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High Commissioner's Programme**

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Summary record*, Tuesday, 17 June 2025, at 15.00 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Marcelo Vázquez Bermúdez.....(Ecuador)

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The meeting was called to order at 15:05 p.m.

2. International protection (resumed)

(a) Note on international protection (resumed)

1. The representative of **Kenya** said that her country aligned with the statement of the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Africa Group. She raised concern over the announced budget cuts to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and urged reinstatement of funding for refugee operations in Kenya, including in critical sectors such as education, health and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). She said that reductions would harm services, increase insecurity and risk child recruitment into armed groups. She asked for more details on the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies and its engagement with national actors. She expressed concern over food ration cuts by the World Food Programme (WFP), which have led to protests and urged UNHCR to engage with WFP to address the issue. She underlined that her country's policy commitments on refugee inclusion must be matched with resources. She requested details on proposals by UNHCR for the Humanitarian Reset initiative and steps towards implementing its Global Initiative on Protection at Sea. Finally, she emphasized that durable solutions require peace, conflict resolution and climate adaptation support.

2. The representative of **Mexico** thanked UNHCR for the note on international protection and expressed concern about rising displacement and declining resources. She called for strengthened cooperation, shared responsibility and durable solutions. She highlighted her country's cooperation with UNHCR in strengthening State capacity to respond to asylum-seekers and persons in need of complementary protection and urged a review of restrictive or outsourced asylum policies. She reaffirmed Mexico's commitment to the inclusion of refugees in national systems through the local integration programme, which had enabled over 50,000 refugees to obtain formal work since 2019. She welcomed support to State governments in addressing internal displacement and noted concern over the impact of funding cuts on measures to prevent sexual and gender-based violence. She encouraged the organization to maintain and strengthen its gender-sensitive approach and concluded by reaffirming her country's commitment to the goals of the Chile Declaration and the Cartagena Declaration 40+.

3. The representative of **Finland** said that his country aligned with the statement of the representative of the European Union on behalf of its member States. He thanked UNHCR for the note on international protection and expressed concern over funding cuts and growing humanitarian needs. He reaffirmed his country's support for the organization and appreciation for refugee-hosting countries and staff. He welcomed ongoing reforms and highlighted the central role of UNHCR in leading protection clusters. He emphasized that reforms must be grounded in humanitarian principles and focus on quality assistance. He underscored the importance of the age, gender and diversity framework and called on the organization to safeguard related technical expertise, including disability inclusion. He concluded by expressing support for the mandate of UNHCR and commitment to further dialogue on international protection.

4. The representative of **Sweden** said that his country aligned with the statement of the representative of the European Union on behalf of its member States. He thanked UNHCR for the note on international protection and stressed the urgency of protection due to rising displacement. He encouraged pursuing the role of the organization in safeguarding rights and promoting solidarity and emphasized the need for specialized expertise, collaboration with local and international actors and continued advocacy as co-champion of the centrality of protection. He welcomed the organization's work on mixed movements and the sustainable response approach, underlining the importance of coordination with development actors and host communities. He reaffirmed the commitment of his country to resettlement and maintaining a quota of 900 refugees in 2025, with a focus on vulnerable groups in the Great Lakes region.

5. The representative of **France** said that her country aligned with the statement of the representative of the European Union on behalf of its member States. She highlighted the

importance of addressing sexual and gender-based violence and reiterated her country's commitment since its pledge in December 2023. She emphasized the need to continue supporting the inclusion and protection of female refugees. She welcomed the use of innovative approaches and artificial intelligence in protection efforts and announced earmarked funding to support innovation. She reaffirmed support to UNHCR and expressed concern over comments made by another delegation regarding Europe, urging reflection on how to better support European countries. She noted that France was the fifth-largest contributor to UNHCR in 2024 and the second among the European Union member States in resettlement, having welcomed over 3,000 resettled refugees each year since 2022. She added that her country supports complementary pathways and is working with Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to build asylum capacity. She concluded by underscoring the importance of shared responsibility and solidarity.

6. The representative of **Malta** said that his country aligned with the statement of the representative of the European Union on behalf of its member States and thanked UNHCR for its presentation and commitment to international protection, despite financial constraints. He noted with concern the increase in global displacement and the compounded impact of climate change, poverty and food insecurity. He referred to humanitarian crises in Gaza, Ukraine and the Sudan and affirmed his country's support for temporary protection measures. He welcomed prospects for refugee return to the Syrian Arab Republic and underscored the need for returns to be safe, voluntary, and dignified. He expressed support for the age, gender and diversity approach of UNHCR and commended efforts on durable solutions. He welcomed the "whole-of-route approach" on migration and reiterated his country's commitment to the 1951 Convention, its 1967 Protocol and European Union asylum law. He noted his country's collaboration with UNHCR and its contributions to the Global Appeal and expressed appreciation for the partnership through the UNHCR office in Malta.

7. The representative of **Japan** said that his country was deeply concerned about the growing number of forcibly displaced persons, driven by conflict, climate change and infectious diseases. He noted the widening gap between needs and available resources and emphasized the critical role of UNHCR. He commended the commitment of the organization to emergency response, refugee protection and durable solutions despite budgetary constraints. He appreciated efforts to improve efficiency, including collaboration with other agencies through the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. He highlighted the Global Compact on Refugees as a blueprint for collective efforts and pointed to the upcoming High-Level Officials Meeting as an opportunity to reinforce solidarity. He affirmed his country's commitment to supporting forcibly displaced persons in cooperation with UNHCR and the international community.

8. The representative of **Belgium** said that her country aligned with the statement of the European Union on behalf of its member States and expressed full support for the leadership of UNHCR in a time of unprecedented challenges. She stated that her country would maintain its multi-year core funding and emphasized the importance of flexible and predictable financing. She highlighted protection as central to her country's humanitarian strategy, noting that it cannot be delivered without access. She reaffirmed her country's commitment to international humanitarian law and underscored that protection should remain a collective priority in the current rationalization process. She supported the role of UNHCR in collective advocacy and emphasized the need to maintain specialized data and analysis. She called for the protection of vulnerable groups and stated that the conditions for safe, voluntary and dignified returns must be ensured. She supported the route-based approach to mixed movements and burden-sharing with host States. Finally, she stressed the importance of humanitarian aid benefiting both refugees and host populations, especially in protracted crises and supported durable solutions in partnership with development actors.

9. The representative of **Brazil** appreciated the note on international protection and welcomed the recognition of her country's efforts to include refugees in public services and implement voluntary relocation programmes. She reaffirmed her country's commitment to the Cartagena process and stressed the importance of regional solidarity and burden-sharing in Latin America and the Caribbean. She noted with concern the global displacement figures and the impact of the budget crisis on displaced populations. She called for clarity on how UNHCR is prioritizing under budget constraints and cautioned against reforms that

jeopardize essential programmes. She emphasized that developing countries, already hosting the majority of displaced persons, must not be further burdened without adequate support and resources.

10. The representative of the **United States of America** said that his country prioritized political solutions enabling refugee returns, citing efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Ukraine, Gaza and the Syrian Arab Republic. He emphasized the need for UNHCR to focus on its core mandate and durable solutions and called on more countries to share responsibility for displaced persons. He welcomed the support from UNHCR for voluntary returns in 2024 and saw its restructuring as an opportunity to enhance efficiency and transparency. He stated that sustainable development should be pursued through economic growth, energy access, trade and peace and noted that the United States of America does not support the inclusion of the Sustainable Development Goals or Agenda 2030 in United Nations materials. He also said that the United States of America opposed the use of diversity, equity and inclusion terminology and advocated for language referring clearly to women and men, girls and boys.

11. The representative of **South Africa** said that her country aligned with the statement of the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Africa Group. She acknowledged the note on international protection and expressed concern about the growing humanitarian crisis. She emphasized multilateralism as essential to addressing displacement and urged all countries to share responsibility by fulfilling legal obligations and financial commitments. She stated that her country, despite its limited resources, continued to host refugees but was being impacted by declining funding. She called on UNHCR to recognize and quantify the in-kind contributions of host countries, including infrastructure and public services. She also urged a nexus approach to address the root causes of displacement and reaffirmed her country's commitment under international law.

12. The representative of **Australia** said that her country appreciated the note on international protection and the briefing on the Chairperson's visit to Bangladesh and Thailand. She reaffirmed her country's support for international cooperation in addressing displacement and emphasized the critical role of protection and humanitarian principles. She acknowledged the difficult decisions that UNHCR had to make due to budget cuts and expressed appreciation for its transparency during the restructuring process. She stated that her country had committed an additional \$370 million over three years to address needs in Myanmar and support refugees in Bangladesh. The representative highlighted her country's leadership in resettlement and complementary pathways, including labour mobility, community sponsorship and refugee education programmes. She emphasized the importance of refugee participation and encouraged other States to adopt similar mechanisms. She called for practical, coordinated responses in line with the Global Compact on Refugees and commended the High Commissioner's leadership.

13. The representative of **the Sudan**, speaking in a national capacity, said that her country supported the statement made on behalf of the Africa Group and thanked UNHCR for the note on international protection. She noted the increased challenges caused by forced displacement, stating that her country itself has been affected by a war waged by a terrorist militia supported by a regional actor. She said that 12 million people were displaced within the Sudan, and more than three million had fled to neighbouring countries. She expressed gratitude to the countries hosting Sudanese refugees and reaffirmed her country's commitment to international humanitarian law, including the principle of non-refoulement. She noted that the Sudanese authorities had regained control of some territories and were providing basic services in cooperation with international actors. She highlighted atrocities committed by the militia, including sexual violence, forced recruitment and looting and expressed concern that the High Commissioner did not name the perpetrators. She said neutrality should not preclude justice and called for a change in the way UNHCR documents violations and collects testimonies. She added that refugees in neighbouring countries faced difficult conditions, limited funding and a lack of access to services, pushing them into dangerous migration routes. She concluded by calling for political and financial support to enable UNHCR to fulfil its mandate, especially in countries facing severe crises, such as the Sudan.

14. The representative of the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** acknowledged the difficult context in which the organization operates and emphasized his country's recognition of the vital role of UNHCR in ensuring the safety, dignity and rights of refugees. He noted the impact of the ongoing restructuring on staff and highlighted the importance of maintaining a human approach while focusing on the organization's capacity to assist and find sustainable solutions. He stressed the need for reform of the humanitarian system, advocating for more efficient, locally-led responses and for UNHCR and other agencies to fully engage to ensure innovation and change. The representative welcomed national inclusion and development strategies in host countries and noted the mandate of UNHCR to address the needs of all vulnerable groups. He outlined the priorities of his country: improving its own asylum system in partnership with UNHCR, supporting sustainable responses through investment rather than aid and continuing effective refugee protection in collaboration with UNHCR.

15. The representative of **Morocco** expressed appreciation for the note on international protection and agreed with the analysis that without greater solidarity and equitable responsibility-sharing, the protection architecture risked further erosion. He stressed the need for reliable data and formal identification of resources rather than estimates, citing the Tindouf case as emblematic of numerical inflation that undermines donor credibility. He called on UNHCR to prioritize conducting a census, make figure publication systematic and adhere to verified data. He emphasized the importance of neutrality, impartiality and independence, reaffirming that camp management falls under the responsibility of host countries. He proposed stronger oversight mechanisms and inclusion of structural indicators at the 2025 High-Level Officials Meeting. He offered to share his country's experience of integrating refugees into national systems and called for multi-year funding based on verified data to restore donor trust. He concluded by affirming his country's commitment to supporting international protection.

16. The representative of the **Republic of Korea** thanked UNHCR and its staff for their efforts in challenging conditions. She stated that her country is fulfilling its pledge made during the second Global Refugee Forum in 2023 by increasing contributions to UNHCR and enhancing protection efforts. This includes supporting voluntary return programmes, such as the reintegration of Burundian refugees through agricultural skills training. She also mentioned that her country is assisting internally displaced people in Kachin State, Myanmar, with a focus on protection from gender-based violence and climate resilience. Since late 2023, she noted that her country has increased support to UNHCR programmes in Jordan and Lebanon for Syrian refugees and host communities, aiming to promote voluntary return and sustainable settlement. She mentioned that the Republic of Korea continues to operate a resettlement programme with language and job support and has launched a higher education programme for refugee students. She reaffirmed her country's commitment to refugee protection and to strengthening its partnership with UNHCR.

17. The representative of **Algeria** thanked UNHCR for the detailed note on international protection and expressed concern about the general situation of displaced persons, particularly the impact of budget cuts on essential services such as education and healthcare. He emphasized the importance of a comprehensive route-based approach involving all States and the need to distinguish between different types of refugees. He stated that his country supported refugee inclusion in national systems while respecting national legislation and reaffirmed that voluntary return in dignity remains the ultimate goal. He mentioned that his country has adopted asylum legislation providing free services to refugees. He provided figures illustrating his country's support to Sahrawi refugees, including vaccination campaigns, medical care and education. He contested comments delivered in the statement of the representative of Morocco, stating that Morocco is neither a host nor a donor but rather the source of Sahrawi displacement. He reaffirmed Algeria's support for Sahrawi refugees and referenced assessments estimating the refugee population at 163,000.

18. The representative of **Colombia** thanked UNHCR for the note on international protection and expressed solidarity with its staff, particularly during the organization's 75th anniversary. She highlighted her country's experience as one of the countries most affected by internal displacement, noting the resilience of its communities and referencing the Deputy High Commissioner's visit to Chocó. She appealed to traditional and new donors for

continued support, as her country had also become a major host country for mixed migration, receiving around three million migrants. She reaffirmed her country's commitment to protection and welcomed the note's references to regional initiatives such as Cartagena+40, the Quito Process and the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS). She aligned with previous delegations, including Brazil and Ecuador, in emphasizing Latin American solidarity and echoed concerns raised by Chile about deportations. She urged all countries to respect the human rights of persons under international protection and those returning voluntarily, stressing due process, dignity, family unity and the best interests of the child.

19. The representative of **Italy** said that her country aligned with the statement of the representative of the European Union on behalf of its member States and offered additional remarks on items 2a and 2b of the agenda. She reaffirmed the full support of her country for the protection mandate of UNHCR, emphasizing the need for it to remain inclusive and responsive, particularly for women and girls facing heightened risks. She expressed concern over the growing number of forcibly displaced people and the impact of funding constraints on essential protection services, while welcoming the decision of UNHCR to prioritize protection in its restructuring. She stated that her country remains committed to addressing root causes, pursuing political solutions and ensuring predictable resources. She highlighted her country's labour mobility framework, including the Safe Labour Pathway for refugees from Egypt, Jordan and Uganda and its support for a multi-purpose protection hub in eastern Chad. She also noted her country's efforts to combat statelessness, referencing its pledge to issue 750 work permits by the end of the year and measures to improve birth registration and civil documentation. Lastly, she underscored her country's promotion of a protection-sensitive route-based approach, including initiatives like the Integration Charter to support municipalities in providing services to people arriving through mixed flows.

20. The representative of **Zambia** said that his country aligned with the statement of the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Africa Group. He emphasized his country's longstanding commitment to hosting refugees, currently accommodating over 110,000 asylum-seekers and former refugees. He noted that while his country remains committed to providing protection, hosting refugees has significantly impacted national resources, particularly in education, healthcare, infrastructure and natural resources. He welcomed global initiatives to measure the impact of hosting refugees and highlighted his country's engagement in the Global Compact on Refugees, the Refugee Policy Review Framework and a forthcoming refugee-hosting cost study supported by the World Bank and UNHCR. He stressed that impact measurement is essential for visibility, dignity and effective planning. He expressed concern about funding cuts to refugee management, which have undermined essential services and strained host communities, particularly in the context of his country's ongoing drought. He urged the international community to support evidence-based burden-sharing and invest in both refugees and host communities through direct financing, improved coordination and predictable long-term support.

21. The representative of **Lesotho** said that his country aligned with the statement of the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Africa Group, expressed appreciation for the comprehensive note on international protection and reaffirmed his country's commitment to the core principles of international protection. He raised concerns about the increasing number of forcibly displaced persons across the continent and commended African host countries for their generosity despite limited resources. He stressed the importance of ensuring access to protection and essential services for vulnerable groups, including women and children. He called for enhanced international cooperation and predictable, flexible and sustainable support to UNHCR, as well as efforts to address the root causes of displacement and expand safe and legal pathways. He concluded by reiterating his country's support for the mandate of UNHCR and its readiness to contribute to a coordinated and humane response.

22. The representative of the **Holy See** commended countries assisting and hosting forcibly displaced persons, emphasizing the urgent need for international cooperation, solidarity and responsibility-sharing through solutions such as voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement. He expressed concern over the reduction in resources despite unprecedented displacement levels and criticized security-oriented approaches that neglected root causes. He highlighted the plight of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, stressing

the importance of respecting the best interests of the child and promoting family unity through expanded reunification visas. He called for access to education as vital for refugee integration and protection. He noted concerns about the inclusion of the terms “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” in the protection note, stating these lack a universally accepted definition under international law and are not present in the 1951 Convention. He expressed the Holy See’s confidence in the ability of UNHCR to uphold dignity and rights without introducing polarizing categories. Concluding, he stressed the need to address root causes of displacement through dialogue, justice and reconciliation and urged for an end to the logic of war, quoting Pope Leo XIV’s call for a humble and persevering peace.

23. The representative of **Cameroon** said that her country aligned with the statement made by the Sudan on behalf of the Africa Group and acknowledged the compounded impact of security, climate and budgetary crises. She welcomed the progress achieved by UNHCR in advancing international protection, especially through information dissemination, service provision and reintegration advocacy. She noted that since the beginning of the year, her country issued 47 identity documents equivalent to birth certificates, over 1,388 refugee certificates and receipts and was finalizing the voluntary repatriation of 20,000 Nigerian refugees, with over 20 convoys planned for Central African refugees by September. On socio-economic inclusion, she cited efforts in healthcare, education and provision of official documents. She noted that the National Technical Committee created under the Support Platform for Solutions carried out a mission in March 2025 in the Adamaoua region. A workshop in April 2025 focused on sustainable solutions and complementary pathways, aiming to enhance local empowerment and resilience. This included the progressive transformation of refugee camps into commercial, urban and ecological centres. She concluded by highlighting major funding challenges and reiterated the call for equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing with host countries.

24. The representative of **Malawi** said that her country aligned with the statement delivered by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Africa Group. She thanked UNHCR for the documentation on international protection and expressed concern over the growing forced displacement, particularly in Africa, driven by conflict and climate change, which is straining limited resources. She stressed the urgency of addressing root causes and affirmed the importance of the mandate of UNHCR in supporting displaced persons. She emphasized that UNHCR must operate within universally agreed frameworks and that saving lives should be prioritized. She underlined the need for multilateralism amid shifting geopolitics and conflicts and noted that people should move by choice, not compulsion. She expressed concern about the funding crisis affecting UNHCR and the resulting job cuts, calling for continued engagement with member States to address the situation. She urged continued support for host countries and durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation and legal pathways and advocated for sustained collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). She reiterated the importance of burden- and responsibility-sharing, especially for developing host countries facing pressure on health and education systems. She concluded by reaffirming her country's commitment to work with UNHCR in carrying out its mandate.

25. The representative of **Belarus** thanked UNHCR for the comprehensive note on international protection and expressed alarm at the global increase in forced displacement. He attributed the growth in refugee numbers to poverty, war, climate change and the broad use of sanctions by Western countries, which he described as contributing factors to instability. He expressed support for Indonesia’s efforts to strengthen protection mechanisms and data-sharing. While regretting the reduced presence of UNHCR in Belarus, he expressed understanding given financial constraints and hoped the effectiveness of the Minsk office would not be affected. He criticized European countries for refusing refugee passage through Belarus, resulting in loss of life and violations of rights. He reaffirmed support for multilateralism based on equality, mutual respect and dialogue. He concluded by expressing his country's commitment to continued cooperation with UNHCR and regional partners to protect the rights and dignity of persons in need of international protection.

26. The representative of **Türkiye** thanked UNHCR for the presentation on international protection and recalled the ongoing tragedy of millions forced to flee due to persecution, war and human rights violations. He noted his country's role as one of the largest refugee-hosting

countries, particularly for Syrians and reiterated the country's commitment to protection. He emphasized that durable solutions, not temporary or solely humanitarian responses, are necessary for resolving protracted displacement, highlighting his country's focus on voluntary, safe and dignified returns. He stressed the need for strengthened international solidarity and effective burden- and responsibility-sharing. While acknowledging the importance of sustainable responses, he cautioned against shifting responsibilities to host countries through transitions to national systems, especially without adequate funding. He concluded by affirming the vital role of UNHCR and his country's continued cooperation in advancing refugee protection and equitable responsibility-sharing.

27. The representative of **Poland** said that his country aligned with the statement of the representative of the European Union on behalf of its member States and expressed solidarity with UNHCR and its staff amid the unprecedented transformations the organization is undergoing, cautioning that ongoing and projected budget cuts would most severely affect vulnerable populations. He stressed that suspending humanitarian efforts in light of rising disregard for international humanitarian law was not an option and welcomed the prioritization of international protection. He acknowledged with concern the scale of global displacement, mentioning crises in the Sudan, the Middle East, Afghanistan, Myanmar and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He highlighted the war in Ukraine as especially distressing for his country, noting that the aggression by the Russian Federation had caused a significant share of global displacement. He explained that his country had integrated nearly one million Ukrainian refugees into national systems and served as a logistical hub for aid. He emphasized that smart humanitarian and economic policies can align, referencing a recent UNHCR-commissioned report that found Ukrainian refugees increased the GDP of his country by 2.7 per cent without harming the job market. He noted that his country's support had extended beyond Ukraine, with assistance to the Sudan, Armenia and the Syrian Arab Republic and that Polish contributions to UNHCR had more than quadrupled compared to 2023. He concluded by affirming that UNHCR remained a strategic humanitarian partner for his country.

28. The representative of **Zimbabwe** said that her country aligned with the statement delivered by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Africa Group. She thanked UNHCR for the note on international protection and acknowledged the organization's extensive work in many countries, including Zimbabwe, especially in strengthening asylum systems. She noted that with the support of UNHCR, her country had established reception centres at entry points, upgraded facilities at Tongogara refugee settlement, appointed the Zimbabwean Refugee Committee and conducted training for its members. She expressed appreciation for the efforts of UNHCR despite financial constraints, and called for a focus on basic needs given the growing global humanitarian needs and the impact of funding cuts on refugee services in her country. She also expressed concern over the inclusion of concepts such as sexual orientation and gender identity, which she said were not universally agreed upon and urged UNHCR to remain focused on principles that respect the cultures and values of all member States, especially host countries.

29. The representative of **El Salvador** welcomed the efforts of UNHCR to assist people fleeing war, persecution, violence and disasters and commended its comprehensive and integrated approach that recognizes communities as active agents of their own protection. She emphasized the importance of resilience, autonomy and inclusion in national systems and noted that her country, having achieved peace and security, prioritized the reconstruction of the social fabric. She supported calls for adequate funding for UNHCR, highlighting its strategic role. She noted that in her country, UNHCR support has helped strengthen the Commission for the Determination of Refugee Status and improve services for asylum-seekers. Since 2025, a provisional ID card has been issued to refugees to facilitate formal employment, and the Comprehensive Care Protocol included legal and psychological support and access to health and education services. She noted progress in protection but acknowledged remaining challenges, stressing the need for continued UNHCR support to update the legal framework and ensure sustainable services. She concluded by reaffirming the collective responsibility to assist vulnerable persons and contribute to global solidarity.

30. The representative of **Iraq** thanked UNHCR for its efforts in assisting people affected globally by climate change and armed conflict, despite limited resources. She noted the

ongoing crises and funding shortfalls and condemned the Israeli attack on the airspace of her country, affirming her country's right to defend its sovereignty. She denounced the use of starvation as a weapon of war against Palestinians and urged accountability for violations. She reaffirmed her country's commitment to responsibility-sharing and highlighted the \$45 million to support humanitarian efforts in Gaza and Lebanon. Domestically, she emphasized her country's focus on resolving internal displacement, noting the adoption of a national action plan, provision of employment opportunities and financial support for returnees and targeted assistance to women and persons with disabilities. She added that reconstruction efforts were ongoing in areas affected by terrorism and that her country had assisted over 4,500 families returning from the Syrian Arab Republic through psychosocial and cultural programmes, resulting in a 67 per cent reduction in internally displaced people.

31. The representative of **Panama** reaffirmed the country's commitment to the right to asylum and international protection, highlighting these as pillars of the international human rights system and expressions of solidarity. He noted his country's integrated approach to managing mixed migration flows and the institutional capacity to provide rights-based support. He reported a 78 per cent reduction in irregular transit through the Darién Gap in 2025, with around 2,800 individuals having transited in the early months of the year. He thanked UNHCR for a mission during May that facilitated the distribution of ID documents to refugees and asylum-seekers, enhancing their access to services. He highlighted efforts under the MIRPS for durable solutions and child protection, including a national protocol guaranteeing psychosocial and educational support. Panama reiterated its commitment to combating statelessness, especially for vulnerable children and recognized the value of regional cooperation through initiatives such as the Cartagena +40 process. He concluded by expressing gratitude for the support of UNHCR and affirmed his country's dedication to humanitarian responses grounded in international obligations.

32. The representative of **NGO Pride Centre, speaking on behalf of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)**, expressed concern over the growing number of displaced persons, noting a 30 per cent increase in conflict-related deaths and a significant reduction in donor funding since 2024. She stressed that 122 million people are forcibly displaced, many facing severe hardship and highlighted the erosion of refugee protection, including externalization, detention and refoulement. She emphasized the disproportionate impact on marginalized groups, including women, people with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer persons (LGBTQ) persons, citing that over 11 million displaced persons belong to LGBTQ communities. She called for sustained commitment to age, gender and diversity inclusion; support to local, forcibly displaced-led organizations; and protection programming that centres equity and accountability. She urged that reduced budgets do not result in retreating from core humanitarian principles.

33. The **Assistant High Commissioner for Protection (UNHCR)** thanked delegations for their rich and substantive interventions, noting that while she could not do justice to every point raised, she would respond thematically. She began by clarifying, in response to concerns raised by some member States, that the note on international protection reflects the views of the UNHCR High Commissioner and not necessarily those of all Executive Committee members, though it is hoped it represents the views of the majority. On the humanitarian reset initiative, she acknowledged concerns expressed by the Netherlands, Switzerland, Kenya and Finland about coordination and internal protection priorities. She emphasized that the reset aims to streamline coordination mechanisms not only in internal displacement situations but also for mixed settings involving both refugees and internally displaced people, with discussions ongoing in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). She reiterated that all crises are protection crises, and that protection must remain central to responses, tailored to the severity and nature of protection risks faced globally.

34. Responding to statements from NGOs and member States, she addressed localization, highlighting efforts to firewall support to displaced-led and stateless-led local organizations and appealed for direct and flexible funding to these actors. She thanked countries including Spain, Ecuador and Mexico for their support for the principle of non-refoulement, which she noted is being violated with impunity in various contexts. She also acknowledged statements by Ukraine, the Africa Group, Chile and the Sudan on the importance of peace, addressing root causes and protecting civilians, stressing that over 120 conflicts involving 93 member

States are ongoing. She noted that the main obstacle to solutions is the collective inability to prevent or resolve these conflicts. On funding, she echoed concerns voiced by nearly all delegations, especially from refugee-hosting countries, noting that the financial crisis is not only exacerbating protection risks for refugees and internally displaced people but also threatening social cohesion between them and host communities. She urged donors to heed the calls of host States.

35. She cautioned that gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection have been among the hardest hit sectors. UNHCR has lost 20 per cent of its GBV capacity just in the first half of the year, with further reductions expected. Child protection is similarly affected. She cited data from Kenya and the Africa Group highlighting dire protection risks for children and noted that of the 49 million forcibly displaced children, 17.4 million are refugees or asylum-seeking children. She highlighted reductions in protection monitoring and community-based protection and thanked Canada, the European Union and the Netherlands for underlining the importance of maintaining the operational protection capacity of UNHCR. On statelessness, she acknowledged support from many delegations and stated that despite UNHCR having 4.4 million stateless persons of concern, there are only six dedicated staff working on statelessness globally. This number may decrease further due to budget constraints. She welcomed statements from the United Kingdom and Poland on the importance of socioeconomic inclusion, citing Poland's statistic that Ukrainian refugees have contributed 2.7 per cent to the national GDP as a compelling counter to narratives portraying refugees as burdens.

36. She expressed gratitude for support to the whole-of-route approach and ongoing cooperation with IOM, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). On age, gender and diversity, she confirmed that it remains a cornerstone of UNHCR programming, supported by a recent accountability report and evaluation. Turning to the Global Refugee Forum and pledge implementation, she noted that 591 pledges had been fulfilled, with 1,300 underway. She encouraged member States to use the December meeting to demonstrate responsibility-sharing and make new commitments in areas such as solutions, integration and humanitarian assistance. On returns, she recognized the importance of voluntary return as a human right and acknowledged returns to Ukraine, Afghanistan and the Syrian Arab Republic under adverse conditions. She stressed that returns must occur in conditions of safety and dignity to be sustainable. Regarding resettlement and complementary pathways, she commended Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Sweden and Norway and for either maintaining or expanding quotas and for exploring innovative approaches such as labour mobility, education and family reunification.

37. She also praised Colombia, Chile and others for supporting regional processes such as Cartagena+40, the MIRPS and the Chile Declaration, as well as the Rabat and Khartoum Processes, which address humanitarian challenges in the context of mixed population movements. Finally, she addressed the importance of fair and effective asylum systems, acknowledging growing concerns and reaffirming the position of UNHCR on the expedited return of those not in need of protection and lawful transfer to countries where effective protection is available. She noted that UNHCR is engaged in continued discussions with interested States on this topic and is ready to further elaborate on its views. She concluded by noting that questions regarding sustainable responses, budgeting, engagement with the private sector and links between refugee response plans and humanitarian response plans will be addressed in dedicated sessions later in the meeting.

38. The **Director of the Division of International Protection (UNHCR)** thanked delegations for their support to UNHCR, its field teams and displaced and stateless persons. She noted that UNHCR is adapting to challenging circumstances through a more agile, multifunctional model and strong partnerships with United Nations agencies, governments and affected communities. Localization remains a priority, though not all local partners could be shielded from cuts. She called for continued dialogue and support, particularly in light of gaps in protection capacity. On statelessness, she encouraged States to implement pledges from the Global Refugee Forum and join the Global Alliance to End Statelessness. She reaffirmed the commitment of UNHCR to maintain a focus on gender-based violence and child protection responses, despite reduced capacity. Highlighting the importance of the route-based approach, she called for cross-border collaboration and sustained dialogue

among States along key routes. She emphasized the centrality of protection as a shared responsibility of the entire humanitarian system and welcomed support for fair and efficient asylum systems, expressing readiness to engage on reforms. She concluded by thanking States for their support of the mandates of UNHCR and stressed the need for collective efforts to better serve refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons and internally displaced people.

(b) Durable solutions and complementary pathways, including implementation of the ExCom conclusion (EC/76/SC/CRP.12)

39. The **Director of the Division of International Protection (UNHCR)** presented Conference Room Paper 12 on the efforts of UNHCR to support durable solutions and complementary pathways. She noted progress, including the adoption of Conclusion No. 117, a rise in refugee returns to 1.6 million in 2024 and the highest resettlement levels since 2016, though overall commitments declined. She stressed the need for access to legal status and inclusion in national systems to secure sustainable solutions and highlighted initiatives in Latin America and the Sahel. Complementary pathways, including education, labour mobility and family reunification, are expanding, with countries like France, Italy, Japan and Canada integrating refugees into migration systems. Continued access to documentation and refugee participation in shaping solutions remain essential. She concluded by calling for international cooperation and investment to ensure that displacement becomes a temporary, not permanent, condition.

40. The representative of **Uganda** expressed appreciation for the update on the implementation of Conclusion No. 117, which her country had helped negotiate. While awaiting the Africa Group's statement to officially align with it, she emphasized that rising displacement figures reflect failure, not success, in addressing root causes and delivering durable solutions. She mentioned that her country, hosting nearly two million refugees, sees very few returns and drastic drops in resettlement, with only 411 refugees resettled this year, less than 0.08 per cent of the total. She urged that all three durable solutions, voluntary return, resettlement and local integration, be treated with equal importance. Highlighting her country's position in a volatile region, she stressed that calls for return must respect the principle of non-refoulement and that fewer resettlement opportunities leave host countries burdened. She welcomed upcoming resettlement consultations and called for resettlement to be discussed with the same seriousness as self-reliance and inclusion.

41. The representative of **Kenya** said that her country aligned with the statement delivered by the representative of Cameroon on behalf of the Africa Group. She highlighted the launch of the SHARIKA Plan in her country on 28 March 2025, part of its national pledges at the second Global Refugee Forum, focused on socioeconomic inclusion and transforming refugee camps into integrated settlements. She called on UNHCR to advocate for funding to support the SHARIKA Plan and to reconsider cuts to the Department of Refugee Services. She stressed the importance of maintaining momentum from the Global Refugee Forum and urged partners to match her country's pledges ahead of the upcoming High-Level Officials Meeting. She cautioned that cuts to education funding undermine refugee self-reliance and emphasized the need for continued support for tertiary education to enable access to labour-related complementary pathways. Expressing concern over the sharp drop in resettlement opportunities and increased eligibility restrictions in 2025, she urged greater responsibility-sharing to alleviate the burden on major host countries. While reaffirming voluntary repatriation as the preferred solution, she noted its decline and called for enhanced support to peace efforts and investments in infrastructure, education, health, governance and development to support return and reintegration. She urged UNHCR to strengthen partnerships to promote stability and prevent displacement, cautioning that failure to do so risks lost generations, poverty and global fragility.

42. The representative of **Spain** thanked UNHCR for the detailed information and reaffirmed his country's commitment to multilateralism and international humanitarian action. The representative welcomed efforts to link traditional durable solutions, such as voluntary return, local reintegration and resettlement, with complementary pathways like family reunification, labour mobility and education. He stressed the importance of shared responsibility and international cooperation as outlined in the Global Compact on Refugees and supported measures to enhance the interoperability of identity systems. He emphasized

that returns must occur in conditions of safety, dignity and sustainability, backed by international support for post-conflict recovery. He argued that his country views resettlement and complementary pathways as mutually reinforcing and welcomed upcoming resettlement negotiations in Geneva. He concluded by highlighting the need to integrate gender, age and diversity perspectives in all responses and to strengthen host community resilience, reiterating Spain's commitment to inclusive, rights-based solutions.

43. The representative of **Canada** welcomed the updates on the implementation of the Executive Committee's conclusion on durable solutions and complementary pathways, emphasizing that access to such solutions was critical for those in need of protection. She underscored that expanding legal pathways remains essential and that equitable burden and responsibility-sharing were vital as the number of refugees continues to rise. She said that her country supports efforts to broaden third-country solutions, including through initiatives like the Regional Asylum Capacity Building Initiative, the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, the Priority Situations Core Group and its participation in global task forces on education and labour mobility. She stated that growing third-country solutions demonstrate solidarity with hosting countries and reiterated her country's commitment to complementary pathways as practical, sustainable responses. She highlighted programmes in Canada such as the Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot, which facilitates economic immigration by recognizing the human and social capital of refugees. In line with the Global Compact, she said that her country is committed to expanding the number and types of admission pathways and welcomed the whole-of-society approach of UNHCR, including refugee and community participation. The representative added that Canada remains committed to its long-standing resettlement programmes, including government-assisted and community-sponsored streams. She noted her country's response to crises in Afghanistan and the Sudan, as well as the renewed commitment to resettling lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex persons (LGBTQI+) refugees. She concluded by stating that Canada looks forward to welcoming over 38,000 refugees through its resettlement and complementary pathways in 2025.

44. The representative of **Switzerland** thanked the Chair and welcomed the report on lasting solutions and complementary pathways. He highlighted progress in contexts such as the Syrian Arab Republic, the Central African Republic and Burundi and stressed that achieving durable solutions requires the engagement of all stakeholders, including displaced persons, host countries, the international community, civil society and the private sector. He emphasized the importance of socioeconomic inclusion, increased support for low- and middle-income countries and the creation of conditions for safe and dignified return. He outlined his country's commitments, including the extension of its resettlement programme, contributions to the Fund for Solutions to Internal Displacement and support for host countries and return initiatives. Noting the restructuring and systemic reforms of UNHCR, he questioned the organization's future role and called for strong and ambitious engagement from all actors.

45. The representative of **Ethiopia** reaffirmed her country's strong support for the Global Compact on Refugees and emphasized the importance of durable solutions and complementary pathways. While acknowledging progress in 2024, she expressed concern over the projected decline in resettlement opportunities in 2025 due to stricter eligibility criteria and reduced quotas. She urged resettlement countries to demonstrate greater political will and flexibility. At the national level, she highlighted her country's implementation of its 2023 pledges, including issuing national ID cards to over 155,000 refugees and shifting to a settlement-based approach that promotes social cohesion and self-reliance. She noted the signing of a memorandum of understanding with 12 national institutions to integrate refugees into the national statistical system. On resettlement and complementary pathways, she reported that her country submitted nearly 6,000 cases in 2024, with over 2,100 departures in December 2024 alone. She concluded by calling for predictable, equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing and reaffirmed her country's commitment to inclusive, rights-based and protection-focused responses.

46. The representative of **Brazil** said that her country appreciated the update of UNHCR and ongoing efforts to advance durable solutions and complementary pathways. She reiterated her country's strong commitment in line with Executive Committee Conclusion

117 and the Global Compact on Refugees. She said that her country had progressive refugee and migration frameworks, including a migration law that provides humanitarian visas to individuals from countries experiencing instability, conflict, disasters or serious human rights violations. She noted that migrants entering with humanitarian visas may apply for permanent residency and become eligible for naturalization after two years, reflecting a commitment to long-term integration. She added that her country continued to grant humanitarian visas to nationals of Afghanistan, Ukraine, Haiti and the Syrian Arab Republic. The representative said that her country was recognized for its leadership in family reunification and highlighted a resettlement and community sponsorship programme launched in 2023 for Afghan nationals, blending complementary pathways with traditional resettlement. She noted that this programme addressed challenges such as cultural differences and psychosocial needs through support with documentation, language courses, labour market inclusion and access to public services. She concluded by stressing the urgent need for equitable burden and responsibility-sharing in light of declining resettlement quotas.

47. The representative of **Côte d'Ivoire, speaking on behalf of the Africa Group**, thanked UNHCR for the documentation provided and noted that multiple humanitarian, security and climate crises have disrupted the management and protection of displaced persons, particularly affecting the implementation of durable solutions and complementary pathways as set out in the Global Compact on Refugees. He welcomed the progress made in disseminating information on return conditions, providing protection services and supporting durable reintegration and expressed appreciation for field teams working on community recovery, rapid interventions and voluntary repatriation. He said that countries in the Group had consistently demonstrated hospitality and currently hosted over 45 million displaced persons, nearly one-third of the global total. He emphasized their efforts to promote inclusion and protection, including through documentation, social protection and reintegration plans and welcomed the support fund for solutions to internal displacement. He recalled the principle of global solidarity and burden-sharing, noting that resettlement goals for 2024 had already been exceeded by 31 per cent. However, he cautioned that the organization's urgent funding needs threatened collective progress. While not financial donors, he said that the Group recognizes and values the efforts of donor partners who provide timely and sustainable support. He concluded by calling for solutions grounded in shared values, reaffirming the Group's readiness to engage in dialogue with UNHCR to address shared challenges and promote the rights and resilience of displaced populations.

48. The representative of **Ecuador** said that her country appreciated the reports submitted on lasting solutions and complementary pathways and welcomed the progress made, particularly the implementation of Executive Committee Conclusion 117, which recognized that sustainable solutions require integral, inclusive and forward-looking approaches. Drawing from her country's experience as a host State, she emphasized that socioeconomic and legal inclusion of refugees is essential for self-sufficiency and durable solutions, noting that individuals in need of international protection have access to education, healthcare and formal employment. She underscored the value of complementary pathways such as family reunification and labour and educational mobility, calling them real alternatives to dangerous displacement and urging States to remove legal and administrative barriers that hinder their implementation. She called for strengthened international cooperation and predictable financing, cautioning that budget cuts are undermining the capacity of UNHCR and host countries to respond effectively. She stressed that solidarity must be sustained, responsible and responsive to the needs of countries facing constant mixed flows. She concluded by reaffirming her country's commitment to the pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum and expressed hope that the upcoming High-Level Officials Meeting in December would help advance the link between international protection and development.

49. The representative of the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** welcomed the update on progress made and challenges encountered in advancing durable solutions and complementary pathways for refugees. He noted the efforts of many countries to include refugees in national economic and social services and supported the view that inclusion and self-reliance contribute to durable solutions. He said that his country was pleased that many refugees had been able to return voluntarily to the Syrian Arab Republic and agreed with UNHCR on the urgent need to strengthen conditions for return. He also welcomed progress on internal displacement returns in the Central African Republic and

commended the work of the Internal Displacement Solutions Fund and the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund in promoting social cohesion and community resilience. He emphasized the importance of translating Global Refugee Forum pledges into action ahead of this year's High-Level Officials Meeting, which he said would be a key opportunity for the international community to align its strategy on forced displacement with the current global funding landscape and to drive coherent and effective progress.

50. The representative of **the Sudan** said that her country aligned with the statement delivered by the representative of Côte d'Ivoire on behalf of the Africa Group and thanked UNHCR for the update provided. While acknowledging the global progress outlined in the report, she said that the situation for Sudanese forcibly displaced persons remained dire, with most excluded from resettlement mechanisms and complementary pathways. She highlighted that survivors, particularly those affected by atrocities committed by the Rapid Support Forces, including sexual violence, had limited to no access to third-country solutions, with resettlement quotas remaining negligible and other pathways, such as education, employment and family reunification, often inaccessible due to documentation challenges, restrictive policies and neglect. She said that internally displaced persons within the country continued to face dire conditions, with systematic attacks on infrastructure further undermining prospects for safe or voluntary return. She stressed that displaced Sudanese were trapped without safety, choices or a path forward. In response, she called for four key actions: prioritizing Sudanese refugees and internally displaced people in complementary pathway planning, ensuring flexible funding for host countries and humanitarian actors, strengthening protection monitoring and survivor-centred support, particularly for victims of gender-based violence and investing in legal identity systems to prevent exploitation and statelessness. She concluded by stating that while the Sudanese people had shown extraordinary resilience, they needed concrete action to access durable solutions and survive ongoing displacement.

The meeting rose at 18:04 p.m.
