombia had set itself for achieving that target were very high. It had more than 9 million victims of armed conflict, and 80 per cent of them were internally displaced persons. The majority of them were living in conditions of extreme poverty. In order to achieve the goals and targets under the development plan, it would need the unwavering support of the international community and looked forward to continuing working closely with UNHCR, which had been a crucial partner, as well as to continuing its work on the Action Agenda with the Special Rapporteur to find lasting solutions to the phenomenon of internal displacement.

16. Later in the year there would be a forum, co-hosted with Canada, on finding sustainable solutions to internal displacement, with specific focus on the 15 priority countries identified by Mr. Piper. Colombia would also work closely with partner donor countries who were part of that group. Lastly, Colombia's President was committed to peace and development, particularly in rural areas, which would benefit internally displaced persons, since many were rural farmers of African descent and indigenous persons. Colombia reiterated that it would need the support of the international community as it sought to achieve a successful conclusion for the project.

17. The representative of the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** thanked UNHCR for the work on the report and the presentation. Developing durable solutions for internally displaced persons was vital, and all recognized that support for internally displaced persons could not be left to the humanitarian community alone. The challenge, though, was in building meaningful engagement beyond natural constituencies. Therefore, the United Kingdom wished to recognize the Office's efforts at country level to achieve that and to put that idea into practice, including community support provision, which fostered social cohesion and peace. It also knew that there was more to be done to ensure the development sector was ready for a solutions model that shifted the locus of responsibility for internally displaced persons from the humanitarian sector to theirs. The United Kingdom therefore commended UNHCR on leveraging its partnerships, particularly with UNDP and UN-Habitat, for that purpose, and while acknowledging that States bore the primary

duty and responsibility to create the conditions which that would provide solutions for internally displaced persons, it also valued the engagement of UNHCR with the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, and particularly the Office's contribution to the work of the Special Adviser on solutions to internal displacement.

18. The United Kingdom reiterated its gratitude to the Office of the Special Adviser for bringing such important attention and momentum to that work, and was very proud to be supporting his efforts by providing a durable solutions adviser in Iraq. Recognizing that the Special Adviser was already halfway through his very short mandate, he wished to encourage UNHCR to use the institutional plan that it had developed in collaboration with the Special Adviser to embed the learnings and changes it had seen in the past year into the Office's approach to internally displaced persons. Beyond 2024, the United Kingdom also wanted to recognize the diversity of internal displacement experience, and therefore urged UNHCR to consider the intersections of vulnerability among the internal displacement community to focus on marginalized groups, ensuring that an emphasis on protection was not forgotten. Finally, the United Kingdom was glad to note the reference to the IASC Independent Review of Humanitarian Responses to Internal Displacement. Given the coordination challenges inherent in supporting internally displaced persons, that was a particularly important piece of work, and the United Kingdom urged UNHCR to engage with its findings.

19. The representative of the **United States of America** said that the world currently faced record levels of global displacement, and more than ever, the international community needed to focus on protecting the most vulnerable. As UNHCR implemented its recently released institutional plan on solutions to internal displacement and especially as it undertook the independent evaluation of its IDP engagement later in 2023, the United States had asked UNHCR to give increased attention to three areas implementing the policy on internal displacement. UNHCR must ensure that country operation managers and frontline staff understood the policy and headquarters expectations of their roles in the internal displacement context, and had the tools and guidance needed to engage effectively with host government and development actors to ensure protection was paramount in advancing durable solutions. While prioritizing internally displaced persons within limited resources, when surveying UNHCR colleagues and country operations in the nine pilot countries of the 2019 Step Up Initiative, there had been multiple concerns that financial resource constraints hampered implementation of the new policy. That was particularly true in operations facing sharply increased internal displacement. In the light of financial constraints, she wondered how UNHCR was addressing the prioritization challenge that it presented. Recognizing the importance of aligning with broader United Nations initiatives, she welcomed the Office's close coordination with the Special Adviser and especially its support to that Office through the secondment of staff. Nevertheless, she underscored the need to complement efforts under way in other agencies, especially those aimed at implementing the results of the internal displacement review, as called for in the Secretary-General's Action Agenda.

20. The United States welcomed the work of UNHCR to strengthen the Global Protection Cluster, and urged UNHCR to bolster its leadership of that cluster. The Office's paper highlighted the ongoing value of the evidence-based protection analysis by the Global Protection Cluster for effective decision-making, the development of which it was proud to support. Likewise, the Global Protection Cluster's Helpdesks provided important training and tools for frontline staff, who were critical to maintaining the centrality of protection and humanitarian responses. The next two to three years would be challenging for the Global Protection Cluster as it sought to respond to growing protection needs at a time of tightening resource constraints. The United States looked to all present and UNHCR to tell it how it was prioritizing, and how it would staff and resource the Global Protection Cluster and crisis-specific clusters to undertake the coordination, guidance and advocacy needed to support the protection needs of internally displaced persons, who made up the largest proportion of forcibly displaced persons. Today, efforts under consideration to optimize the current protection architecture must find ways to make the system more efficient. One way was to strengthen equitable partnerships with local actors and affected communities while maintaining the technical work of the Global Protection Cluster and areas of responsibility.

21. The Global Protection Cluster had an important coordination role in internal displacement crises, and the area of responsibility subgroups had highly differentiated technical roles. Finally, the United States supported the Office's efforts to enhance reporting on results in internal displacement situations with the launch of the new results-based management approach in 2021.

22. The representative of **Canada** said that Canada supported the programme of action of the United Nations Secretary-General, and his appeal to move from a humanitarian approach to a model that was more focused on development with regard to internal displacement. With that in mind, Canada was honoured to support the efforts of the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Piper, to achieve solutions for internally displaced persons. It also looked forward to the results of the independent review of the Committee with regard to the approach of the humanitarian system to internally displaced persons. It therefore welcomed the commitment of UNHCR and its support for those processes.

23. Canada recognized the efforts made by UNHCR over the past year to provide more in-depth partnerships with other agencies, and provide additional expertise and support to national governments and local communities in order to better respond to internal displacement. A durable solution to internal displacement must focus on the most affected and must take into account the disproportionate effect on women and girls. In that regard, Canada encouraged UNHCR to continue to work with its partners in order to provide for direct consultation and interaction, and hear the voices of the displaced in all their diversity, in the framework of the human rights, the relevant standards and humanitarian plans as well as in the processes of peacebuilding.

24. The representative of **Germany** said that UNHCR was central to the protection of internally displaced persons, and welcomed the Office's commitment and efforts to provide protection in often very sensitive and dangerous environments. Germany remained strongly committed to continuing its support to internally displaced persons and their host communities. Durable solutions to situations of internal displacements were at the centre of the Secretary General's Action Agenda. In that context, Germany wished to reiterate the need for strengthened collaboration and coordination between humanitarian assistance, development partners, peace actors and international financial institutions, such as the World Bank, from the very beginning of an operation. Without a doubt, government ownership was at the centre of durable solutions to further strengthen solution-oriented approaches. In the context of internal displacement, the engagement of UNHCR was vital, including with the Office of the Special Adviser. Germany was committed to support the Special Adviser's work in the 16 pilot countries. In line with the action agenda, it wished to see earlier involvement of peace and development actors in the context of internal displacement.

25. The current independent review of the IASC was a milestone in that regard, and Germany thanked UNHCR for its contribution to the process and looked forward to recommendations to further strengthen consistent responses in contexts of internal displacement, accountability to affected populations and leadership. Germany supported the Office's efforts to enhance the collection of data on forced displacement to develop evidence-based and durable solutions for internally displaced persons, and believed there was a data gap which remained to be closed. Therefore, Germany also supported the important work of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. In addition, it remained committed to bringing forward approaches to measure progress towards solutions and further advance data on internal displacement in general. Germany and UNDP had recently launched a joint research project on robust data and evidence on internal displacement. Looking at the context of disaster displacement, durable solutions had to be also part of preparedness efforts, even before disaster struck. In that regard, Germany continued to value the Office's collaboration with the Platform on Disaster Displacement to ensure consistent protection and assistance to people who were displaced in the context of disasters. Looking at protection, it valued the continuous efforts of UNHCR to capture the protection needs of internally displaced persons and advocate for their fulfilment.

26. The Office's expertise in facilitating the centrality of protection in internal displacement situations was unique in the United Nations system, and Germany fully supported activities that emphasized the important role of UNHCR in the protection cluster and in promoting protection in the context of disaster displacement. Germany also urged UNHCR to continue its collaboration and coordination with other crucial United Nations agencies working on internally displaced persons, especially the IOM, to ensure an approach linking humanitarian, development and peace efforts.

27. The representative of **Switzerland** thanked UNHCR for its reports on internally displaced persons. With close to 60 million persons displaced in 2022, a new and dire record had been reached, and the commitment of the UNHCR on this issue, in coordination with States and other stakeholders, was more important than ever. According to the UNHCR 2022 Global Report, internally displaced persons represented 51 per cent of persons under its mandate. According to the Global Trends report, the figure would even reach 58 per cent. Monitoring that phenomenon was of crucial importance as well, in order to ensure that responses matched real needs for UNHCR, which was in the lead of the protection cluster globally in 29 of the 32 operations in the world.

28. Access to reliable and high-quality data was crucial to carry out an effective analysis of the real protection needs of the most vulnerable. Switzerland welcomed the publication in 2023 of the UNHCR Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response, which situated the consideration of durable solutions for internally displaced persons as of the outset of the crisis in Ukraine. Colleagues on the ground welcomed the application of that approach, in particular in the west of the countries where the UNHCR had a lead role in the inter-agency effort for the identification of solutions, in close cooperation with governments.

29. In terms of monitoring, Switzerland also emphasized the challenges represented by the instability of movements in the Ukrainian crisis. UNHCR estimated that 23 per cent of refugees returned temporarily to their country of origin. For internally displaced persons, following those movements back and forth was even more difficult, because many of them were not recorded or registered. In that context, he was anxious to know how the UNHCR took into consideration that volatility in movements when defining its responses, in particular in the area of protection and cash distribution. Of more concern still was that in 2022, internal displacement due to armed conflicts had tripled compared to the average over the past 10 years, according to the 2022 Global Report. That trend emphasized even more sharply the need to adopt an approach based on the nexus of humanitarian action, development and peace. Switzerland would be interested to know how UNHCR intended to play its role in the peace pillar within that triple nexus, and what could it do in that area that went beyond what had been done to date. In situations where there was constant movement between a humanitarian scenario and development scenario, as in Iraq, for example, it was essential to ensure that the closure of a humanitarian facility was accompanied by an integrated and coordinated response to ensure that durable solutions were found in order to allow the last groups of internally displaced persons to return to a safe and appropriate environment.

30. Switzerland welcomed the Office's major support to Colombia and its government in seeking durable solutions for the millions of internally displaced who were still in the country. In both those contexts, which provided some welcome glimmer of hope, Switzerland was committed to its government, UNHCR and other stakeholders in their efforts for peacebuilding. Switzerland welcomed the efforts made by the UNHCR over the past year in terms of developing effective partnerships and also welcomed the partnership launched a year ago with IOM through a cooperation framework. Switzerland wondered whether there had been any feedback on those results that could be shared. The Secretary General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement had also been launched approximately a year ago and represented a major opportunity to connect the global architecture at the national and local level through an integrated and holistic United Nations approach. Switzerland would be interested in learning more about the Office's analysis as a core member of the Global Steering Group on the results obtained and the opportunities expected.

31. Finally, the Global Refugee Forum, which Switzerland will have the pleasure to host with UNHCR in December, represents a major step in strengthening the political traction and the commitment of the international community with respect to internal displacement. Switzerland wondered how UNHCR intended to take the needs of internally displaced persons into consideration during the Forum.

32. The representative of **Iraq** expressed her country's appreciation of the efforts deployed in the preparation of the report. Iraq had achieved great progress and shifted from the humanitarian aid and emergency stage to the development stage, in order to achieve lasting solutions, because of the drop in the number of internally displaced persons. That was a result of its cooperation with the international community and other United Nations agencies, and was also due to the resilience of its people, allowing it to achieve more peace and security. The Iraqi Government worked tirelessly to deal with internally displaced persons and, in that regard, had closed down 148 camps. There remained one more camp in Ambar Province and 26 in Kurdistan. In that regard, Iraq had recently announced the closure of Jeddah 5 Camp in Nineveh Province, after all the internally displaced persons had freely returned to their original place of residence. Iraq's 2022-2025 programme aim was to end internal displacement. Nineveh was now free of all camps of internal displaced persons, except Jeddah 1, which was a psychological support camp. Iraq had worked with the Secretary-General and with the Adviser's Office on displacement in order to provide solutions for internally displaced people and ensure their voluntary return.

33. In line with Iraq's National Plan for 2021 and its Fifth Strategy, in cooperation with the United Nations, with the aim of achieving dignified, safe and voluntary return solutions for internally displaced persons in Iraq, its Civil State Authority had issued identification documents for internally displaced persons to replace those that they had lost. Iraq had set up a National

Committee, which to date had issued 100,000 documents to internally displaced persons. Iraq wished to remind the international community of the need for solidarity to put an end to internal displacement, given that today's internally displaced persons were tomorrow's refugees.

34. The representative of **El Salvador** thanked UNHCR for its update on its most recent actions to fulfil its commitments to address the challenges faced by internally displaced persons. Nonetheless, El Salvador believed that there was still a prevailing need to strengthen that area of action as part of the overall remit of UNHCR.

35. It was vital that more action was taken on strengthening international cooperation and financing programmes and actions that would support the work carried out by those countries which were most closely confronted by internally displaced persons and had insufficient resources to deal with internal displacement challenges alone. El Salvador was particularly concerned by the plight of many people who had been forced to move internally for various different reasons and who were therefore exposed to various different risks, and whose human rights were undermined in the quest for better living conditions in their own country. It was particularly concerned because in many instances, the magnitude of that phenomenon was not properly understood due to the sheer scale of the human movement. For that reason, as of 2020, El Salvador had adopted a special law for the comprehensive protection of internally displaced persons, particularly those who had been forcibly displaced, seeking to find sustainable solutions for that population, and also to set up a national system for comprehensive care and support. That system was responsible for assessing and implementing its national policy to address the phenomenon of internally displaced persons. It was currently engaged in an exercise to review the definition of internally displaced person in the country to include a displacement model that had multiple factors, and the results of that survey and that assessment would be known in 2024.

36. El Salvador wished it to be fully understood that violence was a key motivation for displacement. Thanks to improvements in public safety and security as a result of the roll-out of the country-wide control plan of the government, it had been able to recover control of parts of the country to ensure greater peace and freedom from violence for the local population, which had reduced the phenomenon of internal displacement. A milestone in the history of El Salvador, including with regard to data and the registries for the directorate and the unit responsible for providing care to victims, had recently been achieved. Up to the first quarter of 2023, there had been a significant and meaningful reduction in the number of cases of internally displaced persons as a result of violence. The social policies being rolled out by the government were fostering the necessary conditions in order to ensure that the gang problem would be eradicated once and for all. El Salvador was actively pursuing the overhaul of social welfare and social fabric, and was making sure that it interlinked the various elements of societies successfully, including at the school level. Previously, schools had been considered a high-risk security zone, but thanks to actions undertaken by the government, protection had been provided to vulnerable young people and children, particularly those at risk of joining gangs, and new opportunities had been offered, including courses in art, culture, sport, reading, literacy, language learning and computer skills.

37. All of the above had contributed to reducing levels of criminality, thus reducing levels of displacement and providing a sustainable solution through options for personal development. Against that backdrop, El Salvador wished to thank UNHCR and other international bodies for their support for such government initiatives.

38. El Salvador wished to reiterate its unwavering commitment to the implementation of best practices and comprehensive solutions in order to tackle the phenomenon of internal displacement. It called on UNHCR and other international organizations, partners, financial institutions and civil society to continue to contribute to, and work towards, ensuring that actions remained effective.

39. The **Principal Adviser on Internal Displacement** (UNHCR) stated that although she could respond more precisely to all of the questions, in the interest of time, she would simply follow up with some States, including Switzerland, that had asked precise questions with bilateral conversations.

40. In terms of how the Office's approach to internally displaced persons had been ramped up, she said that in recent years the issue had been actively recognized by Member States and that was most appreciated, because Member States were partners in such a process. UNHCR considered that internal displacement was a national phenomenon, but that it had to be supported internationally, not just by other Member States, but by the United Nations community as a whole. UNHCR was an integral part of that and stood by its commitment to perform as required. The centrality of protection



had been duly noted and was key to such coordination where a large variety or plethora of actors were involved.

41. Operational delivery required funding, resources, as well as close collaboration not only with humanitarian donors, but also with development actors, multilateral development banks, the development ministries of Member States themselves.

42. Solutions in action was a core part of the Office's work and, as noted earlier and recognized by Member States, solutions from the start were absolutely imperative. That was an innovative approach that UNHCR had spearheaded, and many of its approaches in this regard flowed from its refugee experience over seven decades in situations of forced displacement protection and finding solutions.

43. UNHCR was deeply invested in the Secretary-General's Action Agenda and in the work of the Special Adviser, Mr. Piper. The humanitarian, development and peace nexus was being addressed jointly by various actors, including UNHCR. The Office's institutional plan was evolving and would change as it moved forward. It was work in progress, but with the necessary protection safeguards on all development action, it was something that UNHCR stood for.

44. In addition to analysing the protection impact of a variety of activities, whether humanitarian or emergency but also solutions, the slow and sudden onset of climate issues had been raised, each with its own approach. Vitality, the UNHCR emergency policy called on it to respond to disasters and emergencies, where it had presence and when requests from Member States were made. Protection needs were imperative, and that was where UNHCR played an absolutely active role and contributed in collaboration with multiple other partners, including the Member States themselves.

45. Lastly, UNHCR had also launched an independent evaluation of its implementation in internal displacement situations in the last few years. That report should be forthcoming by the end of the year or early in 2024. That was another measure of the Office's demonstration of its interest in continuing to improve as it went along. Despite funding shortages and the challenges that UNHCR faced, support from national authorities was imperative.

#### **4. Programme/protection policy**

##### **Update on the coordination efforts of UNHCR to measure the impact arising from hosting, protecting and assisting refugees**

46. The **Director of the Division of Resilience and Solutions** (UNHCR), presenting conference room paper EC/74/SC/CRP.15, said that over the past decade the number of forcibly displaced persons had risen almost constantly. The majority of the 35.2 million refugees in the world lived in a neighbouring country, which meant that 76 per cent of them were hosted in low- and middle-income countries. In a world witnessing several simultaneous crises and significant displacements, solutions remained elusive.

47. It was in that global context that UNHCR had been working with Member States to coordinate the initiative to measure the impact arising from protecting, hosting and assisting refugees. He briefly reviewed the main points contained in the conference room paper on the topic, and he noted that the undertaking had benefited from the expertise of the World Bank, the Joint Data Center and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

48. The work was in response to the omnibus resolution of December 2017, which requested UNHCR to "coordinate an effort to measure the impact arising from hosting, protecting and assisting refugees, with a view to assessing gaps in international cooperation and promoting burden- and responsibility-sharing that is more equitable, predictable and sustainable, and to begin reporting on the results to Member States in 2018".

49. In its coordinating role, UNHCR had convened four meetings with Member States jointly with the World Bank between 2018 and 2022. At those meetings, Member States had agreed to initially focus on education, providing data and deciding on a common methodology. One outcome of the meetings was the education costing methodology developed by the World Bank, which had been issued in early 2022.

50. In January 2023, UNHCR, in collaboration with the World Bank and the World Bank-UNHCR Joint Data Center, had organized the fourth technical workshop with Member States from Geneva-based missions and capitals. The workshop, attended by 110 participants, had focused on the assessment of the fiscal cost of assisting and hosting refugees in the education sector. In that meeting, UNHCR had provided an update and sought inputs for next steps for the financing of

education. The World Bank was currently refining the methodology proposed for responsibility-sharing in the education sector, incorporating comments received during the workshop. The workshop had also explored potential new sectors for assessment, including shelter/housing and social assistance. Both sectors had been received with interest by participants. The methodological options for the implementation of their relative fiscal cost estimation had been discussed, leading to the prioritization of social assistance. In that connection, the World Bank had initiated a preliminary desk review of a basic methodological approach to measuring the impact of the inclusion of refugees in national social protection/assistance systems. Several Member States had also noted their interest in looking at the health sector.

51. Building on that discussion, he could confirm that the next workshop would be held in Jordan in September 2023 and would seek participation from representatives from Geneva-based missions as well as colleagues from relevant line ministries at capital level to ensure a technical-level deliberation. The purpose of the workshop was twofold: to discuss the financing of education, building on the joint World Bank-UNHCR report, and to have a technical-level discussion to develop a costing methodology for another sector.

52. Member States would recall that UNHCR had shared the note for the January meeting with a short survey in April, which would inform the upcoming workshop in Jordan. The survey would help to assess interest, priorities and sectoral preferences. He asked Member States for their continued robust engagement to help sustain that work. He hoped to obtain additional responses to the survey, which would make it possible to plan the September workshop in accordance with Member States' preferences and to understand which States wished to participate. To take the work forward, it was essential to have the support of Member States, notably engagement and data.

53. He also understood that there might be some interest in briefings of regional groupings in Geneva and stood ready to do so. He expressed the Office's appreciation for the valuable engagement of its partners and encouraged active participation by Member States in the initiative, especially in the lead-up to the Global Refugee Forum in 2023.

54. The representative of **Uganda, speaking on behalf of the African group**, said that Africa was home to over 30 million persons of concern to the UNHCR, a number that was growing in a geographical region that was low- to middle-income with existing economic, social and infrastructural challenges. The impact of hosting an additional population of refugees had been felt with full force in all key sectors of the economy and in the political setting of the region.

55. To measure burden- and responsibility-sharing, the donation in kind offered by host countries should be costed and quantified, taking into consideration their level of development. The continuous delay and postponement of the measuring and costing exercise increased the unfair burden that host countries continued to bear. Measuring easily quantifiable support must not be postponed any further. The slow pace of that important exercise was an obstacle to the African group's proposal to include the measurement of impact as a stand-alone topic in the multi-year plan of proposed ExCom conclusions for the following three years. That would have provided an opportunity to discuss the realities facing host countries vis-à-vis the support received. Nonetheless, the African group welcomed its proposed inclusion for discussion every year alongside the respective topic and hoped that it would soon be considered as a separate topic for an ExCom conclusion.

56. The African group remained very interested in the methodology that would be adopted to measure the impact of hosting and protecting refugees on the African continent. The host countries should be part of the team that determined the methodology to be adopted in measuring impact. Their input must be taken into account in future efforts.

57. The methodology to be adopted was not a one-size-fits-all. The African region's economic and developmental differences and peculiarities affected the differences in the impact on each State of hosting large numbers of refugees. Those differences should be reflected in the measurement approach.

58. The African group emphasized the need for a holistic approach, based on the key elements in the Global Compact on Refugees, when considering the sectors for measuring the impact of hosting refugees. It acknowledged the prioritization of education, which was addressed first because of the availability of data, and it urged UNHCR to work with host countries in deciding on other sectors, including health, social protection, land and housing.

59. Rather than placing a greater focus on the need for host countries to ensure inclusion in the socioeconomic sectors, options should also be considered that would lighten the burden on the host

countries, bearing in mind the impact that refugees had on such key sectors as land, security and road infrastructure.

60. The African group called upon UNHCR to prioritize the need to measure the impact of hosting refugees in order to ensure equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing, and to encourage international partners to match host countries' generosity by contributing adequately, flexibly, consistently and predictably towards hosting, protecting and assisting refugees.

61. The representative of **Pakistan** described how hosting refugees had an impact not only on financial or fiscal costs but also on economic, social, political, environment and security aspects. Nevertheless, the ongoing measuring of fiscal costs provided a good starting point. More engagement, dialogue and regular technical and non-technical briefings would help focus on common challenges, methodologies and gaps in policy and practice.

62. Pakistan took note of the progress made in the development of a methodology for measuring the cost of including refugees in national education systems. It was pleased that UNHCR was receptive to the suggestion of Member States to hold consultations to discuss the future prioritization of the sectors for that exercise.

63. The representative of **Ethiopia** said that his country aligned itself with the statement made by Uganda on behalf of the African group. Protecting and assisting refugees had always been a fundamental undertaking for his country. In Ethiopia, the host communities usually shared their meagre resources with the refugees. So far in 2023, Ethiopia had already received more than 100,000 new refugees and asylum-seekers fleeing the conflict in Somalia.

64. Refugees were a heavy burden for host communities. They cut down trees and collected firewood for cooking or heating, causing environmental degradation. In some cases, locals were required to surrender their land for the construction of refugee camps. The use by refugees of existing local facilities undermined the quality of services. The influx of refugees placed a strain on schools and other social and administrative services meant for the local communities. In Ethiopia, refugees were allowed to work, and they therefore competed with nationals for jobs. All those aspects had had a negative impact on the peaceful existence between the refugees and the host communities.

65. Ethiopia appreciated the education costing exercise conducted by the World Bank as a starting point. However, the timing and methodology might have an adverse impact on the exercise. The exercise had begun in the first and second year of the Global Refugee Forum. It was a time of great momentum for financial and technical pledges, but support had declined from the initial stages of pledge implementation. Thus, the exercise might not provide a clear picture of the impact of hosting refugees, but it could be taken as a basis for planning. In addition, the exercise should include more areas, such as environment, health, shelter and jobs.

66. In general, there was a broad acceptance that the principle of burden- and responsibility-sharing had not yet been matched by international parties. Host countries bore the greatest burden. The upcoming Global Refugee Forum should be used to solicit new measurable and impactful mega-pledges to ease the burden of hosting refugees. The Forum should lead to a sustainable way of sharing responsibility. It would be an opportunity for all Member States to capitalize on the success of the Global Compact on Refugees and commit to making action-oriented pledges.

67. The representative of **Iran (Islamic Republic of)** stressed the need to be more proactive in meeting the needs of people on the move. The international community increasingly disregarded the strain of refugees on the host communities, and the main donors had preferred to focus on their immediate concerns. Thus, the burden of hosting had been shared inequitably. International cooperation was declining, and there was a tendency to forget the benefits of hosting refugees.

68. The burden- and responsibility-sharing principle should be enhanced by promoting additional, expedited and fit-for-purpose actions to strengthen the measurement mechanism. His delegation appreciated the efforts by UNHCR and the World Bank in that regard, but there was still a long way to go to achieve the desired goal. That said, it was important to keep up the good work.

69. There was no need to create complicated data and formulas for impact measurement. A transparent, simple mechanism should be devised to assess the fair share of all members of the international community, not only in education, but also in other crucial sectors, such as health.

70. Data should be readily accessible for developing countries, given that they hosted more than 85 per cent of all displaced persons. In measuring the impact of hosting, obstacles such as financial constraints and mass influx must be taken into account.

71. The Islamic Republic of Iran reaffirmed its commitment to the principle of burden- and responsibility-sharing and called on all members of the international community to follow suit and to support the mechanism for measuring the impact of hosting.

72. The representative of **Brazil** said that her country had participated actively in the workshops organized in 2019 to develop a methodology to measure the impact of hosting refugees. At the workshops, there had been a shared understanding of the technical difficulties relating to data protection, which had led to the decision to begin by assessing the physical dimension of the impact of refugee movements, as reflected in the High Commissioner's report. However, other dimensions, such as the political, economic and social impact, should also be considered. It was important that host countries were on board and could count on adequate support for embarking upon measurement exercises. The overall objective should be to provide a basis for more equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing and enhanced international cooperation.

73. The representative of **Germany** said that his delegation commended efforts coordinated by UNHCR to measure the impact of hosting, protecting and assisting refugees. UNHCR, the World Bank and the Joint Data Center had provided valuable input, including through the workshops held since 2019. The fourth technical workshop in January 2023 had produced promising results in the education sector.

74. The results of the workshop organized in January and presented in the joint World Bank-UNHCR report had shown that the fiscal costs of including refugees in national education systems were manageable. Refugee inclusion should be pursued by host countries and supported by humanitarian and development actors. Better international responsibility-sharing was needed to assist the host countries in those efforts, and the 2023 Global Refugee Forum would be an opportunity to rally support and set on track a collective effort to promote refugee inclusion in the education sector. To do so, Germany would back multi-stakeholder pledges prepared by the Education Alliance at the Forum.

75. Germany welcomed efforts by the World Bank to undertake an initial desk review of a methodological approach to measuring the impact of the inclusion of refugees in national social protection systems. It was open to discussing possibilities for supporting those efforts.

76. The representative of **Ecuador** stressed the importance of having appropriate tools to measure the socioeconomic impact on host communities and host countries which, like Ecuador, provided protection, humanitarian assistance and integration opportunities to large numbers of refugees and migrants. Ecuador was implementing a number of policies and initiatives, including a special migrant regularization procedure, and was pursuing work with relevant stakeholders in the context of the Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). However, it was crucial to continue to seek tools and resources to complement those efforts and initiatives.

77. The impact measurement process led by UNHCR directly addressed the question of the effective application of the principle of burden- and responsibility-sharing. That process could also facilitate more equitable, predictable and sustainable international cooperation by equipping the international community with the tools needed for measuring the fiscal impact on host communities and countries.

78. Ecuador was grateful to UNHCR for organizing the fourth technical workshop in January 2023, which Ecuador had attended to learn more about the proposal for a joint methodological approach that ensured equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing. It was pleased that the methodology had initially addressed the impact of hosting refugees on the education sector, and it endorsed the decision to centre the next phase on national social assistance systems. It was vital to continue efforts to produce user-friendly and readily accessible tools and to guarantee that technical and fiscal questions had a human-rights and non-discriminatory approach.

79. Ecuador urged UNHCR to continue to lead efforts to improve the methodology proposed by the World Bank at the fourth workshop so as to be able to present a definitive measurement tool at the second Global Refugee Forum.

80. The representative of **Egypt** said that her country aligned itself with the statement delivered by Uganda on behalf of the African group. Like a number of other countries, Egypt hosted large

numbers of refugees and included them in their national systems without distinction. It had engaged with interest in the workshops jointly organized by UNHCR and the World Bank on the impact of hosting, protecting and assisting refugees. That joint endeavour should result in an effective modelling approach to responsibility-sharing that was context-driven and took into account the development priorities of host countries. The discrepancy between the number of registered refugees and the overall number of persons in need of international protection, including migrants in refugee-like situations, needed to be addressed in costing approaches with a view to supporting existing public services and enhancing their quality and sustainability.

81. Proposed approaches should complement national development plans so as to bolster national institutional capacities and build on existing efforts and mechanisms to promote the inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers and assist the host communities and national systems. The impact of inclusion should be addressed from a comprehensive perspective that took into account the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers and of the host communities to avoid duplication of efforts by stakeholders, while channelling international support to the humanitarian-development nexus and supporting the long-term development priorities of host countries.

82. The proposed approaches should address the positive economic impact of refugees in national systems in a way that made a careful distinction between the impact of refugee flows and that of migration. Unlike migrants, refugee populations were usually composed of vulnerable groups – women, children and the elderly – that had special protection needs. Assuming positive economic revenues for the inclusion of refugees in national systems without taking into account the particularities of refugee populations and development conditions in host countries could prove to be counterproductive to the objective of a measuring exercise that ensured more equitable and sustainable burden- and responsibility-sharing, and implied a greater emphasis on open integration as a more durable solution vis-à-vis other solutions: voluntary repatriation and resettlement.

83. With a view to addressing the issues of burden- and responsibility-sharing from a more balanced and holistic perspective, it might be useful at a later stage to measure the impact of country solutions, particularly resettlement and complementary pathways, as tools for enhancing the protection and assistance of refugees and asylum-seekers and alleviating the burden of hosting refugees on low- and middle-income countries.

84. The representative of **Switzerland** welcomed the efforts made by UNHCR in collaboration with the World Bank to measure the impact arising from hosting, protecting and assisting refugees. That work made it possible to have a more precise idea of the burden on the hosting populations and to quantify the support needs in terms of responsibility-sharing. Switzerland endorsed the proposal to have measurements include sectors other than education. It commended the Education Alliance for its efforts to assist countries that hosted forcibly displaced persons and to measure their efforts, and it welcomed the proposal to include health, housing, social assistance and any other sector concerned.

85. The hosting of displaced persons also presented opportunities. The manner in which those opportunities were seized depended on several factors, including the quantity and quality of the investments made to facilitate the integration and inclusion of forcibly displaced populations. In view of the increasing duration of their presence, reliable data on economic returns would show not only the extent to which the burden of hosting was, at least in part, a profitable economic investment, but also its potentially beneficial impact at the social, occupational and cultural level. For that reason, his delegation urged UNHCR and its partners to pursue its work on the topic and to seek to measure the opportunities created by the hosting of forcibly displaced persons. It hoped that the dimension of opportunities would be duly addressed at the Global Refugee Forum.

86. The representative of the **United States of America** said that the discussions on the impact of hosting, protecting and assisting refugees were an important part of the global humanitarian dialogue in the current era of unprecedented need and constrained resources. The UNHCR costing and measurement exercises were most useful when they identified where countries needed the most support and where policy shifts that advanced inclusion minimized cost and benefited host communities and countries alike. Linking the identified gaps with policy fixes and financing was a crucial next step. The United States appreciated the Office's efforts to provide data on the impact of hosting refugees and its recognition that quantification of the cost was only the first step. Broadening multi-stakeholder engagement to intensify responsibility-sharing in support of host countries, as well as refugees, stateless and other forcibly displaced persons, was a priority for the United States and was the core of its advocacy to advance the Global Compact on Refugees.

87. Ahead of the Global Refugee Forum in December, his delegation supported promoting solutions and inclusion for displaced and stateless persons; fostering new innovative partnerships with the private sector, development actors and organizations headed by displaced persons; and leading by example on pledge implementation, and encouraging robust participation and matching by other Member States in the run-up to and at the event.
88. The United States had made 13 pledges at the High-Level Officials Meeting in 2022 and the High-Level Segment on Statelessness in 2019 to increase assistance to refugee-hosting countries, support refugee self-reliance and expand access to solutions for refugees and stateless persons. It was well on its way to fulfilling those pledges, including one matching pledge dedicated to support at least 10 existing pledges on refugee inclusion and self-reliance. That demonstrated its commitment to thinking creatively about responsibility-sharing and stretching available resources to be as impactful as possible.
89. Concrete and targeted data would be critical to advancing those priorities and ensuring evidence-based interventions. The United States had supported the World Bank-UNHCR Joint Data Center since its start. It commended the Center for leading efforts to generate stronger data on forcibly displaced persons to increase their inclusion in policies, national data systems and services. To be even more impactful, it was essential to make data and data-derived insights more accessible to policymakers and practitioners in donor and refugee-hosting countries, and to further engage affected populations and local actors in shaping research priorities and data collection efforts.
90. Evidence showed that in many if not most circumstances, refugees brought huge benefits to their host communities, both socially and economically. His delegation hoped that any exercise to assess the costs of hosting would also account for the clear benefits of hosting and including refugees in national systems, and address ways in which policies and programmes could be shaped to maximize those benefits.
91. The representative of **Mexico** stressed the importance of ensuring the availability of data to guide public policy and programmes and international cooperation efforts so that humanitarian and development financing was duly allocated to the priority needs of host countries.
92. Mexico had participated actively in the four workshops organized to date to produce a methodology to measure the impact of refugees. Obstacles had been encountered, such as lack of capacity and outdated national data systems, as well as challenges to putting in place a flexible methodology that could be tailored to different contexts and realities. However, meaningful progress on the methodology had been made at the fourth workshop in the area of education, and new areas had been identified, such as health and housing. Mexico would continue to contribute to those discussions, and it thanked UNHCR and the World Bank for the work carried out so far.
93. The representative of **Algeria** said that the enormous increase in the number of refugees and displaced people due to armed conflicts, natural disasters and climate change called for concerted actions to find durable solutions to the root causes of those displacements.
94. His delegation commended the work undertaken by UNHCR, with the support of the World Bank and the Joint Data Center, to improve the measurement of the impact of hosting, protecting and assisting refugees. It encouraged more stakeholders to contribute to that endeavour.
95. Assistance must be given in response to new situations, but existing protracted situations, such as the one involving Sahrawi refugees, which had been a growing burden for Algeria, must also be borne in mind.
96. His delegation underlined the importance of addressing the root causes of each crisis and seeking durable solutions that put an end to the suffering of the populations concerned and allowed them to live in peace and dignity.
97. In line with its international commitments, Algeria had elaborated a national strategy aimed at protecting all migrants, including Sahrawi refugees, by providing them with free health care, free education and other social services.
98. Algeria had granted access to those services to 40,000 Syrians settled in the country and regularly renewed their residence permits, and it had been contributing to the well-being of the Sahrawi refugees since the beginning of Morocco's invasion of the Western Sahara in 1975.
99. The protection of refugees must take into consideration the new economic and social realities as well as the repercussions of the health crisis and the impact of food shortages brought about by recent international developments. Together with the contributions of UNHCR, UNICEF, the World

Food Programme (WFP), the European Union and national institutions and non-governmental organizations, Algeria was making every effort to protect and assist all refugees and migrants in the country.

100. His delegation paid tribute to all partners working in the field for their active role in providing humanitarian aid to the Sahrawi people and especially to children and women. In that connection, it asked UNHCR to update the figures on refugees in the camps near Tindouf from 93,000 to 173,000, in line with the inter-agency study. Algeria emphasized the need to bolster assistance to the refugees in those camps. Many families had fled the hostilities in the liberated regions of the Western Sahara to join the camps after the breaking of the ceasefire in November 2020. Those displaced persons must be taken into account in all assistance programmes.

101. His delegation hoped that the absence of a reference to the Sahrawi refugees in the reports did not mean that the situation had been forgotten. Algeria would continue to support all refugees living on its territory, in particular those of the Western Sahara.

102. The representative of the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** said that his country welcomed the update from UNHCR, which would facilitate refugee inclusion and durable solutions. He commended host countries on the support they provided to refugees and echoed the call by UNHCR for improved international cooperation. Other Member States must provide flexible support, and efforts must be made to secure the active engagement of a greater number of stakeholders.

103. The United Kingdom welcomed the work of UNHCR and the World Bank to develop a methodology to measure the cost of including refugees in the national education systems of host countries, and it supported the report's conclusion that building an evidence base and establishing a common methodology was the best way forward. With commitment and adequate resources, that methodology could underpin a valuable education-focused pledge at the Global Refugee Forum. His delegation looked forward to receiving the initial results of the application of the fiscal costing exercise to the social assistance sector.

104. The representative of **Uganda**, aligning her delegation with the African group statement, expressed appreciation to UNHCR and the World Bank for their work to measure the impact of hosting, which was of particular significance to Uganda as a host country. In the case of protracted situations, it was important to take into consideration the duration of hosting in order to obtain a better picture of how it had exhausted or benefited the host country.

105. It was painful to describe hosting as a burden, since changing peoples' lives by giving them a home should be something to celebrate. Host countries needed well researched data, tailored to different situations, in order to meaningfully engage when calling for burden- and responsibility-sharing. Without such data, the generosity of host countries was being betrayed.

106. The representative of **Nigeria**, aligning her delegation with the statements previously made by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the African group, commended UNHCR on its work to strengthen development and cooperation between humanitarian, development and peace actors, financial institutions and host countries. Within that inclusive approach, UNHCR must continue to equitably promote all solutions to displacement, including voluntary return, repatriation and resettlement. Moreover, she welcomed the efforts to assist Member States in meeting the many challenges affecting internally displaced persons. She was particularly grateful to the Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement and UNHCR for their work to strengthen efforts to address the root causes of displacement.

107. She commended UNHCR on its efforts to address requests by Member States to measure the impact of hosting refugees. That was a complex exercise since it was necessary to consider the particularities of individual countries while developing a methodology acceptable to all Member States. In that connection, Nigeria underscored the need to consider non-protracted refugee situations, maintain an overarching humanitarian perspective and explore other means of financing humanitarian situations to avoid imposing additional financial burdens, such as loans, on Member States. Her delegation would be grateful if UNHCR could share the findings of its survey on the workshop held in January 2023.

108. Acknowledging the deficits in the proposed UNHCR budget and the difficulty implementing its programme in many countries, she called on UNHCR to ensure equitable distribution of funding

to humanitarian situations and underscored the need for deepened partnership and unearmarked funding.

109. The representative of **Morocco** said that he wished to reply to the allegations by the representative of Algeria concerning the aid supposedly supplied to the Tindouf refugee camps. An independent evaluation of the WFP in Algeria from 2019 to 2022 had identified clear evidence of ongoing misappropriation of WFP aid. Separatist leaders, protected by the host country, controlled humanitarian aid in the camps. Food parcels were being sold at markets or simply stolen, creating a shortage of basic necessities for newborns. The absence of a database of WFP beneficiaries made monitoring difficult, as did the refusal by the host country and the separatist leaders to allow WFP to enter the camps. The separatist leaders had silenced the refugees and forbidden them from speaking to United Nations agencies about the difficulties that they faced. Moreover, the humanitarian principles of impartiality and neutrality were not being applied in food distribution. WFP had expressed concern over the restricted access to aid experienced by the most disadvantaged, the separatists' disregard for established distribution criteria, and the difficulties due to existing conflicts within the camps.

110. As a host country, the Algerian regime must be held accountable for those serious human rights violations and violations of humanitarian law. It must allow unlimited access to the camps and ensure the well-being of persons residing in them.

#### **Statements made in exercise of the right of reply**

111. The representative of **Algeria** said the allegations of misappropriation of humanitarian aid were false; they sought to undermine the international community's efforts in support of Sahrawi refugees, impose a *fait accompli* in the last colony of Africa and delay the irreversible process of decolonization in the Western Sahara. To put an end to the suffering of the Sahrawi refugees, it would have sufficed for Morocco to implement the United Nations settlement plan, which had been officially accepted by both parties in the conflict.

112. Regarding the supposed misappropriation of humanitarian aid, he wished to highlight that those allegations had only ever been made by Morocco. They had been proven to be false on several occasions, including by the European Commission. Indeed, in July 2015, the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations had described the oversight mechanisms in the Tindouf as more secure than those of other camps.

113. He requested that the representative of Morocco respect the language of the United Nations and refer to his country as the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

114. The representative of **Morocco** said that, having spent half a century in the Tindouf camps, the Sahrawis should be given stable status, either through integration into the host country, resettlement in a third country or voluntary return to their country of origin. His delegation believed that voluntary return represented the best durable solution and was the most realistic option since, in Morocco, their socioeconomic situation would be better than in the camps, and their rights would be guaranteed under the constitution.

115. The **Director of the Division of Resilience and Solutions** (UNHCR), responding to the comments made by Member States, wished to first acknowledge the valuable contribution made by the low- and middle-income countries that were hosting 76 per cent of the world's refugees, most of them in protracted situations. Education had been the first topic selected under the omnibus resolution of December 2017. The resulting Global Cost of Inclusive Refugee Education report had estimated that \$4.8 billion would be required annually to provide education to refugees in low- and middle-income countries. The next step was to engage partners and secure financing. This would be discussed ahead of the "mega pledge" on economic inclusion and social protection and during the upcoming technical workshop in Jordan.

116. Member States had highlighted multiple complexities and context-specific challenges; however, he wished to underscore that the success of those discussions depended on the engagement of and provision of data by Member States. The request by Member States to simplify the methodology would be implemented. He would organize at least two sessions before the meeting in



September and invite all those involved to the meeting in Amman, so that more data would be available ahead of the Global Refugee Forum.

117. In response to the request by the representative of Nigeria, he regretted that only six Member States had responded to the survey conducted earlier in the year. That was not sufficient to form the basis of further discussion, although many insights came out of today's discussion.

## 5. Programme budgets and funding

### a. Update on budgets and funding

118. The **Director of the Division of Strategic Planning and Results** (UNHCR), accompanying her remarks with a PowerPoint presentation, said that document EC/74/SC/CRP.16 provided an update on budgets and funding for 2022 and 2023. The final 2022 budget as at 31 December 2022 was \$10.7 billion. Four supplementary budgets, representing a combined total of \$1.7 billion, had been established in support of Ukraine, Afghanistan, Cameroon and Pakistan.

119. Regarding funds available, in 2022, the final figure stood at \$6.2 billion, which represented an increase of \$1.0 billion, or approximately 20 per cent, compared to 2021, and the first time in the history of the organization that funds available had crossed the \$6 billion mark. The final funds available included a significant increase in voluntary contributions, with the remaining funds coming from other sources. The overall funding gap had decreased from 44 per cent to 42.3 per cent; however, any gap had a detrimental impact on operations, especially given the discrepancies in funds available for different parts of the world.

120. Implementation of available funds had remained high in 2022, at 91 per cent, and final expenditure for that year was \$5.6 billion. UNHCR implementation rates were among the highest in the United Nations system. Expenditure had increased significantly in Europe and Asia and the Pacific; slightly decreased in the Middle East and North Africa, the Americas, the Eastern Horn and Great Lakes, and West and Central Africa; and remained stable in Southern Africa. Headquarters expenditure had decreased and global programmes expenditure had increased. Implementing partner expenditure remained very high, at \$1.5 billion. Local and national partners, who accounted for 84 per cent of partner agreements, had received 57 per cent of total partner expenditure in 2022. Moreover, that year, some one hundred grant agreements had been signed with organizations led by refugees, stateless persons or internally displaced persons.

121. In terms of expenditure by impact area, 55 per cent of expenditure had been allocated to impact area 2 (realizing basic rights in safe environments). This was followed by impact area 1 (attaining favourable protection environments), impact area 3 (empowering communities and achieving gender equality) and impact area 4 (securing solutions). It was envisaged to increase expenditure for impact area 4.

122. The **Director of the Division of External Relations** (UNHCR), accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that 2023 budget stood at \$10.8 billion, consisting of the original approved budget of \$10.2 billion, plus four supplementary budgets in support of Ukraine, Pakistan, Türkiye, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan and Somalia, and a modest budget reduction in Iraq. She described how funding fell far short of the \$10.8 billion budget, and that the Office was currently funded at only 32 per cent of its total needs, with higher levels of earmarking leading to reduced flexibility.

123. Although both public and private funding had increased over the last decade, especially during the previous year, the budget gap continued to widen. She wished to pay tribute to the donor governments that had increased their contributions compared to 2022 and also to those that had contributed unearmarked or softly earmarked funding. The generosity of the private sector was also greatly appreciated; however, UNHCR did not anticipate the same levels of private sector support in 2023. She also acknowledged the commitment of the largest refugee-hosting countries. Several such countries had recently taken steps to include refugees in their national systems; however, they needed sustained, meaningful support in order to continue.

124. The Office projected that it would receive \$1.0 billion less in 2023 compared to 2022. That reduction would have grave consequences, forcing UNHCR to cut programming and leave basic

needs unmet. As a result, 2.5 million people would not receive core relief items, 931,800 people would not receive shelter and housing, 290,400 people would be impacted by reduced prevention of and response to gender-based violence, and 94,800 children would not go to school.

125. She called for greater support to be provided to host countries in job creation, educational provision, technology, climate change mitigation and health care, as well as increased bilateral aid. Such efforts would benefit both displaced and local communities, and reduce UNHCR budgets.

126. The representative of **Uganda, speaking on behalf of the African group**, said that the African contribution to humanitarian causes, especially on the continent, was often in kind, in the form of hosting and protecting persons of concern to UNHCR. Since that form of contribution was not measured or financially quantified, it was not reflected among voluntary contributions or in the UNHCR budget.

127. She expressed her appreciation for the donors who continued to provide consistent and flexible funding to situations in Africa; nonetheless, the African group remained concerned by the steady decline in the budget and funding allocated to the continent, which was the region most affected by the funding gap. While Africa benefited from less than 30 per cent of the total UNHCR budget as at 30 April 2023, other countries had enjoyed huge budget increases – some as much as 200 per cent. She questioned whether States viewed all humanitarian needs through the same lens or whether persons of concern to UNHCR in Africa were deemed resilient enough to go without basic needs such as water, food, clothing and shelter. The burden of humanitarian need must be shared without discrimination.

128. It was a matter of concern that impact area 4, securing solutions, was the least funded impact area. The African group would continue to prioritize efforts to find durable solutions and tackle the root causes of displacement in order to enable the safe, voluntary return of displaced persons in the region. In that connection, she urged UNHCR to prioritize and meaningfully budget for efforts to find a solution to growing displacement. States could no longer ignore factors that impeded voluntary return, such as climate change.

129. The African group noted with concern that, irrespective of underfunding in 2022, there was still a total carry-over of \$573.2 million from 2022 to 2023. She would appreciate it if UNHCR could explain how that was possible amid underfunding and state whether that amount in fact corresponded to earmarked funds. It was unfortunate that African countries were not able to benefit from those funds to save lives, which was the core humanitarian purpose of UNHCR.

130. The African group invited all public and private sector partners to commit to equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing and donate generously and without discrimination. She trusted that Africa's generosity in hosting large numbers of displaced persons, in spite of its fragile and weak economies, would be met by equal, flexible and predictable financial support.

131. The representative of the **United States of America** highlighted the immense challenges faced by UNHCR as humanitarian needs continued to soar, and noted that the \$4.5 billion funding gap was a stark reminder that the agency must prioritize how and where it delivered support. Its delegation appreciated UNHCR spending its available resources efficiently and encouraged it to maintain that approach. After praising the leadership of UNHCR in efforts to address the human displacement caused by the wars in Ukraine and the Sudan, he underscored the collective responsibility to address the needs of forcibly displaced individuals. Therefore, he called on all donors and all Member States with sufficient financial capacity to increase their support to meet those growing humanitarian needs.

132. The representative of **Ethiopia** endorsed the statement by Uganda on behalf of the African group and thanked UNHCR for the budget update for 2022 and 2023. He noted the immense pressures faced by the country, which, during 2023, had already received 100,000 new asylum seekers from Somalia and 7,500 from the Sudan due to ongoing conflicts, on top of almost one million refugees and asylum seekers already there. Despite that growing influx of new refugees, Ethiopia had some of the lowest funding allocation and had already used its small budget available at the beginning of the year to respond to the new emergencies in Somalia and the Sudan. Therefore, he called for the additional budgetary support needed to help Ethiopia provide protection to the individuals seeking assistance.

133. He explained that the constant declines in the budget allocations to the refugee response programme could force the country to revisit its refugee policies and commitments. He noted that the scale and scope of the challenge faced by host communities would have an enduring effect and underscored that refugees should get the protection that they needed wherever they were located. Therefore, he encouraged donors to continue providing generously and urged UNHCR to review levels of committable funding so that all refugees received the assistance they needed. He emphasised that funding should be less earmarked and that predictable, regular funding would need to play a critical role in overcoming most protection challenges and implementing durable solutions successfully in the future.

134. The representative of the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** acknowledged the decision by the African group to table an amendment to the draft decision on budgets and funding at the next Standing Committee to allow Member States to give the matter due consideration, and supported the proposed revision. He underlined the scale of the challenge of providing support to forcibly displaced people, which seemed to have become overwhelming due to a combination of factors, and applauded the Office's support for those individuals, as outlined in the Global Report and the update on budgets and funding. Despite such hurdles, funding ensured that progress was made, with reinforcements to the UNHCR Emergency Response Team and improvements to gender-based violence response and engagement, for example. At the same time, the 33 million in pounds sterling of unearmarked funding provided by the United Kingdom in 2022 and 2023 was also spotlighted.

135. The United Kingdom recognized the difficult choices faced by UNHCR in prioritizing resources, in view of the 110 million displaced persons still in need of assistance, the war in Ukraine exacerbating pre-existing global humanitarian needs, and the crises in the Sudan and the Horn of Africa deteriorating. In order to support those efforts, the United Kingdom had an International Development Strategy in place to support the vulnerable and to transform how the crises that they were experiencing could be tackled. However, he stressed that there was still further to go and pointed to the country's plans to spend 1.5 billion pounds sterling on humanitarian needs in 2024-2025. Finally, he stressed that establishing a common understanding of who was in the most severe need, where they were and what they needed, would be critical to ensuring more impactful responses and to fostering more trust in the humanitarian response system. That would be increasingly crucial as needs increased and resources continued to be squeezed, meaning that donors and humanitarians would have to make prioritization decisions.

136. The representative of **Mexico** thanked UNHCR for the update and noted the 15 per cent increase from the 2022 budget in 2023, as well as the increased costs and expenditure. He expressed concerns about the 12.4 per cent decrease in disbursements in the Americas region in 2022 from the previous year, which was a source of concern with so many displaced people seeking refuge in that region. While recognizing that the Office's limited fundamental resources could have driven that funding decision, he stressed that such assistance resources was essential for vulnerable people.

137. UNHCR was applauded for its herculean efforts to fulfil its mandate, and with the very challenging geopolitical and financial circumstances that it was facing in mind, Mexico called upon UNHCR to continue to find efficiencies and mobilize its resources more widely, including through innovative approaches, in order to ensure that financing was in place to deliver on the 2023 budget and all connected plans. The country also supported the African group amendment to the current agenda item.

138. The representative of the **United Republic of Tanzania** wished to commend UNHCR for its budget update and supported the African group statement delivered by Uganda. She requested more information about the Office's approach towards flexible and earmarked funding, in light of the 2022 carry-over. In particular, she wished to know when flexible and earmarked funding would end, so that the United Republic of Tanzania could have sustainable funding in place, particularly for voluntary repatriation and general protection for displaced persons. With so many needs not being met, she questioned how the country could move forward.

139. The representative of **Sweden** thanked UNHCR for its update on budgets and funding and for its efforts to mobilize resources in recent years. With the tricky landscape during this period and needs outstripping resources, the country emphasized that every penny must be well spent, meaning that tough choices would have to be made. With that in mind, flexible funding was playing a critical role in providing a more efficient and predictable response to any sudden crises, particularly with resources being prioritized for individuals in the most difficult circumstances, such as the devastating earthquakes in Türkiye and the Syrian Arab Republic earlier in the year.

140. She explained that the country had been focusing on broadening the humanitarian donor base during the Swedish European Union Presidency, and proudly noted that European Union Council Conclusions addressing the humanitarian funding gap were adopted on 22 May, containing three priority areas that Sweden intended to pursue. The country remained a proud partner to UNHCR and intended to build on that relationship through its four-year Strategic Partnership Agreement. To conclude, she echoed the Office's call for more donors to respond generously to the High Commissioner's appeal for resources.

141. The representative of **Uganda** thanked the Director of the Division of Strategic Planning and the Director of the Division of External Relations for their presentations and for their visits to the country. She noted that the average refugee in Uganda lived on \$3 per month, which was described as "shameful". She was also disturbed at the budget allocations for impact areas in the budget report, with the funding for durable solutions remaining the least funded impact area in the 2022 and 2023 budgets. At the same time, when looking at protection figures, in 2022, the whole of eastern Africa received a fraction of the increment to the budget, which equated to an increment for one country's or a few countries' responses.

142. That situation made Uganda feel that its generosity towards refugees was being taken for granted. The country was proud of its efforts but did not enjoy the pain and burden that came with the situation as it was, and would not countenance closing its borders to new refugees from neighbouring countries. She felt that, as Uganda had integrated the refugees already in the country so well, UNHCR was moving its funding priorities towards new refugees instead. That was a concern, and her delegation believed that the only way those worries would be taken seriously was through the budget. Therefore, she implored the agency to come up with tangible pledges for refugees in Uganda.

143. The representative of **Germany** shared his concerns about the very dire funding situation and the resulting painful prioritizations for allocating finances. With the funding gap in question in mind, he urged Member States that already donated to UNHCR as well as non-host States and those who were not already donating substantially to step up their efforts as part of an approach driven by equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing. At the same time, flexible funding was viewed as critical for supporting efficient and timely responses to humanitarian emergencies, particularly in light of the more acute needs of the rising displaced population numbers, meaning that financial contributions would need to be spent more efficiently.

144. He also expressed appreciation for the increased private donor contributions to UNHCR and encouraged the agency to explore further opportunities to raise funding sustainably. On the suggestions of donor neglect, the delegation took the view that "donor fatigue" was not necessarily the most appropriate term for describing the situation at present, in light of the 20 per cent increase in contributions from the previous year. With other organizations, both humanitarian and non-humanitarian, grappling with this funding squeeze, Germany took the view that the solutions lay beyond the humanitarian sphere and needed to involve more than financing.

145. The representative of **the Netherlands (Kingdom of)** expressed appreciation for the budget update and wanted more information about how UNHCR approached the rankings for its largest donor countries, as the Netherlands had not featured among the top six hosts or donors despite its announcement to increase unearmarked funding by nearly ten per cent in March 2023. In light of the importance of unearmarked funding, he hoped that that step would be lauded and called on others to join in the Netherlands' efforts. He concluded by expressing a desire for the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023 to act as a platform for getting other nations to get involved.

146. The representative of **France** thanked UNHCR for the updated information on the budget and funding for 2022 and 2023, and applauded the Office's quick responses to assisting individuals affected by emergencies as they arose. France's full support was underlined through the increases to its financial contributions in 2021 and 2022 as part of the President's commitment to dedicating 500 million euros per year to international solidarity.

147. The representative of **Pakistan** appreciated the Office's work to mobilize resources in order to meet growing humanitarian needs and welcomed its consistent efforts to expand donor partnerships. His country had, however, experienced a huge gap between the resources available and the needs on the ground. While he commended donors who had increased their flexible and unearmarked funding to UNHCR, he encouraged all donors to make generous and unearmarked contributions to equip the agency with the appropriate resources to respond to emergencies. Reliance on earmarked contributions was not a suitable solution, with lives put at risk and response needs complicated as a result delays or the extra time required to obtain additional funding.

148. The Pakistani delegation welcomed the supplementary budget of \$55.8 million to respond to emergency flooding, in light of the economic and structural damage caused by the 2022 floods in his country. Despite that, the country maintained its commitment to assist over 1.4 million displaced Afghan refugees and almost an equal number of irregular migrants, and to ensure that they could access local services. He appealed to donors and partners to continue donating generously in order to assist refugee populations in the spirit of international solidarity and the principle of equitable burden and response.

149. The representative of **Colombia** thanked the Directors for their presentations and was grateful that the country was recognized as the third largest refugee host. She also commended the Director of the Division of External Relations for her visit and hoped that it would duly influence any lasting solutions for displaced individuals, despite the financial constraints being experienced. Like Mexico, the Colombian delegation was concerned about the shortfall in resources allocated to the Americas and hoped to see it plugged in 2023, to ensure that the region would not be left behind. To conclude, she echoed Uganda's desire to see commitments made by donor countries during the Global Refugee Forum in December 2020 and expressed support for the amendment proposed by the African group.

150. The representative of the **Russian Federation** thanked the Secretariat for the report and the budget update, but sought clarifications about the content of annex 5, "Contributions 2023", in the update on budgets and funding. He stated that the Russian Federation was not listed as a donor country within the annex and wanted an explanation. He noted that the country supported the amendment to the draft decision presented by the African group.

151. The representative of **Japan** wanted to thank UNHCR for its financial update and noted that, as of April 2023, it had contributed approximately \$146 million. Underpinning that, the Japanese Government intended to continue cooperating with the agency to ensure that the support from Japanese companies and individuals, which had reached a record high in 2022, would go towards providing sustainable support for displaced persons affected by humanitarian crises around the world. In addition, Japan's new Development Cooperation Charter was incorporating a policy of providing quality and flexible funding when necessary.

152. The representative of **Denmark** said that, with regard to the budget, the decline in the funding received in 2023 compared to the same point in time in 2022 was very worrying. Denmark was fully committed to the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees, to international burden- and responsibility-sharing, and global solidarity. For a number of years, Denmark had been among the top 10 largest government donors to UNHCR, and in 2022, Denmark had been the seventh-largest government donor, providing more than \$100 million in funding. The majority of its funding was unearmarked or flexible, as it was critical for UNHCR to be able to respond quickly and efficiently to new emergencies and crises, and allowed the Office to prioritize where needs were highest. Unearmarked and flexible funding was more urgently needed than ever, given the extraordinary forced displacement crisis. She therefore called on all donors to provide more unearmarked and flexible funding. The current budgetary outlook also underlined the need for continued efforts to broaden the donor base. All contributions, large or small, made a difference. The Global Refugee Forum in December 2023 would be a platform for all to enhance engagement and strengthen partnerships, not least with development actors.

153. The **Director of the Division of Strategic Planning and Results**, in response to claims of budget shortfalls and insufficient allocations for areas of need, said that there had always been a correlation between the numbers of person of concern to UNHCR and the budget allocated, and that was also the case in 2022.

154. In response to points about flexible and multi-year funding, she stressed that such funding was making a vital contribution to ensuring that UNHCR could respond to emergencies and advocate for solutions. In particular, multi-year funding had helped refugees and other displaced persons to rebuild their lives in their host countries. In 2022 and 2023, the agency used flexible unearmarked funding in response to emergencies.

155. Responding to Ethiopia's queries about how UNHCR was planning to respond to the influx of refugees and displaced persons from Somalia and the Sudan, she explained that the agency was coordinating a number of partners in order to provide assistance, on top of its provisions of shelter, water and other services to families, as well as increased funding since the start of 2023.

156. Answering questions about the high carry-over, she noted that it stood at 10 per cent for 2022, which was not unusual compared to recent trends. That figure reflected the significant amount

of funding raised and the large proportion raised late in the year due to winterization appeals, which was hugely appreciated and played a valuable role in providing essential assistance during a period of enormous need.

157. In response to the question from the Russian Federation, she answered that the report had a cut-off date, meaning that the information on the country might not have been in the Office's system when the report had been generated, and assured him that it would be updated for the next Standing Committee.

158. The **Director of the Division of External Relations** substantiated that response to the Russian Federation's question and explained that its contribution had been acknowledged in the 2022 report. She offered to show it to its representative following the meeting. She reiterated the Office's gratitude to the providers of flexible funding, stating that it was "like gold" and listed the sixth to twelfth largest donors, namely the Netherlands, France, the private donors of Spain, Japan, the United Kingdom, Canada and Switzerland.

159. The Vice-Chairperson thanked the Directors for their answers and moved to the budget and funding decision. He proposed adopting the draft decision in annex VII of conference room paper 16. Prior to this decision, the Uganda requested to take the floor on behalf of the African group.

160. The representative of **Uganda on behalf of the African group** briefed the room that the African group had proposed adding the following minor language to the draft budget decision: "with flexible and unarmarked contributions". She noted that the perception of flexible funding being "like gold" had made them think of the Office's core role of saving lives and responding flexibility, which had motivated it to table the amendment. Many colleagues and partner donors in national statements had supported flexible and unarmarked contributions, and the group therefore felt that such a consensus should be adopted in a collectively adopted decision. While stating that the African group respected its partners and their sovereignty, she stressed that such urgent language should already be enshrined in UNHCR documents. Nonetheless, the African group withdrew the amendment for the purposes of just consensus, so that colleagues who believed that they needed to consult with their capitals further could be given more time. The language would be retabled for the next Standing Committee meeting and Executive Committee session.

161. The representative of the **United States of America**, in response, thanked Uganda and the African group for their proposal. He reiterated the country's endorsement of unarmarked contributions and agreed strongly with the principle discussed, explaining that its concerns were rooted in the issues of timing and process. His delegation appreciated the flexibility that the process involved and looked forward to working with the African group in preparation for the next Standing Committee meeting and Executive Committee session to ensure that those principles could be reflected clearly.

162. The **Vice-Chairperson** announced that the decision on budgets and funding for 2022 and 2023 contained in conference room paper 16 had been adopted, taking note of the final budget for 2022 and the current budget for 2023, including supplementary budgets established to 30 April 2023.

163. The delegation of **Algeria** wished to have more time to reflect on that decision, but this request was refused as the gavel in the Vice-Chair's hand had fallen when the delegation requested to take the floor.

*The meeting rose at 6.12 p.m.*