

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

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Summary record,* Thursday, 15 June 2023, at 10:06 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Kadra Ahmed Hassan (Djibouti)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.06 a.m.

2. International protection (resumed)

b. Statelessness (including an update on the #Ibelong campaign) (resumed)

1. The representative of **Brazil** said that statelessness remained a significant challenge in many parts of the world. Almost ten years after the launch of the #Ibelong campaign, international efforts must be renewed to address the legal and policy gaps that deprived millions of people of a nationality. The Constitution of Brazil had been amended in 2007 to enable all children of Brazilian citizens born abroad to become Brazilian citizens. In 2017, Brazil's migration law had streamlined procedures to determine the status of stateless persons and facilitated their naturalization after only two years of residence. Brazil endorsed the recommendation in the UNHCR report to improve quantitative and qualitative data on stateless populations, and to strengthen the provision of technical cooperation to countries seeking to update their legislation in order to prevent and reduce statelessness. As a member of the group of friends of the #Ibelong campaign, Brazil was ready to work with UNHCR on a global alliance to end statelessness, which represented a new step towards universal access to human rights.

2. The representative of **Sierra Leone** said that Sierra Leone was committed to protecting stateless persons, and it had been one of the champion countries that had acceded to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (1954 Convention) and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (1961 Convention). Sierra Leone had made considerable strides in fulfilling its commitment to eradicate statelessness by launching a national action plan; undertaking national laws and civil legislation reforms; and establishing a dedicated office to promote a holistic response. It had reformed its nationality laws to allow women to confer their nationality to their children, thereby putting an end to gender discrimination in nationality laws. The Government had provided birth certificates for concerned individuals and remained committed to ending statelessness by 2024.

3. The representative of **Iran (Islamic Republic of)** said that his country had taken significant steps towards the prevention and reduction of statelessness, including the adoption of new nationality legislation that would allow children born to an Iranian mother and a non-Iranian father to acquire Iranian nationality. Individuals aged 18 years or more with an Iranian mother could make their own application for citizenship. The new laws allowed persons without a nationality to apply for Iranian citizenship once they had reached the age of 18, provided that one of their parents was born in Iran (Islamic Republic). Since introduction of the legislation, approximately 100,000 applications had been received, 30,000 of which had already been processed. There were significant challenges due to the continuous irregular movement and immigration, lack of primary documents for non-Iranian fathers, limited financial resources, the need for additional security checks and the significant administrative burden placed on local authorities addressing the plight of refugees and undocumented foreign nationals. Despite those challenges, the Islamic Republic of Iran had been making its best efforts to address statelessness, which it expected would be recognized and supported by the international community through the principle of fulfilment of burden- and responsibility-sharing.

4. The representative of the **International Council of Voluntary Agencies, speaking on behalf of non-governmental organizations (NGOs)**, said that her statement was delivered on behalf of a wide range of NGOs, including community-led groups impacted by statelessness and discriminatory nationality laws, who must be able to participate in UNHCR and state-led decision-making and be consulted on the rights of stateless communities. Global human rights violations continued to expand, devastating the fundamental rights and protection of individuals and communities. She urged UNHCR and States to support new opportunities to address those violations at the international level.

5. Recalling the High Commissioner's 2022 Dialogue on Protection Challenges on the theme of development cooperation to advance protection, inclusion, and solutions for forcibly displaced and stateless persons as well as host communities, she stressed that development cooperation had the potential to respond to situations involving displaced and stateless persons and urged the High Commissioner to prioritize that important topic. With the #Ibelong campaign due to conclude in 2024 and the considerable work needed to continue to achieve its goals of eradicating statelessness, it was encouraging that the Global Alliance to End Statelessness would provide an ongoing platform to support the implementation of initiatives planned until 2030; she urged UNHCR and donor States to fully support it. She acknowledged the support provided by the friends of the #Ibelong campaign and urged their continued work on addressing statelessness.

6. She welcomed the commitments made on the previous day by States and other stakeholders at the Global Summit on Gender Equality in Nationality Laws, particularly those on reforming nationality laws to uphold gender equality. She urged States with gender discriminatory nationality laws to take urgent action to uphold citizens' equal right to confer nationality on their children and spouse, and to acquire, change and retain their nationality without discrimination on the basis of gender or other protected grounds.

7. The Global Refugee Forum 2023 would help to prepare for the launch of the Global Alliance and demonstrate how the multi-stakeholder and partnership approach contributed towards the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees through instigating and integrating new pledges by States as well as joint and matched pledges to address statelessness. The Forum would also provide an opportunity to review progress with existing statelessness pledges and encourage their swift implementation. She welcomed the inclusion of civil society in the Forum and urged that it be further facilitated. Statelessness should be included as a priority area on the agenda, and actors should be encouraged to increase efforts to mainstream the priorities of stateless people and to strengthen systems for their identification and protection. She called on States to pledge to address the underlying causes of statelessness, including discriminatory nationality laws and to ensure that the rights of stateless people were addressed on their territory. Stateless persons and refugees must be central to discussions at the Forum and included as experts, speakers and attendees, with logistical efforts made for their participation. A diversity of views, including those of stateless women, girls and members of the LGBTQIA+ community should be solicited.

8. There was a pressing need to mainstream priorities more effectively to protect stateless people, and prevent statelessness to support and complement the launch of the Global Alliance to Eradicate Statelessness. Further to the joint civil society submission to the International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics global consultation process, she urged that statistics on statelessness should be more coordinated with civil society groups and that the adoption of the International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics should be delayed, pending further consultation with stateless-led organizations. She further requested clarification on the impact of the International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics on the Office's statistical reporting.

9. The **Director of the Division of International Protection** (UNHCR), replying to comments, expressed gratitude for the broad support for the Office's work to prevent and reduce statelessness, and to identify and protect stateless persons. She acknowledged the efforts of many States to address statelessness, including law reforms to prevent statelessness and measures to advance solutions for stateless persons. She thanked delegations who had taken the floor to highlight the progress made by their countries, including the adoption of national action plans. She acknowledged the diplomatic efforts made by many countries and the funding provided for statelessness work. UNHCR expressed sincere appreciation for the continued support of Member States and civil society through the friends of the #Ibelong campaign, which had been instrumental in supporting work on statelessness, and through a forum for exchanging information and good practices. It was encouraging to hear the support expressed by delegations for the new Global Alliance to End Statelessness, a multi-stakeholder platform representing a new phase in the Office's efforts to accelerate the prevention and eradication of statelessness and the appreciation expressed for the International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics. It would be important to see countries use the framework in upcoming censuses and to support the dissemination of International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics in order to address the data gaps for statelessness.

10. She had noted the wide support for making stronger linkages between statelessness and development, the socioeconomic impact of statelessness and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. She thanked States for having highlighted the link between gender equality and statelessness, a theme addressed in the Global Summit on Gender Equality in Nationality Laws, which had celebrated achievements and called for action on gender discrimination, including in the 24 countries where women could not confer nationality to their children on an equal basis with men, thereby creating a risk for childhood statelessness. In response to the question from the Philippines, a final event for the #Ibelong campaign was planned for the end of 2024 when the Global Alliance would be launched. UNHCR stood ready to support Governments in further accelerating progress on addressing statelessness and looked forward to further commitments on statelessness at the Global Refugee Forum at the end of 2023. Many States had recognized that statelessness was solvable and that the international community must come together to end it and its far-reaching consequences for individuals and families.

c. Oral update on ExCom conclusion(s)

11. **The ExCom Rapporteur** said that the Executive Committee had begun its deliberations earlier that year on the general understanding that the Rapporteur would develop a multi-year workplan, providing indicative topics for conclusions, since the previous workplan adopted at the seventy-first plenary session had been implemented, and a new workplan was required. Furthermore, due to the preparatory work for the second Global Refugee Forum in December 2023, negotiating the text of a new conclusion in addition to negotiations on a workplan would be too ambitious. In order to begin development of the workplan, the Rapporteur had held multiple bilateral discussions with delegations with the aim to understand Member States' priorities concerning the work of UNHCR and their aspirations for the multi-year plan. Based on those discussions, the Rapporteur had proposed five areas that could be of relevance to the membership, with due consideration given to balanced themes that cut across both protection and solutions. The five proposed themes were: durable solutions; education; persons with disabilities; climate change; and the impact of hosting.

12. A background paper had been developed to provide more information and to assist delegations in reflection and discussion on proposed themes with a view to drafting a multi-year plan. The background paper had been discussed at the first informal preparatory consultation on 20 March 2023. Member States had concurred that all five topics were important and had expressed openness to developing a three-year workplan as a good basis for a more predictable Executive Committee conclusion process, also noting that it would allow for timely and smooth preparation for the Global Refugee Forum, which would be held every fourth year.

13. Member States had been invited to discuss the draft workplan at a second consultation on 9 May 2023 at which broad support had been voiced for durable solutions and education. There was no opposition to the other themes although divergent views were noted on prioritizing one theme over another. After the second consultation meeting, multiple bilateral meetings were held with the Rapporteur, and a revised multi-year workplan was subsequently drafted and circulated for discussion at the third informal preparatory consultation on 25 May 2023.

14. A clear understanding of priorities, differences and concerns was evident at the third meeting at which a breakthrough was achieved and agreement reached on the final text of the draft workplan. In the final text, Member States had agreed to consider and develop an Executive Committee conclusion on: durable solutions and complementary pathways in 2024; climate action as relevant to UNHCR activities in 2025; and education in 2026. In addition, agreement had been reached on a technical update on the conclusion on refugees with disabilities and other persons with disabilities protected and assisted by UNHCR No. 110 (LXI) 2010. Furthermore, Member States had noted the impact of hosting to be addressed in conclusions as a cross-cutting issue from 2024. All three of the topics chosen were relatively new, and the Executive Committee had never pronounced itself on a conclusion on complementary pathways or climate action as relevant to UNHCR activities. It had yet to address education as a standalone topic. The draft workplan was due for adoption at the seventy-fourth plenary session of the Executive Committee in October 2023. He thanked Member States for their active participation in constructive discussions and for their spirit of consensus and cooperation.

15. The representative of **Iran (Islamic Republic of)** said that he sincerely appreciated all of the efforts made by the Rapporteur in developing a balanced multi-year workplan. During the informal consultations, the Islamic Republic of Iran had reiterated the necessity of adopting a balanced approach between durable solutions and protection. The Islamic Republic of Iran had also emphasized the need for UNHCR to focus on the main issues of its work and mandate, highlighting the importance of measuring the impact of hosting as a crucial element for fulfilling burden- and responsibility-sharing. With the consideration of those facts, Iran supported the decision draft multi-year workplan.

16. The representative of the **Philippines** thanked the Rapporteur for his determination to achieve consensus on the priorities of the Executive Committee conclusions. He recognized that the three thematic areas were important concerns for all stakeholders and were part of the work already being done by UNHCR. The value added of conclusions should be to guide prioritization in the operations and programmes of the organization and should be practical, feasible and inclusive. It was encouraging that there was agreement to update the conclusion on refugees with disabilities and other persons with disabilities protected and assisted by UNHCR. The shared aspiration of UNHCR was to uphold humanity and human dignity, with the related theme of how to respond to challenges

faced by all sectors of society, including persons with disabilities. The Philippines endorsed the continued attention given to the impact of hosting refugees in the upcoming workplan and in other relevant work of UNHCR.

17. The representative of **Mexico** thanked the Rapporteur for his efforts in developing in a multi-year plan through open and transparent consultations. The conclusions were an important tool to bolster protection for refugees and promote the achievement of durable solutions. The discussions held in informal consultation had been relevant and represented a balance of priorities that reflected the UNHCR mandate. Mexico stood ready to adopt the new multi-year plan and encouraged other Member States to do so in a spirit of consensus.

18. The representative of **Egypt** welcomed the multi-year workplan and the constructive consultation process in which it had been drafted. She commended the concerted efforts of the Rapporteur to reach consensus. The upcoming workplan should reflect and build on key outcomes of the Global Refugee Forum and advise on issues that would lead to the effective achievement and implementation of responsibility-sharing. In addressing durable solutions and complementary pathways, climate change and education, the workplan struck the right balance between addressing the root causes of displacement, protection and finding solutions. It was hoped that those topics would also make cross-cutting references to other equally important issues that were suggested during the negotiations, such as measuring the ongoing impact of hosting and protecting refugees.

Statement made in exercise of the right of reply

19. The representative of the **Russian Federation** said that he was compelled to take the floor in connection with a number of statements which had made unfounded accusations against the Russian Federation. Politicized statements did not facilitate a constructive discussion of humanitarian issues. The Russian Federation could not stand by given the plight of the Russian-speaking citizens of Donbas who were discriminated against by Kiev. The Russian Federation had been obliged to protect people in Luhansk, Donetsk and other regions, and it had become a hosting country for over 5 million people who had entered voluntarily from those regions.

3. Regional activities and global programmes

a. Solutions

20. The **Director of the Division of Resilience and Solutions** (UNHCR) said that the conference room paper on solutions (EC/74/SC/CRP/13) was structured differently from those of previous years: it approached solutions more comprehensively and holistically, with attention paid to solutions for internally displaced persons. It highlighted collective efforts to support conditions for return in safety and dignity for sustainable reintegration. It also emphasized the importance of building resilience in displacement response in order to better prepare displaced communities for durable solutions.

21. In recent years, refugee return rates had significantly declined, with nearly 340,000 refugees returned in 2022. Some 5.7 million internally displaced persons had been willing to return to their places of origin. There was a worrying trend whereby displacement was not only on the rise, but becoming increasingly protracted. Ongoing and recurring conflicts, limited services and livelihoods, as well as a failure to redress housing, land, property and climate-related challenges were all impacting access to sustainable return. The conflict in the Sudan had led to the displacement of a significant number of people both internally and across borders, undermining the efforts of the international community to drive forward sustainable solutions.

22. Despite significant challenges, some progress had been made, such as the cessation of refugee status for Ivorian refugees and the return of approximately 96 per cent, concluding one of the most protracted refugee situations in West Africa. In collaboration with stakeholders, UNHCR had facilitated the voluntary repatriation of over 207,000 Burundian refugees since 2017. Over 354,000 Syrian refugees had returned between 2016 and 2022 in a self-organized manner. In countries such as Ethiopia and Ukraine, UNHCR continued to promote durable solutions and the appointment of the United Nations Secretary General's Special Advisor on Solutions to Internal Displacement brought new impetus to the drive for resolving internal displacement.

23. In South Sudan, UNHCR and partners had scaled up area-based approaches such as the "pockets of hope", which focused on enhancing living conditions and access to services in communities. In Afghanistan, given the profound displacement challenges faced, UNHCR and partners had improved access to services including health, education and livelihood opportunities for 3.2 million Afghans in some 80 priority areas of return and reintegration. Regional approaches

also continued to play a pivotal role through support platforms such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the solutions strategy for Afghan refugees and the comprehensive regional protection and solutions framework, known by its Spanish acronym MIRPS, in Central America and Mexico.

24. The Office's efforts to build resilience and promote inclusion had gained momentum through strategic partnerships with government and development actors. Colombia's efforts to build resilience and promote inclusion, particularly in the context of hosting Venezuelan refugees and migrants, was commendable. The tangible benefits of hosting extended beyond refugees to the host communities. In Uganda, collaboration between the Government, UNHCR and the World Bank had successfully transitioned from parallel humanitarian systems to national education, health and water systems. The joined-up approach ensured that refugees had access to wider resources and empowered them to rebuild their lives. The Office's successful support to Mexico's local integration programme had ensured the relocation of thousands of refugees, enhanced their well-being and substantially contributed to national tax revenue. In Brazil, integrated efforts had resulted in improved access to jobs, housing and education for relocated Venezuelans. Poland's inclusive approach granted essential documentation to Ukrainian refugees, providing them with access to health care, social benefits and education. Argentina's Cities of Solidarity and Community Sponsorship Initiative stood as shining examples of community-based approaches to promote the inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers.

25. Coexistence and social cohesion were vital for the harmonious inclusion and integration of displaced populations. Kenya's recognition of the Pemba people as an ethnic community had resolved their stateless status, granting them equal rights to essential services. Additionally, the transformative plan of Kenya based on the implementation of the Refugee Act 2021 represented a significant advancement in inclusive and sustainable solutions. Inclusion policies were fundamental to fostering an advance in protection.

26. Regarding third-country solutions for refugees, the vision was ambitious and compelling: to provide life-changing opportunities for over 3 million refugees to access resettlement, complementary pathways and family reunification by 2030. The effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic as well as the conflicts in Afghanistan and Ukraine had strained resources and impacted resettlement efforts. Despite those challenges, over 57,000 refugees had found homes in 20 different countries with the largest receiving countries, the United States of America, Canada, Germany, Sweden and France, exemplifying true leadership by offering a safe refuge to those in need. Resettlement places, in particular for emergency resettlement for medical cases, were becoming harder to secure, even though they had been at the core of protection solidarity since the inception of UNHCR. UNHCR was also engaged with a global task force on refugee labour mobility and third country education pathways, which sought to remove barriers and create equal opportunities for qualified refugees. UNHCR had collaborated on education-focused programmes in Belgium, France and Ireland to enable refugees to access quality education.

27. Complementary pathways needed to grow through the lifting of obstacles to safe movement of refugees, most particularly through the issuance and acceptance of machine-readable travel documents. Family reunification was also a cornerstone of preserving the bonds that connected people. The Family Reunification Network had enhanced cooperation between States and partners in developing responses to the crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine. In 2022, there had been several successful examples of collaborative action from governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector to promote and support solutions for displaced and stateless populations. Those efforts had yielded positive outcomes and demonstrated the power of working together towards solutions. However, as the scale and complexity of displacement continued to increase, there was a need for an amplified and expanded approach to promote greater responsibility-sharing. As UNHCR and Member States looked forward to the second Global Refugee Forum in December 2023, it was imperative to seize the opportunity to prioritize work towards lasting solutions, and to foster cooperation, dialogue and innovative approaches that would ensure protection and solutions for all those affected by displacement and statelessness.

28. The representative of **Jordan, speaking on behalf of the Arab group**, expressed appreciation for the efforts made by UNHCR and Member States to find solutions for internally displaced persons and refugees since submission of the paper on solutions in June 2022. The Arab group was concerned, however, that only 6 per cent forcibly displaced persons – and 1 per cent of refugees – had been able to return home, owing to a number of cross-cutting reasons including security challenges, compounded by the effects of climate change. It was necessary to find solutions

to the obstacles blocking returns, by reaching political solutions to crises and fostering an environment conducive to the voluntary repatriation of refugees.

29. The Arab group supported UNHCR and its partners in its current pathway that promoted plans for preparedness and planning for repatriation, guided by the strategy for protection, comprehensive solutions and the Global Compact on Refugees, and reiterated the importance of the second Global Refugee Forum in December 2023 in finding durable solutions to the refugee crisis.

30. It was important that the pledges made in that Forum should cover the four goals of the Global Compact in an equitable and balanced manner, in particular the goal to provide an environment conducive to increasing the voluntary repatriation of refugees. The Group called for pledges to increase the repatriation of refugees, mobilize efforts and resources for the voluntary repatriation of refugees, and address the root causes of the refugee crisis, taking into account the need for equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing. Predictable, flexible and multi-year financing was also required.

31. The Arab group also expressed concern over the increased burden placed on host countries in the region, which assumed their humanitarian role towards refugees and provided all services, including in health care and education and the provision of work permits, despite their meagre resources and economic difficulties. Those difficulties were compounded by a decline in international support for refugees, and a reduced programme implemented by the United Nations in the region. Host countries could not bear that burden alone – it was a common international responsibility. The current situation required intensification of efforts to mobilize infrastructure and resources to facilitate voluntary repatriation as soon as possible. That was the only way to address the refugee crisis, and the Arab group reiterated the need to continue to provide support to host countries.

32. It was necessary to address sustainable solutions in a more balanced manner, especially in view of the continued attempts to reintegrate refugees without a comprehensive vision that incorporated the concerns of host countries. The Arab group believed that the best solution could be achieved by addressing the root causes of the refugee crisis and enabling refugees to voluntarily return to their homes and countries of origin.

33. The representative of the **Congo (Republic of), speaking on behalf of the African group**, congratulated UNHCR on the progress made in its efforts to save lives and protect the rights of refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons worldwide – while acknowledging the many obstacles faced by the Office in fulfilling its mandate – and paid tribute to UNHCR staff members who had lost their lives in the course of their work. It was important to note, in the search for durable solutions, that the situation of each refugee and internally displaced person was unique and that solutions must be adapted to the specific circumstances of a country or region. Providing assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa was complex and required a global, coordinated approach.

34. In Africa, the number of refugees and internally displaced persons continued to rise owing to a number of factors – including armed conflict, humanitarian crises and natural disasters – thereby severely stretching resources and assistance capacities. It was difficult to provide a proper response to the ever-increasing humanitarian aid requirements, including food, water, shelter, medical care, protection and safety. The African group strongly encouraged UNHCR and other humanitarian actors to step up their advocacy efforts to draw the international community's attention to the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa. Mobilization of financial and practical resources should continue to be at the heart of the search for appropriate solutions.

35. UNHCR and its partners were also encouraged to continue their capacity-building efforts vis-à-vis host country governments in Africa, in order to better protect and provide humanitarian assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons. Creating economic opportunities for refugees and internally displaced persons – for example through economic development programmes, employment initiatives and public-private partnerships – could increase their autonomy and help them rebuild their lives. Host communities should be included in those programmes. Measures already taken or planned to improve the living conditions of refugees and internally displaced persons should not preclude the option of voluntary repatriation as a durable solution, when the necessary conditions existed in the country of origin.

36. The African group urged UNHCR to continue to play its important role in the prevention and resolution of armed conflict alongside that of specialized actors and institutions, and to use its voice to advocate for peace, the peaceful resolution of armed conflicts and the search for solutions

negotiated in compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law. In that regard, the African Group supported the Office's collaboration with regional organizations in Africa to strengthen regional cooperation in seeking solutions for those requiring protection.

37. The African group drew the international community's attention to the resettlement of refugees living in Africa. Resettlement continued to be a vital protection tool for refugees faced with extreme vulnerability in asylum countries. It was also a way for other States to prove their commitment to sharing responsibility for international protection. The African group therefore supported the Office's call for States to make dependable multi-annual commitments in the area of resettlement, accelerating departure procedures and formalities, as well as strengthening in a sustainable manner their processing capacity and hosting structures.

38. The African group looked forward to the commitments that would be made at the second Global Refugee Forum in December 2023, in line with the Global Compact on Refugees, to reduce the burden on host countries, help refugees and internally displaced persons become more autonomous, improve access to third-country solutions and improve conditions in countries of origin so that refugees could enjoy safe and dignified returns.

39. The representative of the **United States of America** said that as the number of refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless people grew, finding durable solutions must remain the Office's driving goal. The Office's commitment and progress in that area was essential, as was its recognition that humanitarians alone could not solve the causes or impacts of forced displacement. He appreciated the Office's collaborative approach to returns where possible and its focus on improving individuals' long-term situations, citing the model of cooperation between UNHCR and the Government of Burundi as one to be considered when conditions were sufficiently safe to allow voluntary repatriation. Reintegration into national social protection schemes, re-establishing livelihoods and rebuilding communities called for a comprehensive and collaborative approach that extended beyond humanitarian actors.

40. The United States was doing its part to expand durable solutions through refugee resettlement. While it had prioritized rebuilding and strengthening its refugee admissions programme, it had introduced a new private sponsorship programme to allow its nationals across the country to directly sponsor refugees arriving through the refugee resettlement programme, thereby applying a more creative lens to protection, both domestically and overseas.

41. He welcomed the UNHCR paper on statelessness and expressed the hope that stateless persons would be similarly incorporated across papers and briefings in the future. Preventing and resolving statelessness was one clear, achievable way of directly contributing to durable solutions. The ground-breaking example of Kenya's formal recognition of the Pemba people, thereby resolving their stateless status, constituted an excellent example of how efforts to resolve statelessness directly provided durable solutions to those in need.

42. It was also necessary to look beyond durable solutions, and he urged Member States to leverage the Office's expertise on intensifying the development of temporary protective measures and complementary pathways, citing as an example the Office's work with the private sector to recognize companies hiring refugees in places such as Ecuador and Costa Rica, which could pave the way for increased employment opportunities for more refugees, both in those countries and globally. Taking action on global commitments on temporary protective measures should be a top priority.

43. He expressed appreciation to UNHCR for its leadership in exploring solutions. It was clear that new innovative approaches to meet the needs of the large numbers of stateless and forcibly displaced persons were urgently needed. The United States was ready to work together to translate those ideas into action.

44. The representative of **the Sudan** commended the Office's tireless efforts to protect and provide durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons, whose numbers continued to grow as a result of conflict, climate change and other factors. He expressed concern that only 6 per cent of the total number of forcibly displaced persons were able to return to their countries of origin. The UNHCR report on solutions referred to the durable solutions initiative for refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees and host communities in the Sudan and South Sudan as an example of the engagement of UNHCR with situations in countries of origin. He appreciated the Office's support and confirmed that the Sudan had been active in engaging in all phases of the initiatives from the very beginning. Several steps had been taken in that regard, including the adoption of a national strategy. Safe and dignified repatriation to their countries of origin remained

a dream for many forcibly displaced persons. To make their dreams a reality, it was essential for humanitarian and development institutions and the States concerned to put in place developmental projects to ensure safe and dignified returns. In that regard, the Sudan encouraged the Office's continued engagement with international financial institutions to establish and sustain such projects. He thanked UNHCR for its positive engagement with some countries with regard to expanding third-country solutions, including resettlement and complementary pathways. Similarly, he appreciated and commended those countries that were facilitating such solutions to protect refugees and provide new lives for them. He encouraged UNHCR to continue those efforts and to expedite and expand that process so that its vision and roadmap for 2030 on resettlement and complementary pathways could be fully achieved.

45. The representative of **Australia**, noting that voluntary repatriation was the solution most favoured by refugees, which must drive collective efforts across the humanitarian-peace-development nexus to address both the root causes of displacement and create the conditions conducive to repatriation, thanked UNHCR for highlighting in the paper under discussion some clear illustrations of constructive activity over the last year in that regard, as well as illustrations of success in building resilience and inclusion. Equally however, third-country solutions were crucial and were a clear demonstration of burden- and responsibility-sharing.

46. As displacement situations around the world increased in scope, scale and complexity, Australia was committed to leading the search for sustainable global solutions, including through growing its traditional refugee resettlement programme and building innovative complementary pathways. Australia recognized resettlement as a critical protection tool. Since the end of the Second World War, Australia had successfully settled more than 950,000 refugees and others in humanitarian need, and valued the contribution that refugees had provided and continued to provide to Australia through their skills, talents and diverse cultural vibrancy.

47. In the current programme year, Australia would provide permanent resettlement for 17,875 people most in need of protection, offering them the settlement support they needed to be well protected and to succeed in their new lives. The Australian Government aspired to grow the humanitarian intake over the coming years. Australia was also championing new approaches to complementary pathways for refugees and displaced persons, through innovative community sponsorship models, labour pathways and family reunion opportunities.

48. Under a pilot programme, Australia was providing labour pathways for those in need and in turn, gained highly sought after skills that boosted the country's economy. The programme had provided proof of concept for the successful creation of refugee labour mobility pathways, paving the way for other States to tap into new sources of talent while providing an opportunity for refugees and displaced persons to move safely to a third country and rebuild their lives. Australia stood ready to support other States developing their own labour mobility pathways.

49. Australia remained committed to enhancing community sponsorship pathways to support its refugee intake and to working with the national education sector to explore the possibility of complementary education pathways. For all those pathways to be successful, Australia needed host States to facilitate the lawful departure of refugees to Australia.

50. In addition, host States and resettlement States needed to issue refugees with a machine-readable travel document to allow them to move without the risk of refoulement, and all States needed to accept those travel documents at their borders. Through such measures, refugees would be provided with a greater opportunity to rebuild their lives.

51. The representative of **Ecuador** was grateful for the efforts on the part of UNHCR and the international community to seek lasting appropriate solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons, particularly regarding implementation of the 2030 road map of solutions for refugees in third countries, with the goal of facilitating safe access for up to 2 million refugees to complementary pathways. He believed that such initiatives helped to bolster the commitment of all actors in that field and to strengthen the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees. Further, he highlighted that since 2022, UNHCR, the Global Compact on Refugees, Red Ecuador and the Beyond Borders programme at the Inter-American Development Bank had granted the "inclusive business stamp" to 60 businesses in Ecuador to acknowledge their efforts in integrating refugees and migrants through job opportunities and training.

52. It was essential that UNHCR continue to work and, as in Ecuador, to promote normative frameworks that allowed formal access for refugees to financial services and to be granted loans for entrepreneurship in cooperation with international financial institutions. It was also important to

address cooperation for development during the period of displacement in order to foster international protection and lasting solutions for persons of concern to UNHCR as well as to provide support to host communities.

53. To that end, strengthening and consolidating partnerships with various actors in the field of cooperation for development was a valuable resource for States to generate and implement projects that facilitated inclusion, bolstered resilience and strengthened the capacity of refugees and host communities. As such, as part of the upcoming Global Refugee Forum it was essential to incentivize quality, high-impact commitments and promote cooperation and strategic alliances in which governments, development agencies, and international financial institutions in the private sector worked together to come up with specific commitments in line with the principle of burden- and responsibility-sharing.

54. The representative of **Canada** said that in an increasingly complex international landscape, Canada reiterated its steadfast support to UNHCR in addressing critical life-saving protection needs and finding solutions to forced displacement. She commended the efforts of host countries in providing vital access to safe territory and local integration solutions for refugees. Canada welcomed the Office's work on strengthening its partnerships, including with development actors and international financial institutions, to advance durable solutions and address the root causes of forced displacement. That included the Office's heightened efforts to foster collaboration with other United Nations agencies as well as through its crucial role as a technical adviser to the World Bank's global concessional financing facility. As UNHCR expanded on those partnerships, she welcomed the Office's efforts to maximize its comparative advantage as an advocate and facilitator, as outlined in the recently released development engagement strategy. She would be keen to hear how UNHCR would build on its funding from the private sector in 2022 and expand that success to other underfunded crises and access non-traditional finance streams to advance durable solutions, particularly in the face of climate change.

55. At the upcoming Global Refugee Forum, Canada could be counted on to demonstrate its commitment to advancing durable solutions for refugees, including through traditional resettlement and complementary pathways for refugee movement and by supporting the development of community sponsorship programmes through the global refugee sponsorship initiative.

56. The representative of **Egypt** welcomed the efforts made to expand durable solutions and complementary pathways for refugees and asylum-seekers, and stressed the need to address those solutions from a balanced perspective that did not place emphasis on some solutions at the expense of others. While fully committed to hosting refugees and asylum-seekers and to including them in national systems, particularly health and education, Egypt emphasized the need to expand third-country solutions to ease the increasing burden shouldered by governments and hosting communities in the face of insufficient international support. It was important to enhance voluntary repatriation, address the root causes of displacement and enhance development cooperation with countries of origin. She welcomed the expansion of third-country solutions for refugees and the Office's advocacy and progress towards increasing resettlement quotas in 2022, but she also noted with concern the small percentage of refugees and asylum-seekers worldwide that had access to such solutions, as well as the limited quotas for resettlement programmes. That reality was particularly evident in Egypt, where the numbers of resettled refugees stood in stark comparison to the annual number of newly registered refugees. That not only put refugees and asylum-seekers at risk, with increasing trends of onward movements through irregular and dangerous routes, but also had long-term repercussions on hosting communities, equality and sustainability of protection services, as well as on national long-term development plans.

57. She highlighted the critical role of resettlement and complementary pathways as a durable solution and one of the primary tools for burden- and responsibility-sharing with hosting countries. The ongoing crisis in the Sudan and its impact on neighbouring countries highlighted the need to expand solutions opportunities for persons in need of protection in a way that would ease the mounting pressures on hosting communities. She noted with appreciation the reported progress in the areas of return and repatriation in certain countries and highlighted the critical importance of peacebuilding and addressing the root causes of displacement as a means to ensure durable and lasting solutions for refugees.

58. Current developments highlighted the need for more emphasis on the humanitarian-peace-development nexus and a clear focus on addressing the root causes of displacement, while investing in building the stability and resilience of the local community. Egypt was strongly committed to addressing the root causes of the refugee crisis and was a strong contributor to regional and

international efforts in that area, for example working with partners on launching a multi-stakeholder pledge on peacebuilding, conflict prevention and forced displacement to be made at the upcoming Global Refugee Forum, with the aim of placing emphasis on addressing the root causes of displacement.

59. With regard to inclusion, Egypt welcomed the partnership between UNHCR and the World Bank to support low-income refugee-hosting countries, and emphasized the need to provide adequate support to the hosting communities and support institutional capacities in host countries to ensure the sustainability of the services provided. In line with the principle of burden- and responsibility-sharing, excessive financial pressure should not be placed on host countries that were already struggling with debt and economic challenges. She reiterated the need for a balanced approach, durable solutions for refugees and people in need of protection that placed equal emphasis on resettlement and complementary pathways and addressed the root causes of displacement in a manner that enabled safe and voluntary repatriation.

60. The representative of **Uganda** thanked UNHCR for its consistent efforts in seeking solutions; it was unfortunate, however, that the share of the budget allocated to durable solutions was consistently low. One of the four objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees related to durable solutions, third-country access and the ability to improve conditions in countries of origin, which pointed to the solutions of resettlement and voluntary repatriation. For her region, voluntary repatriation was the most reliable solution, since resettlement to third countries had often proved underproductive; while in Uganda, over 4,400 refugees were awaiting resettlement in third countries, it was possible that only 25 per cent would be afforded that solution. Despite the challenges it faced, Uganda was going to prioritize finding solutions to the consistent displacement in the region, and was holding ministerial-level meetings to that end with other countries in the region. Uganda expected to be able to deliver a pledge in that regard at the second General Refugee Forum. She expressed concern at the declining statistics that had been presented – only 340,000 of the 103 million refugees worldwide had been able to return. They were not just statistics: every statistic represented a person's life. While partners were very well intentioned, she urged UNHCR to prioritize solutions in the face of growing humanitarian need and hoped that their budget allocation would be increased accordingly.

61. The representative of **Mexico** said that trying to find durable solutions for refugees was a core part of the work of UNHCR; without solutions, refugees would be left in protracted situations of displacement with limited future prospects. Mexico was focusing on solutions, faced with the mixed migration flows in the region. With regard to migrants that did not enjoy international protection or complementary pathways, Mexico was in favour of repatriation to countries of origin under safe and humane conditions, or work to foster their integration in society. Resettlement to third countries was also an option. Such was the case with Afghan refugees that arrived in 2022, who had been offered pathways to the United States and other destinations. With regard to local integration, Mexico believed in the importance of guaranteeing access to rights and services that allowed refugees to become empowered and self-sufficient, and was therefore promoting strategies to direct refugees to centres that would help facilitate access to the labour market. Mexico carried out that work with UNHCR, local governments and the private sector. In practice, there were options for integration of refugees as well as benefits for the community as a whole through the work they did and the tax they paid.

62. Another area being explored was strengthening cooperation between UNHCR and the Bank of Mexico to facilitate refugees' access to finance. Integration into the labour market and the banking system had opened up opportunities to refugees to have access to basic services such as health care, education, housing – that was a viable pathway to achieve solutions in line with the Global Compact on Refugees. However, as stated by the representatives of Egypt and Uganda, those options would not be sustainable in the future if they were not accompanied by greater efforts to address the causes that compelled people to search for international protection and flee their country of origin.

63. The representative of **Pakistan** expressed concern that even as the number of refugees and internally displaced persons had surpassed 100 million, durable solutions for most of them remained elusive. He regretted that, in 2022, only 1 per cent of refugees had been able to return to their country of origin, and the widening gap between resettlement needs and resettlement departures, which presented a depressing trend of limited global attention on solutions. While host countries continued to shoulder a disproportionate burden of international responsibility for refugees, the failure to meet ambitious targets in the strategy on resettlement and complementary pathways and the lowest

budgetary allocations for durable solutions in the UNHCR budget demonstrated a lack of implementation of the principle of equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing. There had been growing recognition of the role of development actors in driving solutions; however, it was necessary to revisit whether the current modes of support by development actors, including through financing and loans, were commensurate with the objectives of easing the pressure on host countries, many of which were facing constraints, including debt and food insecurity.

64. Pakistan was now in its fifth decade of hosting a protracted Afghan refugee situation and was committed to attaining three objectives with regard to solutions: the creation of conditions conducive to repatriation; building refugee capital to facilitate sustainable repatriation and reintegration; enhanced support for host communities; and resettlement opportunities in third countries. Safe and dignified voluntary repatriation remained the preferred durable solution for the majority of Afghan refugees. Efforts were being made to strengthen partnerships with humanitarian and development actors to achieve solutions for foreign refugees as well as to support host communities. The Government of Pakistan – with a view to building refugee capital and facilitating voluntary repatriation, resettlement and complementary pathways, had provided smart registration cards and foreign citizenship cards, which had addressed the question of statelessness but also facilitated them with regular pathways to re-enter Pakistan, benefiting from flexible long-term visa arrangements. The Government was also working on expanding tertiary education opportunities.

65. The Global Compact on Refugees recognized that the most effective way of achieving durable solutions was by eliminating the root causes and drivers of forced displacement, including through political and security cooperation, diplomacy, development and promotion of human rights. In the run-up to the second Global Refugee Forum, he looked forward to concerted global efforts by all stakeholders to make concrete progress towards achieving the objectives of the Global Compact, prioritizing durable solutions for refugee situations.

66. The representative of **Brazil**, referring to the paper on solutions, expressed appreciation to UNHCR for presenting the second Global Refugee Forum as an opportunity for progress. Regarding third-country solutions, her Government was resuming a resettlement programme originally launched in 2019 as a State-funded initiative to receive a group of refugees from Central America to address the needs at the community level, with the support of private sponsorship; lessons learned from the *Operação Acolhida* (Operation Welcome) strategy, for instance, had served to create the strong network for cooperation to facilitate the success of future initiatives.

67. Her delegation also appreciated that the paper acknowledged Brazil's efforts to facilitate the integration of Venezuelan refugees by enabling them to regularize their status by applying for a residence permit or submitting an asylum, claim and to have full access to public services, including health care and immunization. Her Government's "interiorization strategy" had shown the potential to foster the conditions for local integration by improving living conditions and socioeconomic opportunities for those refugees; more than 100,000 had been relocated, with the support of UNHCR, to more than 900 municipalities where they had continued to benefit from support from federal and local governments, international and civil society organizations and the private sector; more than 50 per cent of those of working age had managed to find a job within three months of their relocation.

68. Regarding complementary pathways, her Government's new humanitarian policy had already benefited a large number of displaced persons from Afghanistan, Haiti, the Syrian Arab Republic and Ukraine by providing a safe and legal route to Brazil and an emergency exit route for critical situations. Her delegation requested that those routes be duly recognized as complementary pathways and reflected as such in future papers.

69. The representative of **Ethiopia**, aligning his delegation with the African group statement delivered by Congo (Republic of) and drawing attention to the fact that Ethiopia was hosting over 1 million refugees and counting, with more arriving by the day owing to the conflicts in the Sudan and Somalia. While the Ethiopian Government and people were fundamentally welcoming to refugees, the increasing pressures on host countries in general meant that this inherent hospitality could no longer be taken for granted. Member States and stakeholders attending the second Global Refugee Forum must take practical steps to move away from the current reality of a few host and donor countries assuming the responsibility to assist refugees. They must strive collectively to ensure that responses were predictable and adequately met the protection needs of refugees, while widening the search for opportunities for durable solutions. The Global Refugee Forum served as a platform for meeting the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees and, as such, the second edition should provide Member States with an opportunity to strengthen their commitment to

addressing the challenges of the refugees and their host communities and bridging the humanitarian-development divide. It should also support easing the burden on host countries, while standing in solidarity with the more than 103 million forcibly displaced persons in the world.

70. The efforts of a large host State such as his to develop complementary pathways, including resettlement and more robust ways to operationalize the principle of burden- and responsibility-sharing, were hindered, however, by a widening funding gap that must be closed.

71. With respect to strengthening refugee inclusion and integration, his Government had launched a call to action for an ambitious programme to equip the Kebribeyah refugee camp and its 16,000 Somali refugees, some of whom had been there for more than 30 years, with the infrastructure and facilities to ensure access to sustainable public services, utilities, housing and livelihoods; the programme road map provided the framework for that work through to the ultimate objective of merging the camp with the nearby town of Kebribeyah. His delegation urged partners to support the initiative, which could be scaled up for refugee inclusion and integration initiatives at the national level.

72. The representative of **Lebanon** drew attention to the risk of the new emergencies and soaring numbers of forcibly displaced persons in the world further protracting existing crises and contributing to a humanitarian meltdown, exposing host countries and communities to overwhelming pressure. UNHCR, which had a pivotal role to play in reversing the trends, needed more financial support to ensure that the significant challenges faced by host countries were properly addressed; failing to do so would aggravate the drivers of displacement, which was a recipe for disaster. Among the basic principles that the Office must abide by in its response, it was important to respect the sovereignty of host countries while working in close collaboration with their Governments; to pay particular attention to the specific context; to take care of vulnerable host communities; and to give equal consideration to all durable solutions, keeping in mind that voluntary returns were the preferred option for both the refugees and their host countries.

73. Lebanon, with displaced persons accounting for 40 per cent of the population, was the biggest refugee-hosting country per capita in the world. Despite having borne the brunt of the Syrian refugee crisis, together with fellow neighbouring countries, for over a decade, it remained committed to providing assistance, protection and relief to the displaced. The promise of equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing, however, had yet to materialize owing to chronic underfunding, and the pressure on Lebanon's infrastructure and vital services had mounted to intolerable levels, impeding social and economic recovery, contributing to a sharp deterioration in living conditions in host communities and enhancing the vulnerability of the displaced. Host countries such as his should not be left to their plight; the longer they were, the more open to abuse their systems would become, tempting individuals no longer entitled to refugee status, for example, to continue to claim the benefits.

74. The Global Refugee Forum was presented as a multilateral platform for the balanced and effective implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees, so the concerns voiced by host countries at the upcoming second edition should be heard and taken into account in assessing the refugee crises for it to achieve its objectives; those countries should not be coerced into passively accepting a situation just because it was complex. His delegation had often felt its concerns and priorities to have been ignored or dismissed, hence its expectations of the Forum in terms of its outcomes were low.

75. Lebanon aligned itself with the Arab group statements under agenda items 2 and 3, respectively delivered by the representatives of Egypt and Jordan, and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation statement, which had been delivered by the representative of Pakistan.

76. The representative of **Switzerland** said that finding and implementing solutions for the 94 per cent of the world's refugees and internally displaced and stateless persons that needed them was crucial to reversing current trends and giving the more than 100 million persons of concern worldwide that UNHCR was mandated to serve some hope for the future. Switzerland therefore welcomed the Office's efforts to diversify its partnerships to include development actors, the private sector and international financial institutions, among others. The conclusions and recommendations of the 2022 High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges on the matter deserved the full attention of UNHCR and its partners, and the participation of actors that had yet to fulfil their potential to contribute in developing the new approaches and mobilizing the resources to implement them was key.

77. The second Global Refugee Forum, which Switzerland was hosting the following December, would be a landmark in the process of consolidating a holistic, solutions-oriented approach to forced displacement situations in the world, and all participants were urged to redouble their efforts to find durable solutions for a maximum number of the world's displaced. The preferred option was a return to their countries or regions of origin, and UNHCR had a crucial role to play in ensuring that it was safe and dignified, for which it could count on Switzerland's unfailing support. As the conditions in those countries and regions rarely conduced to such a return, however, it was important to focus on supporting States of origin, the Office and all its partners in the situations where there was a real chance of a solution. His delegation commended the Office for facilitating the voluntary return of refugees to Burundi, for example, for which Switzerland had provided technical and financial support, with the establishment of a dedicated subwindow for the reintegration of Burundian refugees under the Burundi Multi-Partner Trust Fund. Switzerland also supported the "pockets of hope" pilot project in South Sudan, which had already facilitated thousands of returns, providing livelihoods, tools and agricultural inputs, and which included a major peaceful coexistence component that aligned it perfectly with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development-led regional solutions initiative for the Sudan and South Sudan – another project that enjoyed his country's support.

78. While awaiting a chance to return or have access to a third-country solution, it was essential that displaced persons attain an adequate level of self-sufficiency and contribute, to the best of their abilities, to the proper functioning and prosperity of the host country; being open to creative thinking and taking every opportunity to try new approaches would be of benefit to one and all. His delegation encouraged UNHCR to continue to strive for holistic, coordinated solutions that took into account the needs of the persons of concern and their host communities, in the manner of the multi-year, multi-partner project to find durable solutions for the Somali and Oromia regions of Ethiopia that the Office was implementing in conjunction with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). While that example showed how important it was for UNHCR to work in partnership with others, his delegation wished to know about the impacts of its country-level collaboration with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and work with development actors to facilitate the inclusion of refugees into national systems, and about the Office's efforts to integrate a development approach into its institutional arrangements and programming.

79. The representative of **Finland** said that with global humanitarian funding possibly about to peak while the numbers of displaced persons in the world continued to rise and displacement situations to become increasingly protracted, host countries and communities were shouldering most of the burden, and the sustainability of the humanitarian system's delivery of core services to persons of concern was now in doubt. Given the pressing need to do more in terms of solutions in order to navigate a way through the coming difficulties, the second Global Refugee Forum the following December could not be more timely.

80. In terms of contributing to third-country solutions, Finland, in solidarity with the countries hosting large numbers of refugees and to share their duty of care, remained committed to the role of resettlement State that it had played for the previous 50 years. In receiving 1,500 refugees in 2022, not counting the number of Ukrainians to whom it had granted temporary protection, it had exceeded that year's annual resettlement quota and met the pledge for 2020-2022 made at the first Global Refugee Forum. Now well on the way to filling the 2023 quota of 1,050 resettlements, his Government was working with UNHCR to prioritize urgent cases, especially the most vulnerable and at-risk women, children and families. In view of the importance of ensuring effective integration and social cohesion, a community sponsorship pilot project had been launched in a number of Finnish municipalities the previous January on support for the integration of new arrivals and strengthening the local community's engagement in facilitating their settlement.

81. His delegation expressed immense appreciation to the Office for its tireless efforts to advance solutions, to the other States offering third-country solutions and, above all, to the host States shouldering the biggest burden.

82. The representative of **France**, commending UNHCR for being responsive, in the face of increasing – and increasingly complex – crises, to the needs of the populations, States and host countries affected, and recalling her country's support plan for the Office's actions, drew attention to the fact that France had provided nearly 48 million euros in support of Ukraine since the start of the conflict; 7 million for the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2023; more than 7 million for the countries hosting Sudanese refugees since the start of the current crisis; close to

50 million for Afghan refugees since August 2021; and 7.5 million euros for the populations affected by the earthquakes in Türkiye and the Syrian Arab Republic in February 2022.

83. France further commended UNHCR for its efforts to provide refugees and host countries with durable solutions, with a particular focus on the former's inclusion in the latter's labour markets. France had participated fully in those efforts, introducing mechanisms to facilitate the integration and resettlement of refugees by training them for – and helping them to find – jobs in sectors of the local community where workers were in short supply, on the one hand, and serving as a resettlement State on the other; since 2008, her country had taken in 20,000 refugees from host countries struggling to cope with large numbers of new arrivals.

84. UNHCR was also to be commended for its readiness to work in partnership with other United Nations entities, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which would enable it, within the scope of its mandate, to provide long-term solutions to internal displacement situations and ensure that they were suited to addressing the complexities of contemporary crises and in keeping with the core objectives of the United Nations Secretary-General's Common Agenda which her Government supported. Welcoming the efforts to enhance its synergies with the French Development Agency, France encouraged the Office to continue to build partnerships with development banks and other international financial institutions and ensure that they took into account the situation of refugees and other persons of concern. The Office could count on France's support for the upcoming Global Refugee Forum, of which it was a co-sponsor.

85. The representative of the **United Republic of Tanzania**, aligning her delegation with the Africa group statement delivered by the representative of the Congo (Republic of), expressed appreciation to the High Commissioner and his Office for their outstanding work in providing international protection to refugees and asylum-seekers in the face of an unprecedented increase in the number of forcibly displaced persons in the world. The United Republic of Tanzania also appreciated the UNHCR country office's collaboration in addressing its humanitarian challenges.

86. Forced displacement was common, and the humanitarian system's attempts to address the growing concerns had proved ineffective. The United Republic of Tanzania, which was a host country to more than 264,000 refugees, mostly from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, had received and approved the claims of more than 11,000 Congolese asylum-seekers in the previous three months, and the numbers were growing bigger by the day. Her Government was determined to maintain its open-door policy and meeting its international obligations to offer asylum and protection to those fleeing persecution, and it called for the international community's support in providing the Congolese asylum-seekers, in particular, with much-needed access to shelter and other non-food items. Meanwhile, the Government was concerned about the ongoing cuts to household food rations, which, if they continued, could lead to refugee and host community populations competing for resources, hence threaten their peaceful coexistence; an immediate intervention by the international community was key to ensuring that that did not happen.

87. Regarding the Burundian refugees, her Government had noted the positive developments in terms of the socioeconomic conditions, among other things, in their homeland, which had encouraged the voluntary repatriation and the safe and dignified return of 146,649 refugees since 2017; efforts had been made, together with UNHCR, to increase the returnee support package to \$200 per person, children included; her country, Burundi and UNHCR, at the 23rd meeting of the Tripartite Commission for the Voluntary Repatriation of Burundian Refugees, agreed to move from facilitating to promoting voluntary returns; and her Government continued to advocate for the cessation of refugee status for Burundians in her country, as they no longer had a reason to flee their homes. Funding for refugees would be better spent on housing, hospitals, schools and social amenities for returnees.

88. The Rapporteur was to be commended for the multi-year workplan for 2024-2026, in particular for the proposal to include climate change among the key themes of the draft workplan to be discussed at the next plenary session of the Executive Committee. Her delegation believed it timely to do so, given the severity of the environmental impacts in her country of the deforestation caused by refugees seeking fuel for cooking and building materials for shelters. Climate change issues were now at the top of the global agenda, and her delegation looked forward to their inclusion in that of the upcoming second Global Refugee Forum.

89. On the localization of humanitarian action, which was a Grand Bargain commitment and a subject for discussion at the Forum and in the Executive Committee, moves to implement that agenda in her country had been suppressed by the predominant international humanitarian

organizations, which was regrettable. Her Government therefore demanded that its implementation be allowed to proceed in the hands of, among other options, a consortium of local and international NGOs or subcontractors that were capable of pooling their technical expertise and resources and best placed to deliver, thereby allowing for more impactful, real-time capacity-building, with a focus on maximizing resource use to ensure sustainability.

90. The representative of **Germany** commended UNHCR for its work to find durable solutions for displaced persons and called for a collective effort to advance that work with the political commitment, the tools and the instruments needed to achieve that vital goal. Germany, as one of the world's largest host countries, was working on its own national solutions for the displaced and, as a leading donor of assistance in displacement settings and in line with its commitment to global responsibility-sharing, supporting those of fellow host countries. Its support for local integration and reintegration efforts was focused on, inter alia, inclusion, international education and health care programmes, and the focus of its support for self-reliance work was on employment and housing.

91. His Government took it as established policy to assist the most vulnerable with resettlement programmes and invited others to follow suit. It also provided flexible funding to allow UNHCR to capitalize on unexpected opportunities to advance solutions.

92. The effectiveness of support for durable solutions, especially voluntary, safe and dignified returns, called for the complementarity and coordinated efforts of humanitarian, development and peace actors to deliver quality assistance to displaced persons and their hosts. Germany regarded a triple nexus approach as crucial to its humanitarian response, and it was committed to maintaining its own nexus instruments, such as the special initiative on "displaced persons and host countries". The Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement had made great progress on durable solutions for the internally displaced, and his delegation, expressing appreciation to the Office for its close collaboration, called on all Member States to support that work. The second Global Refugee Forum would be an opportunity to spur the international community on to greater, more innovative efforts to address the shortfall in durable solutions for the ever-increasing numbers of forcibly displaced persons, and Germany was currently preparing new pledges and commitments to that end.

93. The representative of **Jordan**, aligning his delegation with the Arab group statement delivered earlier and expressing appreciation to UNHCR and the international community for their efforts to find solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons, drew attention to the small number of returns to date owing to political instability and security concerns or a lack of basic services in countries of origin, among other things, and to the fact that Jordan continued to host some 1 million Syrian refugees, 10 per cent of whom were living in camps. It continued to provide them with a State education and health care services, while international support for them was dwindling and service delivery by international organizations in the country was on the wane. Jordan was struggling to cope with the mounting burden.

94. The international community had a duty, pursuant to the principle of burden- and responsibility-sharing, to share the burden of host countries, especially those subject to a poverty crisis or food insecurity exacerbated by a decline in funding. With 6.8 million Syrian refugees in need of \$5.8 million in assistance, United Nations entities must step up their support. The protracted crisis in Syria and the disastrous humanitarian, political and security-related consequences for the civilian population throughout the region called for a rational, practical response to address all those consequences through joint action and a step-by-step approach, in line with the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

95. Jordan was co-organizing the second Global Refugee Forum, which it considered key to finding durable solutions and gathering pledges to address, in a balanced and equitable manner, the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees, especially the fourth – support conditions in countries of origin for safe and dignified returns – which had previously received the fewest pledges. Noting little change in the current approach to reintegration, with a lack of alternative options and an overarching, all-embracing vision, his delegation reiterated the need for a new, more balanced approach.

96. The representative of **Angola** said that the development of effective measures in the search for durable solutions, in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals and in observance of human rights, was complementary to effective and holistic international protection, where new responses were needed to different humanitarian emergencies, including climate change. Efforts should be expanded to find solutions to mitigate the effects of the root causes of forced migration in countries of origin, thus easing the burden for host countries. In Angola, a national campaign for

refugees, organized in partnership with UNHCR, was due to be launched soon, representing a concrete response to the challenges relating to the lack of documentation and registration. The process of implementing the clause on ceasing refugee status, which began in 2021, was also continuing. That important step would facilitate access to services for asylum-seekers and refugees, creating the possibility of inclusion in national social programmes. Angola was also continuing to work on preventing the risk of statelessness and had developed a study, in partnership with UNHCR, aiming to resolve the legal gaps, in the framework of the #Ibelong campaign and the implementation of commitments made at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum.

97. The representative of **Japan** said that in order to achieve durable solutions to displacement challenges, the international community needed to take a whole-of-society approach to burden- and responsibility-sharing, involving various actors from the public and private sectors, on the basis of the principles of the Global Compact. The situation in Afghanistan was deeply concerning, and the Government of Japan strongly condemned the Taliban's further restrictions on the rights of women. Japan maintained a presence in the country, and it continued to urge the Taliban to reverse its oppressive measures. Stability in Afghan society was key to creating the conditions conducive to the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. Japan was therefore providing humanitarian assistance to the country, in collaboration with international organizations and NGOs, including working with UNHCR to provide facilities to improve the health, hygiene, education and livelihoods of internally displaced persons, returnees and host communities, as part of a comprehensive support package targeting priority areas of return and reintegration. The expansion of these areas and efforts to register Afghan refugees in Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan would increase the likelihood of return and also promote reintegration. Japan had started a resettlement programme in 2010, which had been expanded in 2020. It had been suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic, but had been resumed in 2022. In 2016, Japan had announced a programme to provide educational opportunities for Syrian youth for five years, which had since been extended for a further five years. In cooperation with UNHCR, a new programme would be launched to provide educational opportunities for young people in other humanitarian crises, besides the Syrian Arab Republic. In response to the protracted displacement challenges in Uganda, Japan was providing support to both refugees and host communities, including income improvement, administrative service enhancement, and basic infrastructure development, working from the perspective of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. The G7 summit held in Japan in May 2023 had highlighted the importance of such efforts, and Japan would continue to further materialize the nexus approach.

98. The representative of the **Philippines** noted that the topic of solutions had also been included in the note on international protection, indicating that UNHCR indeed listened to its Member States. However, progress took time, which weighed heavily on host communities. After limited progress reported the previous year, the 2023 report acknowledged progress in a number of areas, including partnership with the World Bank, programmes relating to education in Afghanistan, Uganda, Poland, among other countries, and various vocational training and livelihood programmes. His government supported creative third-country solutions, including resettlement, complementary pathways and reunification, which had gained momentum in recent years. A complementary pathways programme had been piloted in the Philippines in 2022, providing education and assistance to Rohingya refugees, and that was an initiative that could be scaled up. While international protection responded to ongoing and protracted crises, durable solutions required greater patience and continued investment. Solutions intersected with complex development and socioeconomic conditions. There needed to be political determination from all actors, including from donors to upscale support, from countries of origin to create conducive environments for return, from humanitarian and development actors to prioritize durable solutions, and from the wider international community to contribute to burden- and responsibility-sharing.

99. The representative of the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** welcomed the efforts to pursue solutions for forcibly displaced people, in particular the progress that had been made on voluntary repatriation of refugees from Côte d'Ivoire, which demonstrated that solutions could be found even in protracted situations. She welcomed the role of the World Bank's Window for Host Communities and Refugees in enabling permanent residence permits to be issued free of charge to former Ivorian refugees, which the United Kingdom proudly supported. Although there were many challenges to ensuring suitable conditions for voluntary return in safety and dignity, welcome progress had been made in various locations. Likewise, welcome progress had been made to expand host countries' access to sustainable development finance, to support the vital work on building resilience and inclusion. She encouraged UNHCR to work with the World Bank to identify how the Window for Host Communities and Refugees and the Global Concessional Financing Facility could be made even more effective in ensuring the rapid disbursement of funds.

100. Third-country solutions were a fundamental part of burden- and responsibility-sharing, and the United Kingdom had long been an advocate for providing protection to those fleeing persecution, conflict or instability. The country also supported the ambition of the Third-Country Solutions for Refugees: Roadmap 2030 to provide 3 million refugees with third-country solutions. Viable long-term solutions were very important, and the United Kingdom remained committed to offering support in that regard.

101. The representative of **Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)** said that as well as being a crucial part of the UNHCR mandate, solutions were a sustainable mechanism. Voluntary repatriation and reintegration had traditionally been recognized as the preferred sustainable solution. According to international human rights law, voluntary return was also the only sustainable solution, since the right to return was enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Indeed, the 1950 Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees established that the High Commissioner, acting under the authority of the General Assembly, would seek permanent solutions for the problem of refugees. As a result, her Government valued the objective of the Global Compact to address root causes and establish conditions in countries of origin to enable refugees to return home. It was therefore a great concern that political instability, security challenges and a lack of services and livelihoods continued to impede people's return to their countries of origin. Five years on from the signing of the Global Compact, only a tiny percentage of the refugee population had been able to return home, so further prolonging the crises. There needed to be an urgent response to the objective of the Global Compact to facilitate return. In order to find lasting solutions, the root causes of the crises needed to be considered.

102. UNHCR had completed an evaluation of its repatriation programmes and activities for 2015-2021, but there had been a number of concerning findings. Firstly, UNHCR interventions in support of voluntary return were often affected by the political dynamics of repatriation operations. The Office's strictly apolitical humanitarian mandate must be protected. Secondly, the UNHCR guidance on repatriation and reintegration was outdated and did not align well with key policies adopted in recent years. According to the Global Compact, the international community as a whole would contribute resources and expertise to support countries of origin to address root causes, remove obstacles to return and enable conditions favourable to voluntary repatriation. UNHCR must redouble its efforts to facilitate returns and support States in making agreements to facilitate repatriation. Thirdly, it was a serious concern that challenges remained in the collection and systematic use of operations-level data, particularly with regard to returns not facilitated by UNHCR. Lastly, with regard to sustainability, the evaluation had found that the extent to which UNHCR had adapted repatriation and reintegration activities to become more sustainable still had a lot of room for improvement. In particular, the evaluation had found that long-term reintegration support presented more significant challenges, which UNHCR had been slow to address. Those findings demonstrated the need to pay more attention to the relationship between the sustainable economic development of countries of origin and the sustainability of returns. UNHCR should continue to promote and create sustainable and durable solutions, while eliminating the root causes of refugee crises. Her government would be keeping a close eye on the measures to address the important challenges in that regard, while reiterating its willingness to work together to find durable solutions for refugees.

103. The representative of **El Salvador** reaffirmed his country's commitment to addressing the challenges of human displacement. In particular, his Government was prioritizing the development of standards frameworks, national policies and actions to better respond to the needs of displaced people, ensuring their protection and access to durable solutions, and it welcomed the efforts of UNHCR in that regard. Significant progress was being made in El Salvador to address mobility and help those with protection needs, with support from UNHCR through its regional and country offices. Through MIRPS, professional training programmes and employment initiatives for refugees, displaced persons and those at risk of displacement had been developed in El Salvador. Similarly, the alliance between UNHCR and the Ministry of Labour had resulted in the implementation of the "my first job" programme, enabling 18- to 29-year-olds without previous work experience to access formal employment in private enterprises and receive compensation equivalent to the minimum wage. Thus far, the programme had introduced more than 500 vulnerable people to the labour market, more than half of whom were women. The programme involved training in essential skills as well as business meetings, and more than 100 enterprises had signed up. El Salvador was also continuing to implement its initiative to provide free, safe and confidential information about rights and assistance to internally displaced people, those at risk of displacement, asylum-seekers, refugees and returnees with protection needs. The country also had a guidebook for displaced children, adolescents, young people and teachers, or those at risk of displacement, with

the objective of bringing attention to their situation and establishing a road map to ensure educational continuity. El Salvador recognized that much remained to be done and that the needs were urgent, so had great expectations for the second Global Refugee Forum, where it was hoped that through international cooperation and the exchange of best practices, substantial progress could be made in the search for durable solutions. El Salvador was committed to continuing to make progress, working from a perspective of shared responsibility and human rights, guaranteeing development opportunities and social programmes for the well-being of refugees and displaced populations.

104. The **Director of the Division of Resilience and Solutions** (UNHCR) thanked Members for their comments, suggestions and encouragement. In the interest of time, he would reach out to delegates bilaterally to address some of those issues. A number of representatives had raised concerns with regard to the decline in the number of returns as well as challenges to resettlement. It was important to note that although the percentage of returns showed a decline, displacement figures had more than doubled in the past ten years to over 110 million, which was a worrying trend. Although UNHCR was working to find durable solutions for displaced populations, the solutions were eventually political, as they involved peacebuilding and development, addressing the root causes, as many delegates had pointed out.

105. With regard to the upcoming Global Refugee Forum, a number of Member States had highlighted the need to have more pledges focused on solutions. Indeed, partners and Member States were being encouraged to make more concrete pledges on goal 4, but also others on solutions. Another important concern was burden- and responsibility-sharing, as nearly three quarters of displaced populations were hosted in low or low-middle income countries, and that had to be addressed. UNHCR was working on greater partnerships with development actors, including with the World Bank and its two dedicated financing windows, the International Development Association and the Global Concessional Financing Facility. UNHCR was now also working with a number of different regional development banks, and a number of other initiatives were in progress to expand partnerships with development actors and work together with other United Nations agencies to find lasting solutions for development. A number of countries had also referenced encouraging partnerships with the private sector. Indeed, the joint initiative with the International Finance Corporation, which had been launched in 2023, had established a space in Istanbul and was beginning to move on to a number of other countries. More encouraging results were expected in that regard. A lot of policy work was being done with the OECD Development Assistance Committee, using data analytics to look at concrete initiatives relating to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Germany was hosting a workshop in October for policymakers, to which all members of the International Network on Conflict and Fragility and the nexus would be invited, and where forced displacement would be discussed. Another partnership to highlight was with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as more discussions were being held on forced displacement and the IMF was paying more attention to fragile and conflict-affected States. The Office's engagement with them at the country, regional and global level, was beginning to show results.

106. With regard to inclusion, he had highlighted the example of Uganda, but there were many others as well, including Mexico, Ecuador, Kenya and Zimbabwe. However, inclusion required burden-sharing and more engagement from development partners. The representatives of Uganda and Ethiopia had raised important points about budgets and funding gaps. The representative of Mexico had also highlighted financial inclusion, which was an area that the Office was focusing more on, and he would be able to share details of normative work in that area soon. Data was still very important. The joint data centre was producing a lot of valuable data, but other development partners were also including forced displacement in their discussions. More than 30 countries had included forced displacement in their national statistics, and that opened up space for engagement.

107. With regard to countries of origin, he noted that although the conflicts in those countries were political, where the situations permitted and there were pockets of hope, UNHCR went in to engage. They also worked with development partners to focus more on countries of origin, since the World Bank financial instruments were for refugees and host countries. It was important to put the focus back onto the situations that were politically conducive for forced displacement to come to an end and for people to return home. Investment was needed in that area.

108. The **Director of the Division of International Protection** (UNHCR) said that pursuing durable solutions was the second stream of the UNHCR mandate and was inextricably linked to all its work. She therefore welcomed the decision to dedicate the Executive Committee's conclusion to

that topic in 2024. She noted the support of many countries for the Third-Country-Solutions for Refugees: Roadmap 2030.

109. With regard to responsibility-sharing in the form of reliable and multilateral commitments to resettlement and complementary pathways, States had been called on to include resettlement commitments as part of their Global Refugee Forum pledges. She thanked countries that had offered protection and solutions in the form of resettlement to third countries, and the commitments made by several delegations to increase resettlement and find ways to broaden third-country solutions opportunities. Resettlement needs continued to rise, but the rate of departure and the number of places were not keeping pace. UNHCR was particularly concerned about the availability of unallocated places for emergency resettlement for medical cases, and for dossier submissions allowing remote processing for the most urgent cases, including some countries not prioritized for resettlement. In that regard, she welcomed the continued support for unallocated resettlement slots.

110. On the issue of complementary pathways, she welcomed the new education pathways being built and the commitments of many States to work towards complementary pathways, and was encouraged by the agreement to prioritize the matter in the Executive Committee's conclusion workplan. She echoed Australia's call for dignity through mobility, and in that spirit underlined the Office's commitment to working with States, with private and education sectors, with multilateral actors and refugees themselves, to build flexibility into migration systems so that refugees could take up opportunities in an increasingly mobile world, without needing to set aside their international protection needs or human rights such as family unity. The road map on third-country solutions set a goal of 200 million people in complementary pathways by 2030, and such a scale-up would require solidarity and changes to national systems around the world.

b. The engagement of UNHCR with internally displaced persons

111. The **Principal Adviser on Internal Displacement** (UNHCR) shared an update on the engagement of UNHCR with internally displaced persons. Much had changed since her previous presentation. Regretfully, there had been a sharp increase in the number of people internally displaced by conflict, violence and disaster, with a total of more than 60 million people internally displaced in 2022, and the numbers were continuing to rise. Internally displaced people were the largest displaced population served by UNHCR, with operations ongoing in 34 countries across all regions. Tackling the challenge of internal displacement required supporting the primary responsibility of States to assist and protect those who had been displaced within their borders. UNHCR was doing that, in collaboration with other stakeholders, and most importantly in collaboration with States themselves. In 2022, UNHCR had released its flagship Global Report on Law and Policy on Internal Displacement: Implementing National Responsibility. The report analysed key benchmarks, such as the presence of effective national legislation, as well as global and regional trends. It also looked at efforts to develop national instruments to protect and support internally displaced persons. UNHCR, together with governments, continued to support the efforts of the internally displaced persons protection expert group, a group of senior-level figures that held consultations with national leaders on ways to strengthen solutions responses, including recently in Honduras and South Sudan.

112. Protection analysis was a key advocacy tool for UNHCR. In 2023, 39 protection analysis updates had been prepared by the UNHCR-led global protection cluster and shared with affected States, with United Nations Resident Coordinators and country teams, and with internally displaced communities themselves, to ensure that the protection of internally displaced persons was placed at the centre of stakeholder response. Following the decision of a number of States to advance new legislation and policies on internal displacement, UNHCR had provided expert advice and assistance to Honduras, Mexico, Mozambique, Nigeria and the Philippines, and work was ongoing in Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, the Niger and Somalia, among others.

113. UNHCR led three internal displacement coordination mechanisms at the global, country and subnational levels: the global protection cluster, the global shelter cluster and the camp coordination and camp management cluster. Under the global protection cluster, UNHCR supported the strengthening of capacities at the country level, and timely and evidence-based protection analysis to reinforce decision-making. Under the global shelter cluster, UNHCR mobilized efforts towards greener and more climate smart humanitarian shelter and settlement responses. In 2022, the cluster developed and published Pathways home: Guidance for supporting shelter self-recovery, to provide practical guidance on how to support the self-recovery process in post-disaster and post-conflict contexts. The cluster's strategy and information management processes had been revised in 2022, resulting in updated strategic priorities and strengthened staffing capacity, in an effort to address

emerging needs. Regional shelter forums had been organized in Africa and Asia to assist national actors with locally defined approaches. UNHCR had steadily stepped up its leadership role in camp coordination and camp management, and its work in that area was embedded in the age, gender and diversity mainstreaming approach.

114. The revised UNHCR policy on emergency preparedness and response, released in January 2023, emphasized the speed and agility of the UNHCR humanitarian response in internal displacement emergencies. It included programmatic interventions that enabled decision-making by communities and facilitated durable solutions for internally displaced persons as part of the emergency response from the start. It also leveraged the cluster coordination roles of UNHCR to instil a solutions lens early on for a system-wide approach, involving development and peace actors from the onset to identify early opportunities for joint action.

115. Much work had been done on solutions, and UNHCR had been central to all collaboration efforts with various actors, most importantly following the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement and providing support to his Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement, Mr. Robert Piper, to whom UNHCR had seconded two senior members of staff. UNHCR was also working at the country level to bring together humanitarian and development actors in that context. She had also personally undertaken missions to Afghanistan and Yemen to work directly with the Resident Coordinator and the United Nations Country Team to develop their solutions strategies.

UNHCR was moving into a transition mode in countries where there had been a move away from the humanitarian emergency situation, including Iraq and the Philippines. Yemen and Libya were also emerging as potential transition countries. The humanitarian-development-peace nexus remained confounding for many, but UNHCR had become more extroverted in its approach to internal displacement, redoubling its efforts to work on both humanitarian aspects and solutions advancement. Relationships had been strengthened with the United Nations Children's Fund, UNDP, the World Food Programme, IOM, IMF, the World Bank and UN-Habitat, in order to enhance cooperation on internal displacement issues and help bridge the nexus.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.
