



General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 November 2024

Original: English
English, French and Spanish only

Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Seventy-fifth session

Summary record of the 767th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 15 October 2024, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Gorely (Vice-Chair)(Australia)

Contents

Agenda item 3: High-level segment on statelessness and general debate (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of the present record to the Documents Management Section (DMS-DCM@un.org).

Any corrected records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.



*In the absence of Ms. Stasch (Germany), Ms. Gorely (Australia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.
The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

Agenda item 3: High-level segment on statelessness and general debate (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Espinosa Olivera** (Mexico), speaking also on behalf of Australia, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea and Türkiye, said that the members of that cross-regional platform were deeply concerned about the increasing numbers of people being forced to flee their homes and countries as a result of conflict, persecution, and violence. They commended the efforts and solidarity of host countries, 75 per cent of which were low- and middle-income economies. While they acknowledged the contributions of donor countries, the needs continued to grow, and resources remained insufficient. Sustained financial commitments, a broader donor base and increased funding flexibility were needed to ensure the provision of assistance and protection to forcibly displaced and stateless persons, while also supporting host communities.

2. The work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) remained vital, and the delegations of Australia, Indonesia, Mexico, the Republic of Korea and Türkiye commended its efforts to address a significant number of new emergencies and support countries facing multiple crises. They offered their condolences for the UNHCR staff who had lost their lives owing to conflict and violence and called for compliance with international humanitarian law.

3. Australia, Indonesia, Mexico, the Republic of Korea and Türkiye promoted robust and accessible protection mechanisms. In seeking solutions, the specific needs of persons in vulnerable situations must be addressed and the human rights of displaced and stateless persons must be upheld. They wished to encourage States to support UNHCR in fostering greater cooperation with host countries and other relevant partners, with the aim of developing inclusive policies and enhancing the self-reliance of displaced persons. They advocated for the expansion of resettlement and complementary pathways.

4. Further steps must be taken to end statelessness. However, he recognized the progress that had been made during the previous decade under the I Belong campaign to end statelessness and welcomed the high-level segment on statelessness. Australia, Indonesia, Mexico, the Republic of Korea and Türkiye were committed to fostering collaboration and partnerships that enhanced their collective capacity to respond effectively to displacement and statelessness, including with local communities, the private sector, civil society organizations and refugee-led organizations. They stood united in their commitment to addressing the challenges and root causes of forced displacement and statelessness and would continue strengthening their efforts to effectively implement the pledges made in connection with the second Global Refugee Forum, in close collaboration with UNHCR.

5. **Mr. Mehdi** (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Group, said that the OIC Group highly appreciated the remarkable contribution made by UNHCR in assisting forcibly displaced persons and refugees worldwide. The OIC countries were countries of origin, major host countries and UNHCR donors. In recent years, a series of humanitarian crises triggered by high-intensity conflicts and adverse climate impacts had considerably exacerbated the scale, scope and complexity of displacement situations and had particularly affected the OIC member States. The OIC Group called upon UNHCR to enhance its support to the OIC host Governments and communities while pursuing durable solutions, including through partnerships to address the root causes of conflicts and climate-induced catastrophes.

6. In order for there to be holistic protection and solutions for refugees, it was critical that the principles of international cooperation and equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing should be effectively applied. The OIC Group recognized that the Global Compact on Refugees embodied those principles and looked forward to the implementation of the pledges made at Global Refugee Forums held in 2019 and 2023. The Group called upon UNHCR to continue to measure the impact of hosting, assisting and protecting refugees, assess gaps in international cooperation and find new solutions, in close consultation with the host countries.

7. The international community should join hands to support the severely underfunded regional refugee response plan for the Sudan, where 11 million people had been displaced in the previous 18 months. The OIC Group appreciated the work done by UNHCR for various social groups and wished to emphasize the importance of continuing that work with full respect for the laws and cultures of local partners.

8. The OIC Group unequivocally condemned the attacks on refugee camps in Gaza and the recent escalation in Israeli war crimes in Lebanon. It had been a year of destruction and displacement for thousands. According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), more than 42,000 Palestinians had been killed in the preceding 12 months, including 17,000 innocent children. Furthermore, 226 UNRWA staff had lost their lives while delivering humanitarian assistance, which was a blatant violation of international humanitarian law. The Group commended the High Commissioner for Refugees for his recent visit to Lebanon and Syria and for drawing attention to the avoidable but growing crisis. It stressed the need for all States to condemn military attacks on displaced persons and refugee camps as a crime and called for full accountability.

9. **Mr. Yáñez Deleuze** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations, said that the Group of Friends attached particular importance to the Office's mandate because the political, economic, social and environmental dynamics of recent decades had triggered major emergencies requiring international protection for thousands of people. In addition to providing international protection, UNHCR must also seek durable solutions, including by planning for responses from the outset of refugee situations, addressing the root causes and helping Governments fulfil their international obligations. Voluntary repatriation was the preferred solution in the majority of refugee situations.

10. In view of the gravity of the situation on the ground, the Group of Friends called for the urgent adoption of measures to provide international protection to the heroic Palestinian people, who had endured years of brutal aggression, until those responsible had been brought to international justice. It considered that the best way to ensure sustained progress towards a more peaceful and secure world was full adherence to the spirit in which the United Nations had been established, as clearly enshrined in its Charter, including the promotion of friendly relations among nations on the basis of respect for the principle of equal rights, self-determination and the settlement of disputes through dialogue and cooperation.

11. The Group of Friends regarded unilateralism, extremism, exceptionalist conceptions and foreign interventionism as being among the main root causes of global crises that generated massive human displacement. It wished to emphasize that the application of unilateral coercive measures against entire peoples, in contravention of all rules of international law, represented the most sophisticated cause of displacement by depriving more than one third of humanity of the full enjoyment of their human rights. Moreover, human actions, based on a model of unequal economic accumulation and the exploitation of resources, had exacerbated the current climate catastrophe, threatening the fragile coexistence between humans and nature, generating extreme natural events and resulting in mobility crises that had to be addressed through solidarity and cooperation.

12. In the field of humanitarian assistance, it was important to stress the importance of full adherence to the core principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and operational independence, as set out in General Assembly resolution 46/182. The provision of such assistance was one of the most critical tasks of the United Nations and required financial resources, technical expertise and high-risk operational capacity. The Group of Friends called on the international community to lend support in that regard, including through voluntary, unearmarked contributions. The Group of Friends wished to express its appreciation for the work of UNHCR and underscore the need to address issues inherent to the Office's mandate from a perspective of human rights, dialogue and cooperation, while avoiding, at all times, the politicization of refuge.

13. **Mr. Adom** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that his country welcomed the implementation of pledges made at the second Global Refugee Forum and the use of regional legal frameworks, including the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Specific

Aspects of the Right to a Nationality and the Eradication of Statelessness in Africa, to more effectively address statelessness. In connection with the I Belong campaign and the launch of the new Global Alliance to End Statelessness, and in line with the recommendations under the Abidjan Declaration of Ministers of ECOWAS Member States on Eradication of Statelessness, Côte d'Ivoire had adopted a national plan for the eradication of statelessness and had put in place the first national commissions on eligibility for stateless status in Africa.

14. While the number of displaced and stateless persons continued to increase because of conflicts and the harmful effects of climate change, the considerable reductions in the Office's and host countries' financial resources jeopardized their ability to host and help them. There were some 61,000 asylum-seekers in Côte d'Ivoire. With assistance from UNHCR, 2,182 shelters had been built for them, healthcare and education services had been provided and supplies made available. In 2024, the Government had undertaken to issue biometric passports to refugees and stateless persons for the same fee as for nationals, at a cost to the State of \$927 for each passport issued to a refugee.

15. Côte d'Ivoire welcomed the financial support being provided by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to the States of the subregion, including some \$1 million to Côte d'Ivoire, to cope with the displacement stemming from the security situation in the Sahel. Côte d'Ivoire urged the international community to seek to address the root causes of forced displacement and pursue durable solutions.

16. **Ms. Bemaka-Soui** (Observer for the Central African Republic) said that conflicts, economic crises and climate change-related disasters continued to force millions of people to flee their homes. A series of crises in the Central African Republic had led to large-scale displacement. There were currently more than 543,000 internally displaced persons in the country and 740,000 refugees from the Central African Republic in neighbouring countries. In addition, flows of refugees were arriving in the Central African Republic from neighbouring countries, including more than 25,000 refugees from the Sudan and South Sudan and more than 30,000 from Chad.

17. More than 1 million nationals of the Central African Republic were at risk of statelessness. Steps taken by the country to eradicate statelessness, a goal that it had set for itself in 2014 under the I Belong campaign, included the issuance of more than 1,000 birth certificates in Bangui alone and the deployment of enumerators around the country, including in areas of return, to identify persons with no official documents.

18. The Government had implemented a national strategy for durable solutions for internally displaced persons and returnees for the period 2018–2021 and had recently revised it and extended it for the period 2024–2028. The strategy reflected the Government's commitment to promoting the return and reintegration of internally displaced persons and refugees from the Central African Republic who were in other countries, and it supported the efforts being made under the Yaoundé Declaration on Solutions in the Context of Forced Displacement related to the Central African Republic Crisis and the solutions support platform, which had been launched in November 2023 and was chaired by the Central African Republic. The main obstacle to the strategy's implementation was that it required significant resources. The Central African Republic counted on the international community for solidarity and durable solutions.

19. **Mr. Praokaew** (Thailand) said that, in response to the High Commissioner's call for additional resources to meet the surging needs in 2024, Thailand had made an unearmarked additional contribution of 1 million baht. As the I Belong campaign drew to a close, the world was still far from being free of statelessness. Thailand therefore welcomed the launch of the Global Alliance to End Statelessness and was delighted to become a member. Thailand was preparing a new national action plan on the legal status and rights of stateless persons, planned to expedite the acquisition of Thai nationality for a large segment of the population, including stateless children born in Thailand, and looked forward to continued support from UNHCR, the United Nations Network on Migration and civil society in conducting outreach, providing legal assistance to stateless persons and training officials.

20. Thailand appreciated the support that it received from UNHCR and partner countries in providing protection, assistance and durable solutions to the various groups of displaced persons that it hosted. Thailand had implemented a national screening mechanism in

September 2023. More than 200 persons had submitted applications under the mechanism, and seven had been granted protected status. Support was needed from UNHCR to strengthen the mechanism through training and information-sharing and to provide interpretation for certain local and ethnic minority dialects.

21. Thailand was grateful to the United States of America for its offer of group resettlement for displaced persons from Myanmar. The first group had already departed. Thailand also wished to thank the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand for accepting displaced Rohingya. Thailand remained concerned about the worsening conditions in Rohingya camps in Bangladesh, and had contributed 1.6 million baht through the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme to strengthen education and contribute to food security in the camps.

22. Given the ongoing conflict in Myanmar, assistance and solutions for the Rohingya and other groups of displaced persons in host and transit countries in South-East Asia as well as in the country of origin must not be forgotten. Thailand provided humanitarian assistance to the people of Myanmar through various channels and had provided its first cross-border assistance in March 2024, allowing more than 56,000 people fleeing unrest to stay temporarily in designated areas along the border. Thai authorities, with support from local communities, provided them with essential items. All had since voluntarily returned to Myanmar. Thailand continued to explore alternatives as to how it could better assist the vulnerable population in the area along the border.

23. **Ms. Córdoba Ulate** (Costa Rica) said that, as the implementation period for the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness and the I Belong campaign came to a close, Costa Rica had fulfilled 100 per cent of the pledges that it had made under them in both 2014 and 2019. Costa Rica wished to recognize the invaluable technical and financial assistance provided by UNHCR and the involvement of civil society organizations, particularly the Servicio Jesuita para Migrantes Costa Rica, in that effort.

24. Costa Rica had amended its laws and procedures to introduce a model of biopsychosocial care for persons applying for stateless status that took account of the issues of vulnerability, discrimination and exclusion in their broadest sense; to eliminate the risk of statelessness; to guarantee access to a nationality for stateless persons; and to promote the full recognition of the rights of stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness.

25. The Global Action Plan to End Statelessness and the I Belong campaign had shown that transnational tools could bring attention to the issue of statelessness and guide States' efforts in moving towards the shared objective of preventing and eradicating it. The Global Alliance to End Statelessness, which Costa Rica had joined in July 2024, constituted a valuable opportunity to continue consolidating those efforts. The Alliance could also serve as a catalyst for regional and international commitments on statelessness. Costa Rica also welcomed the introduction of the solution seekers programme, which it had joined in August 2024 as part of the Global Alliance.

26. Costa Rica would develop a workplan under that programme to reflect the pledges that it had made at the Global Refugee Forum, such as those to increase its efforts to identify stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness in Costa Rica and provide them with temporary and permanent solutions. Statelessness constituted a global humanitarian challenge. Costa Rica respectfully called on States to continue taking steps to ensure the effective enjoyment of the right to a nationality and to redouble their efforts to prevent and eradicate statelessness in the world.

27. **Mr. Chan** (Philippines) said that the Philippines stood with the international community in safeguarding the rights and dignity of displaced and stateless persons, including those in particularly vulnerable situations – women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities and Indigenous Peoples – whom it had included in the Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028. The Philippines had developed a national action plan to end statelessness, which was aligned with the I Belong campaign, had enacted a law recognizing foundlings born in the Philippines as citizens and, through its judiciary, had issued rules to facilitate the naturalization of recognized refugees and stateless persons. The Government was advocating for a law that would establish an independent office for the protection of refugees and stateless persons. The Philippines welcomed and fully supported the

cooperation between Japan and UNHCR to expand birth registration initiatives in certain local government units in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and reduce the risk of statelessness. The Philippines was proud to announce its commitment to join the Global Alliance to End Statelessness and serve as a solution seeker and a member of the Alliance's advisory committee.

28. The Philippines continued to enhance the legal frameworks for its pilot complementary pathways programme for Rohingya refugee students. The Philippines reiterated its strong support for UNHCR. Governments and stakeholders must ensure that UNHCR had the resources to fulfil its mandate, regardless of how modest a contribution they might make, especially for middle-income countries like the Philippines. The Philippines trusted that UNHCR would continue to adhere closely to its mandate and fulfil it efficiently, effectively and with accountability. The Philippines renewed its unwavering commitment to the protection of refugees, stateless persons, internally displaced persons and other persons of concern and stood ready to work alongside UNHCR, other States and the international community to ensure that protection.

29. **Mr. Atroshenko** (Russian Federation) said that the Russian Federation welcomed the results of I Belong campaign. It had been a traditional supporter of the Office's activities to reduce statelessness and was particularly concerned about the massive scale of statelessness in many European countries. Reducing statelessness, especially in Europe, must remain a priority for UNHCR. The Russian Federation would continue to make contributions for that purpose.

30. His Government encouraged stateless persons permanently residing in the country to acquire Russian citizenship. Statelessness had declined in Russia every year since 1992, with some 800,000 stateless persons having obtained Russian nationality. A new federal citizenship law that had entered into force in 2023 had simplified the acquisition of Russian citizenship by stateless persons and specifically addressed the prevention of statelessness among children.

31. Russia welcomed the humanitarian work done by UNHCR. That work had proved to be especially effective in the face of the unprecedented rise in forced displacement and large-scale mixed movements. It supported the Office's efforts to increase the effectiveness of international protection on the basis of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. The Office's activities should remain non-political, in keeping with the principles of neutrality, humanity, independence and impartiality, in full compliance with its mandate.

32. The Russian Federation shared the Office's concerns regarding the practice of pushbacks against asylum-seekers at Europe's borders and the possibility that European countries would offshore their refugee status determination procedures to countries outside Europe.

33. Russia supported the continued facilitation by UNHCR of Russian initiatives for the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of Syrian refugees. It was carefully following the escalation of the situation in the Middle East and welcomed the Office's efforts to support the more than 250,000 Lebanese and Syrian refugees arriving in Syria from Lebanon. Russia intended to contribute financially to the emergency appeal for international support recently launched by the High Commissioner.

34. A new bill on asylum in the Russian Federation had been drafted, incorporating basic principles enshrined in the Convention, including non-refoulement. Over 13,000 people from 73 States had been granted asylum in the Russian Federation. In 2022, over 5 million forcibly displaced persons arrived in the country from the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson Provinces and Ukraine. UNHCR staff could verify the protection extended to those persons by the Russian authorities and had regular, free access to the centres where they were being accommodated.

35. Over 111,000 people had had to be evacuated following the incursion on 6 August 2024 of the Ukrainian armed forces into Kursk Province. There were 588 temporary accommodation centres, with 54,000 beds, in 74 constituent entities of the Russian Federation. The evacuees were given all the necessary support, including medical,

psychological, financial and other assistance. Kursk Province had been provided with 4,500 tons of humanitarian goods. The Russian Federation would continue to work with and provide every possible support to UNHCR.

36. **Ms. Velimirović** (Serbia) said that Serbia, as a country on the Western Balkan route, had been facing mixed movements for over a decade. It provided shelter and support to all persons in vulnerable situations and was committed to creating the conditions for permanent and sustainable solutions for all displaced persons.

37. Despite the efforts made under the regional housing programme and the housing programmes of the Serbian Government, 8,000 families that had fled from the former Yugoslavia and acquired Serbian citizenship were still in need of a permanent housing solution. Additional support would be needed to finally resolve the refugee issues in the region.

38. Serbia ensured access to asylum to all persons seeking protection from persecution. Asylum-seekers were integrated into Serbian society in close cooperation with UNHCR. Since the outbreak of the refugee crisis in Ukraine, Serbia had been actively involved in the provision of protection and assistance to Ukrainian citizens. The new pledges announced by Serbia at the second Global Forum for Refugees reaffirmed its readiness to address the rise in the number of refugees in the world.

39. She wished to draw the Committee's attention to an unacceptable situation in the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija. There were 196,000 internally displaced persons in Serbia and more than 17,000 internally displaced Serbs and non-Albanians in the province. However, the severe security situation in Kosovo and Metohija and the existential threat to Serbs and other non-Albanians due to the hostile activities of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Pristina made return to the province impossible. In the first nine months of 2024, there had been 87 ethnically motivated attacks against Serbs, particularly returnees, in most cases with no legal proceedings being brought against the perpetrators. Over the previous 20 years, only 1.9 per cent of internally displaced persons had made a sustainable return to Kosovo and Metohija. Because internally displaced persons in Serbia were unable to exercise their basic right to choose between local integration and sustainable return, durable solutions could not be achieved. The obligations under the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations must be met in order to ensure the conditions for sustainable return.

40. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he was grateful for the support for UNHCR that had been expressed in the three statements delivered on behalf of the delegations of Australia, Indonesia, Mexico, the Republic of Korea and Türkiye, the OIC Group and the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations, which spanned different regions, countries and cultures. The Office would continue to strive to be as non-political as possible, as urged by the Group of Friends. He would also invite States to help keep the Office's work non-political, a quality in which he himself strongly believed.

41. He wished to commend Thailand for the great efforts it had made to address statelessness, which provided a good example to other countries, and for its efforts to help relieve the humanitarian consequences of the situation in Myanmar. UNHCR would continue to rely on the cooperation of Thailand in its efforts to help the people affected by that situation. He welcomed the information shared by the Philippines on its own efforts to combat statelessness through sound planning instruments and legal frameworks, and he wished to thank it and all the other countries that had announced that they would be joining the Global Alliance to End Statelessness.

42. He welcomed the steps taken by Costa Rica to reduce statelessness and was grateful to it for its cooperation in addressing significant flows of refugees and migrants. Costa Rica was one of the main host countries for refugees in Central America, and UNHCR would continue to support it both directly and through regional mechanisms such as the comprehensive regional protection and solutions framework.

43. Côte d'Ivoire had made important strides in reducing statelessness. He wished to assure Côte d'Ivoire and the other countries of the region that were receiving refugees from

the countries of the Sahel that UNHCR was ready to support them and mobilize additional resources to address the new challenges. He also wished to express his gratitude to ECOWAS for the contributions that it was providing to the countries of the region to address those challenges. He appreciated the political will in the Central African Republic to bring home its nationals who were refugees in other countries of the region, and UNHCR would continue to support the Central African Republic in its efforts to do so in accordance with principles and practices agreed on under the Yaoundé Declaration.

44. He wished to reassure the Russian Federation that the Office's efforts to reduce statelessness would continue to be deployed across all regions, including in Europe. He also welcomed its stated support for the appeal launched by UNHCR a few days earlier and acknowledged the point made regarding the Office's access to temporary centres. UNHCR remained available to support the work done to receive people at those centres. The regional housing programme in Serbia had been very successful, and he regretted that further efforts were required under it. Although UNHCR was no longer part of that programme, it would continue to support the efforts of Serbia to find the needed resources. He acknowledged the unresolved plight of displaced persons from Kosovo. As he had stated previously, broader political problems needed to be resolved before a solution to their plight could be found.

45. **Mr. Mura** (Italy) said that he wished to commend all humanitarian workers working on the ground, who faced constant emergencies and unacceptable security threats. In 2023, 280 aid workers had been killed; in 2024, the figure was already over 170. Italy expressed its deepest condolences to UNHCR for the deaths of two members of its staff in Lebanon in September and urged all parties to the conflict there to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

46. Italy wished to express its unwavering support for UNHCR and welcomed the collaboration between UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on a whole-of-route, rights-based approach to mixed movements, an approach that his Government's policies on migration and asylum would continue to apply, in line with the new pact on migration and asylum. Under the Regional Development and Protection Programme for North Africa, Italy would continue to support host country efforts in terms of reception, access to international protection and durable solutions in mixed movement contexts. The Welcome Programme of the European Union offered a concrete example of how integration and the expansion of access to employment could be approached.

47. Italy welcomed the results of the I Belong campaign and the launch of the Global Alliance to End Statelessness. Thus far in 2024, Italy had provided more than \$42 million for the Office's humanitarian activities, and private donations from Italy had reached over \$14 million. Italy welcomed a sustainable programming approach that promoted inclusion and the self-reliance and resilience of displaced persons and host communities. It steadfastly supported the Office's work in combating all forms of discrimination and commended UNHCR on its commitment to inclusiveness, diversity and gender equity in its policies and organizational culture.

48. **Ms. Bejanishvili** (Georgia) said that Georgia appreciated the Office's tireless work in assisting forcibly displaced people worldwide. Raging conflicts in different parts of the world, including the war of aggression by Russia against Ukraine, continued to worsen the already dire situation of displacement. Georgia was currently providing accommodation, education and healthcare services for more than 28,000 war-affected Ukrainians.

49. In line with the pledges made by Georgia at the Global Refugee Forum in 2023 regarding its laws on international protection and the integration of asylum-seekers, Georgia provided social assistance, healthcare, education and employment services to persons under international protection, and it was implementing an integration programme. After capacity-building efforts involving UNHCR, the country's integration centres were for the first time able to provide on-site services in different regions.

50. She welcomed the launch of the Global Alliance to End Statelessness. In connection with its pledges to tackle statelessness under the I Belong campaign, Georgia had reduced the residence requirement for naturalization for stateless persons, reduced the service fee for issuing electronic residence permits to persons with stateless status, abolished the service fee for the statelessness determination procedure and granted stateless persons the right to receive

emergency care under the State universal healthcare programme and free State-funded legal aid.

51. Hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons, who had been expelled from the Russian-occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali as a result of several waves of ethnic cleansing, continued to be deprived of their fundamental right to return to their homes. Therefore, the Government of Georgia continued to prioritize the protection of the rights of internally displaced persons, with policies and programmes designed to provide them with decent living conditions and regular social services.

52. The humanitarian and human rights situation in the regions continued to deteriorate. The gross violations of human rights and basic freedoms severely affected the everyday lives of people living there and posed an imminent threat of a new wave of forced displacement. Ethnic discrimination against Georgians continued to take a heavy toll, and, in 2023 alone, Russian occupation forces had claimed lives of two more peaceful Georgian civilians.

53. Despite the gravity of the situation, international human rights mechanisms were continually denied access to the regions by the Russian Federation, the Power exercising effective control on the ground and bearing full responsibility for the human rights violations committed there. Georgia reiterated its call for the Russian Federation to comply with the 2008 Ceasefire Agreement mediated by the European Union, to admit international security and human rights mechanisms, to cease its grave human rights violations, and to ensure the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees to their homes.

54. The Geneva International Discussions provided a unique forum to exert pressure on Russia to implement its international obligations. Regrettably, owing to the continued disruptive actions of Russia, no progress had been achieved on one of the core issues of those discussions: the return of internally displaced persons and refugees to their homes in safety and dignity.

55. **Mr. Garba Moussa** (Observer for the Niger) said that he wished to draw attention to the principles of neutrality, impartiality, humanity and independence that underlay all humanitarian action and the need to ensure that humanitarian work was free of geopolitical and geostrategic considerations and was focused solely on the interests of the vulnerable persons that it was intended to serve.

56. The Niger would honour the pledges it had made with its own resources as well as with support from other members of the international community. With a view to fulfilling those pledges, a monitoring committee would be put in place and a road map drawn up.

57. To prevent statelessness, the Niger was computerizing its civil registration system and had launched a process to amend its asylum legislation in order to provide for a statelessness determination procedure and the establishment of a national commission on eligibility for refugee and stateless status. In adopting its law on the protection of and provision of assistance to internally displaced persons, in December 2018, the Niger had become the first French-speaking African State to incorporate the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa into its domestic legislation. In addition, large-scale civil registration campaigns had been held, with a biometric component that would eventually feed into a secure, interoperable database.

58. The country's geographical location made it a natural crossroads, and it received refugees and displaced persons of various nationalities. Data for 2024 showed more than 900,000 refugees, internally displaced persons, asylum-seekers and returnees. In addition to the existing challenges, floods had caused significant loss of life and property damage. The Niger wished to express its gratitude to the international community and UNCHR for the multifaceted support provided in connection with the protection of refugees and displaced persons.

59. **Mr. Ndomahina** (Observer for Sierra Leone) said that his Government, through its National Commission for Social Action, was committed to the creation of a national budget line for the amendment of the Refugees Protection Act of 2007, with a view to bringing the Act into line with international standards and guaranteeing an effective legal framework for the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers and a sustainable refugee phase-out strategy supported by an operational road map. The road map would ensure the quality, sustainability

and efficiency of the asylum system, paving the way towards the implementation of the National Action Plan on Statelessness and the incorporation of key commitments into national law by 2026. As part of the phase-out strategy, the Government had obtained approval from the ECOWAS Disaster Management Unit to use approximately \$288,000 of the funds provided by the Unit to implement six subprojects of the Tenki Salone project in host communities.

60. The Commission held monthly online meetings with the UNHCR multi-country office in Senegal and worked with it to assess and support the caseload of refugees who were at risk of becoming stateless. Such efforts had enabled two Malian and Sudanese refugees to receive national identity cards within the same time frame as that established for nationals, enjoying freedom of movement and access to basic services in the meantime. A small number of stateless persons had obtained employment through the Productive Social Safety Nets and Youth Employment Project. His Government called on donors to support its efforts to ensure a sustainable phase-out of refugees and guarantee effective legal protection for refugees and asylum-seekers in the country.

61. **Mr. Adam Taïrou** (Benin) said that Benin had ratified the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness in December 2011. In December 2022, the Government had enacted Act No. 2022-31 on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons, under which persons residing in Benin had the right to apply for recognition as a stateless person and enjoy the rights associated with that status, subject to any applicable conditions.

62. In November 2014, the Government had demonstrated its commitment to eradicating statelessness by approving a plan of action in response to the launch of the I Belong campaign. It worked with UNHCR, other United Nations bodies, ECOWAS, the African Union and civil society to reduce the risk of statelessness. Such efforts had led to the amendment of the Beninese Nationality Code to bring it into conformity with international standards, the regularization of the births of 2,500 individuals in vulnerable border communities, the provision of support to municipalities in the north of the country for the establishment of a birth registration system and the delivery of training on statelessness to civil society and media actors. Those activities had enabled the Government to honour the commitments made at the first Global Refugee Forum in 2019. The Government had also received support from the multi-country office in Senegal in launching a capacity-building workshop on the determination of statelessness. As the end of the I Belong campaign approached, it would seek to enhance the skills of stakeholders involved in the protection of stateless persons, establish mechanisms to run regular awareness-raising activities on the topic of birth registration and facilitate the issuance of birth certificates to individuals at risk of statelessness.

63. **Ms. Evuna Andeme** (Observer for Equatorial Guinea) said that States' obligation to address statelessness was more crucial than ever. Her Government was committed to helping guarantee that all individuals had a safe home by supporting countries and communities to address the factors that turned areas into danger zones and creating the conditions for safe and dignified returns.

64. African States had recently met to review the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The States members of the Economic Community of Central African States were working tirelessly to harmonize their migration policies, share best practices and develop common approaches to migration governance. A high-level humanitarian forum would be held in Equatorial Guinea, with the aim of further harmonizing regional policies on humanitarian crises. One goal was to create a regional humanitarian fund and stimulus package for civil society and private sector actors in order to support government efforts to facilitate the integration of refugees into local communities.

65. Ending statelessness was more than a humanitarian imperative; it was a social and economic necessity. While Equatorial Guinea had not faced significant influxes of refugees, stateless persons or internally displaced persons, the Government was committed to engaging proactively on the issue of regional migration governance. It had established robust systems to handle any displacement situation and was developing a new law on forced displacement and a centre to manage the issue, both of which would be operational by early 2026.

66. The Government supported the Global Alliance to End Statelessness and was committed to pursuing its objectives. Nonetheless, it was aware that international humanitarian funding remained unpredictable and insufficient. It was proud of the newly established African Humanitarian Agency and its corresponding fund, which would play a significant role in addressing emergencies on the continent. Displacement had become a protracted problem, which meant that humanitarian responses needed to be fundamentally reimagined. She wished to thank UNHCR and its regional office in Yaoundé for supporting her Government's efforts to address forced displacement and committing to work with the Central African region to tackle the challenges faced by refugees, internally displaced persons, stateless persons, asylum-seekers and returnees.

67. **Mr. Harahsheh** (Jordan) said that he wished to reiterate the call made by King Abdullah II at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023 for the international community to remain focused on the refugee crisis. Jordan was a model for host countries thanks to the Government's efforts to ensure that refugees received the support they deserved and were able to lead dignified lives. It was currently hosting almost 3.9 million refugees, including 1.3 million Syrians. The vast majority of Syrian refugees lived within host communities, placing significant pressure on services. In the area of education, for instance, more than 155,000 Syrian children were enrolled in Jordanian public schools, almost 200 of which had been forced to operate in double shifts. The Government had issued more than 460,000 work permits to Syrian refugees in the past six years, while the unemployment rate among Jordanians stood at 24 per cent. That situation had created an unsustainable financial strain. The Government's ability to provide refugees with essential services was contingent on support from the international community, which was diminishing. In 2023, just 29 per cent of the funding required for the operation of the Jordan Response Plan had been received. That figure was even lower in 2024; any further falls would lead to cuts in services and have an adverse impact on refugees.

68. The voluntary return of refugees to their home countries was the optimal solution. The international community, however, had done too little to create the conditions conducive to that outcome; more focused political efforts were urgently needed to address the conflicts and other factors that drove displacement. Jordan called for the establishment of a fund to support the voluntary return of Syrian refugees and the implementation of early recovery projects as part of the area-based approach adopted by the United Nations in Syria. Syrians who wished to return must be given the means to rebuild their lives in their home country. Third-country resettlement should be used to ensure that host countries were not left to face the challenges alone and that the international community played its part. He wished to urge the international community to immediately renew its funding commitments, as it was essential for UNHCR to receive the funds necessary to fulfil its mandate.

69. **Mr. Bachtobji** (Tunisia) said that the figures presented by UNHCR on the number of refugees around the world revealed the severity of the challenges faced by the international community. States must foster solidarity and burden-sharing to provide durable and effective solutions that would enable all stakeholders to address those challenges and contribute to the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals. His delegation wished to reiterate the importance of establishing mechanisms to relieve pressure on transit and host countries and safeguard the rights and dignity of refugees and displaced persons. Donors, regional and international organizations and civil society should redouble efforts to facilitate the voluntary return of refugees to their home countries or expedite their resettlement in third countries and provide them with the economic and social support required to foster their integration. Promotion of the principle of shared responsibility was key.

70. Tunisia reaffirmed its commitment to the protection of refugees, international human rights instruments and international humanitarian law. The Government sought to ensure optimal conditions for the temporary hosting of refugees and promoted legal mechanisms for their protection. It was working to address the root causes of displacement by seeking the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Tunisia called on UNHCR to hold consultations with the authorities concerned when issuing assessments of the humanitarian situation in a given State, with a view to optimizing the credibility of those evaluations. It was essential for the process launched at the 2023 International Conference on Development and Migration, which had been organized by the Governments of Italy and Tunisia, to be completed. At the

second Global Refugee Forum, his Government had committed to contributing to the promotion of peace and the prevention of conflict in Africa as part of its membership of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union for the 2022–2024 period.

71. While Tunisia recognized that responsibility for Palestinian refugees did not fall within the Office's mandate, it was essential for all actors to come together to support the Palestinian people given the unprecedented deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, the significant number of Gazan refugees and the targeting by the occupying forces of UNRWA offices, which had resulted in more than 220 deaths among its staff. Tunisia also wished to call on UNHCR to step up its efforts to address the difficult humanitarian situation in Lebanon.

72. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he wished to thank King Abdullah II for his participation in the Global Refugee Forum, which was testament to the long Jordanian tradition of hospitality towards refugees. He agreed with all points made by the representative of Jordan and was committed to continuing discussions in order to identify the best ways of garnering support for the projects in the Syrian Arab Republic. He appreciated the mention of the Sustainable Development Goals by the representative of Tunisia, as they could play an important role in ensuring stability in all countries. UNHCR stood ready to provide Tunisia with the support it required as a transit country. While he was very sensitive to the suffering of the Palestinian people, there was a need to maintain a clear division between the work of UNRWA and that of UNHCR. The Office would, however, continue to do its utmost to ensure that the former received all the support it required.

73. Humanitarian efforts in the Niger and the entire Sahel region must continue despite the complex political and security situation. The Secretary-General had been clear in his comments on the Sahel and had encouraged humanitarian agencies to continue their engagement in the region. UNHCR would continue discussions with the authorities of the Niger in order to determine the best ways to implement the legislative and administrative measures outlined. He was grateful for the comments by the representative of Equatorial Guinea on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, as the Office considered that Compact and the Global Compact on Refugees to be complementary to each other. He appreciated the efforts by the Government of Benin to eradicate statelessness, improve its asylum system and seek durable solutions for refugees.

74. He took note of the comments made by the representative of Georgia regarding the situation of internally displaced persons and thanked the Government for supporting the Office's humanitarian work in Abkhazia. UNHCR would continue to contribute to the humanitarian pillar of the Geneva International Discussions. He appreciated the recent visit by the President of Italy to UNHCR headquarters and the invitation from the Government to attend the meeting of interior ministers of the Group of Seven, during which he had outlined the Office's efforts to address mixed movements. He supported the Italian Government's plan to invest in locations along migration routes, which was in keeping with the route-based approach.

75. **Mr. Hellgren** (Sweden) said that he wished to convey his Government's condolences to UNHCR following the loss of two of its staff in Lebanon. Sweden recognized the Office's efforts to resolve displacement crises and reiterated the need for innovation, a whole-of-society approach and efficient and durable solutions in order to enable voluntary, safe and dignified returns and sustainable reintegration. His Government supported the concept of sustainable programming and was holding discussions on the route-based approach with UNHCR, IOM and other key partners. Sweden commended UNHCR on its efforts to involve development and private sector actors in responses to displacement and welcomed the progress made in enhancing the Office's efficiency, risk mitigation efforts, transparency and performance reporting. The Office's work to limit the risk of aid diversion was particularly appreciated, as were its effective leadership and strong commitment to upholding the rights of forcibly displaced and stateless persons.

76. Displaced women and girls were disproportionately affected by gender-based violence in times of conflict. Accordingly, Sweden strongly supported the Office's commitment to place the protection of those groups at the centre of humanitarian responses

and strengthen their sexual and reproductive health rights. His Government stood ready to help build asylum capacity in third countries. Receiving quota refugees should not be a task for only a few countries; Sweden itself had long been a country of resettlement and remained committed to welcoming 900 refugees, giving priority to women, girls and LGBTQI+ refugees. In 2024, it would take steps to address the refugee situation in the Great Lakes region of Africa. The Government had decided to join the Global Alliance to End Statelessness as a demonstration of its support for efforts to drive further progress in that area. Sweden remained a steadfast supporter of UNHCR and a leading donor of unearmarked and multi-year funding.

77. **Mr. Macdougall** (Canada) said that Canada expressed its sincere condolences for the loss of UNHCR staff in Lebanon and its deep concern at the violence and lives lost in the Middle East, the Sudan and Ukraine. All parties must comply with international law and protect civilians and humanitarian workers. Canada was determined to promote the rights and well-being of refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons by strengthening third-country solutions and addressing urgent needs. In 2023, it had provided more than \$91 million of funding to UNHCR. It was also committed to donating \$25 million in multi-year funding over the 2020–2025 period. In view of the worsening crises, the emergence of new conflicts and the impact of climate change, the Government shared the High Commissioner's concerns regarding the shortfall of resources to meet needs on the ground. Accordingly, it recognized the difficult decisions made by UNHCR in order to guarantee the continuation of its life-saving emergency interventions. Canada encouraged UNHCR to continue prioritizing its resources based on the urgent needs of the most vulnerable groups and, to that end, called for improved strategic planning and inter-institutional coordination to enhance the delivery of aid and ensure that protection remained at the heart of all humanitarian efforts.

78. Canada acknowledged the generosity of host communities and recognized that durable solutions were essential for building resilience and addressing the root causes of displacement. With regard to sustainable programming, it encouraged UNHCR to take action that would bring to bear the expertise of development actors and promote their longer-term engagement. The Office must also continue to invest in its protection mandate.

79. Protection was most effective when those concerned were empowered to participate in decision-making. The recently launched Council of Newcomers would provide its members, who included former refugees, with the opportunity to share their experiences of the Canadian immigration system and provide feedback to senior officials. In line with its Global Refugee Forum pledges, the Government of Canada continued to invite individuals with lived experience of forced displacement to join its national delegations and valued the participation of refugees in policymaking. In that connection, he wished to invite Ms. Muzna Dureid, the refugee adviser to the delegation of Canada, to take the floor.

80. **Ms. Dureid** (Canada) said that geopolitical shifts over the past two decades had led to the intensification of conflicts and worsening of the displacement crisis. Tackling such challenges required intersectional approaches to protection, sustainable economic models and innovative partnerships. Inclusive humanitarian assistance that recognized the intersectionality of vulnerabilities must be complemented by efforts aligned with the women and peace and security agenda. Addressing the gendered impact of conflict could help strengthen peacebuilding and security initiatives, fostering sustainable solutions and tackling the root causes and far-reaching effects of displacement.

81. While resettlement was a powerful solution, it was essential for life-saving emergency responses to remain at the centre of the support provided to refugees. The meaningful participation of refugees and refugee-led organizations in policy discussions and programme design was crucial for developing effective solutions and ensuring genuine accountability. She wished to urge all those present to tackle misinformation, disinformation and hate speech targeting refugees. All stakeholders had a collective responsibility to combat xenophobia and discrimination while promoting a positive, fact-based narrative that empowered all individuals and recognized the invaluable contributions of refugees to society.

82. **Ms. Schroderus-Fox** (Finland) said that she wished to express her Government's condolences for the tragic death of two UNHCR employees in Lebanon. Finland

unequivocally condemned attacks against humanitarian workers and all United Nations staff. It had great respect for all UNHCR employees and aid workers who risked their lives working in increasingly dangerous environments. The international community must step up its efforts to ensure the safety of humanitarian workers.

83. She wished to thank the High Commissioner for his recent visit to Finland. In view of the unprecedented number of forcibly displaced persons, Finland paid tribute to the host countries and communities showing solidarity to refugees, who deserved more support from the international community. It welcomed the Office's sustainable programming approach, which helped direct resources to the most acute humanitarian crises. Efforts to prioritize and improve the efficiency of interventions and seek synergies with other United Nations agencies were more important than ever.

84. There was a clear need for new approaches to addressing the challenges in host countries. As a co-leader of the School Meals Coalition, Finland considered the provision of such meals to be an excellent way of promoting food security, school enrolment and academic achievement in displacement contexts. It had contributed more than €14 million to ensure that children, including refugee children, had access to school meals and invited UNHCR to engage with the Coalition's work as part of its cooperation with the World Food Programme.

85. It was essential for efforts to enhance respect for international humanitarian law and protect civilians in times of conflict to be stepped up. Finland continued to run its national resettlement programme and sought to facilitate the employment and integration of immigrants by promoting language learning opportunities and the participation of underrepresented groups in the labour market. While Finland appreciated the Office's efforts to ensure that assistance reached persons with disabilities, much remained to be done to improve disability inclusion and integrate it into formal humanitarian coordination mechanisms. Finland had long supported UNHCR and would continue to do so. In 2023, it had provided a record level of funding of almost €36 million and had been one of the main donors supporting the Office's work in the Sudan and the surrounding region. More than 80 per cent of the funding provided in 2023 had been flexible in nature.

86. **Mr. Grima** (Malta) said that his Government's commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations remained undiminished. Malta was very concerned by the situation in the Middle East and the significant loss of life as a result of targeted attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. The recent expansion of the theatre of operations into Lebanon was causing more devastation to millions of lives. Malta unreservedly condemned the attacks on the peacekeepers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. There was a real risk of region-wide conflict, which would predictably lead to further displacement and humanitarian emergencies.

87. The situation in the Sudan presented a risk of spillover into a fragile region that already faced an acute crisis. Accordingly, he wished to call on all parties concerned to find a path towards peace and stability. In Ukraine, the continued aggression by Russia had led only to further displacement, loss of life and the forced deportation of children to areas under Russian control. The situation in the Mediterranean remained precarious; the instability in the region had led to a large increase in arrivals, which presented significant challenges to all host countries, including Malta.

88. His Government continued to work on implementing the pledges made at the second Global Refugee Forum, which related to sustainable return and reintegration, the improved dissemination of information and the enhancement of services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and persons with disabilities. Malta supported the non-discriminatory and human rights-based approach implemented by UNHCR in the field and considered respect for the values and principles enshrined in international law and international humanitarian law to be essential at all times.

89. **Mr. Ghikas** (Greece) said that addressing the humanitarian needs of refugees and internally displaced persons was a moral obligation. It was essential to tackle the root causes of the crises that led millions of people to seek refuge abroad. The conflict in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon must be ended, and the horrifying ordeal of the individuals taken hostage on 7 October 2023 must be terminated immediately. A continuation of the conflict would lead

to a rise in refugee flows, meaning that no efforts should be spared in restoring stability and security for the people of the eastern Mediterranean region.

90. The humanitarian system was under severe pressure and struggling to deliver. Greece would do its utmost to increase its contributions to UNHCR and wished to express its condolences for the tragic loss of humanitarian workers in the field. Enhancing respect for international humanitarian law and ensuring the protection of civilians was crucial. His Government had worked with UNHCR to implement various projects on refugee accommodation, cash-based assistance, integration, voluntary relocation and the protection of unaccompanied minors. Following its pledge at the second Global Refugee Forum to establish a national emergency response mechanism, it had taken steps to identify more than 5,000 unaccompanied children and provide them with emergency accommodation. Activities under that mechanism focused on promoting the integration and protection of such children, and their scope would be extended to cover vulnerable adults.

91. There was a need to step up cooperation to dismantle smuggling networks, which posed a severe threat to refugees and migrants. In that connection, Greece reaffirmed its commitment to a whole-of-route approach. The Government was continuing its efforts to improve its national asylum system, expedite asylum procedures and strengthen legal migration pathways. It supported intensified cooperation between UNHCR and IOM, which was necessary for ensuring that a clear distinction was made between economic migrants and refugees at the earliest point possible, with a view to more fully and rapidly safeguarding refugees' rights.

92. **Mr. Bekkers** (Kingdom of the Netherlands) said that the growing humanitarian needs were outstripping current levels of funding and support. The Office's efforts to address that situation by placing sustainable programming high on its agenda were commendable and fully supported by the Netherlands. The Netherlands had redirected its predictable, multi-year development funding to the PROSPECTS partnership, which brought together humanitarian and development actors to build the self-reliance and resilience of forcibly displaced persons in eight host countries. At the second Global Refugee Forum, it had pledged to significantly increase its financial commitments in the area.

93. His Government considered sustainable programming to represent a blueprint for how UNHCR should work with development actors, national governments, international financial institutions and civil society without increasing its operational footprint on the ground. The PROSPECTS partnership was in keeping with that approach. Clarification of the Office's view on the relationship between multi-year funding and sustainable programming would be welcome. Efforts should be made to ensure that the coordination of development responses to forced displacement was managed by the governments of host countries to the extent possible. He hoped that steps would be taken to build on the Office's work in various countries to adjust its role based on the concept of sustainable programming and that donors would continue to support that process.

94. The Netherlands supported the route-based approach to addressing mixed movements, which should prevent unnecessary suffering by facilitating early interventions and the prompt identification of durable solutions. His Government agreed that cooperation between UNHCR and IOM was essential in that regard. The Netherlands welcomed the introduction of the Office's strategic framework for the improved integration of the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion in its work and its recent achievement of gender parity.

95. **Mr. Yun Seong Deok** (Republic of Korea) said that his delegation recognized the Office's crucial work in providing essential services to the growing number of displaced persons. Innovative mechanisms should be explored in order to tackle the shortfall of funding to address humanitarian needs. The protracted nature of many refugee and displacement crises meant that it was essential for UNHCR to adopt an integrated approach that involved collaboration with humanitarian and development stakeholders. Such an approach could enable it to provide a more comprehensive blueprint for each country concerned. The nexus between humanitarian assistance and development should be strengthened in host countries and countries of origin. The implementation of sustainable programming required a high level of coordination between UNHCR, partner countries and development actors. It was important for sustainable programming efforts to be focused on addressing the root causes of

displacement and reducing humanitarian needs in the long term. Failure to do so would simply shift the financial pressure on humanitarian aid programmes onto those in the area of development cooperation.

96. The route-based approach would enable UNHCR to provide displaced persons with more protection and essential services throughout their journey. It should not, however, inadvertently facilitate irregular migration and should instead be accompanied by efforts to promote solutions, such as the voluntary return of displaced persons. The Republic of Korea had increased its financial contributions to UNHCR; in September 2024, it had become the tenth largest overall donor and the fifth largest donor of unearmarked contributions. It was currently working to improve its national mechanisms for the protection of refugees and other vulnerable groups. His delegation wished to underline its continued commitment to UNHCR and looked forward to the High Commissioner's visit in November.

97. **Ms. Stasch** (Germany) said that the past year had been particularly difficult for humanitarian workers on the front line. Germany paid tribute to all those who continued to assist others despite the significant risks and extended its deepest condolences to the families of those who had lost their lives, including the two UNHCR staff members in Lebanon.

98. The dire picture of global displacement served as a stark reminder of the importance of intensifying efforts to address the needs of displaced persons and their host communities. It was essential to ensure the implementation of the many useful pledges made at the second Global Refugee Forum, which had the potential to bring about positive changes. Germany welcomed the progress made under the I Belong campaign and the launch of the Global Alliance to End Statelessness.

99. The Global Refugee Forum had seen a push for a renewed focus on durable solutions through increased cooperation across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Such an approach called for coordination among host Governments, humanitarian actors, development agencies, financial institutions, the private sector and the communities concerned. Its implementation would require donors, host countries and international institutions to change their ways of working, with a view to creating pathways towards self-reliance and stability for displaced persons and host communities. Germany fully supported the High Commissioner's proposal on sustainable programming.

100. Guaranteeing the meaningful participation of forcibly displaced persons in efforts to address displacement must remain a priority. In that connection, a member of the recently established Refugee Advisory Board for Germany had been invited to attend the current session as an adviser to her delegation. UNHCR could count on her Government's continued support as both a long-standing donor and a major host of refugees.

101. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he wished to thank the Republic of Korea for the funding provided to the Office, the percentage increase in which had been one of the largest observed among all countries. It was his hope that the route-based approach would not become a vehicle for irregular immigration; he considered that the coordination of efforts to protect refugees and those to ensure safe and orderly migration could prevent that outcome.

102. UNHCR was grateful for the support from Canada, in particular in the area of resettlement. Efforts to provide protection would be ineffective without substantial material support and assistance to host countries. He appreciated the participation of the delegation's refugee adviser and welcomed her comments on hate speech, which must be countered with all available means.

103. Sweden was projected to be the fourth largest donor to UNHCR in 2024. He was grateful for the country's support for his proposals on a route-based approach and sustainability programming, in addition to its recognition of the external and internal reforms being led by the Deputy High Commissioner. The leadership shown by Finland in a number of areas was greatly appreciated, as was the increase in its funding to the Office. UNHCR would follow up with the World Food Programme regarding the invitation to join the School Meals Coalition. He welcomed the country's work on disability, which was an area for improvement for all parties.

104. UNHCR would continue to support countries like Malta that faced challenges owing to their geographical position. He appreciated the delegation's comments linking the issue of displacement to the current conflicts, since resolving both those challenges went hand in hand. In that connection, careful monitoring of the eastern Mediterranean route, as mentioned by the representative of Greece, was essential as the situation in the Middle East continued to escalate. On his recent visit to Greece, he had been pleased to witness the progress made in the reception and management of arrivals, especially unaccompanied minors.

105. In order to address refugee-related challenges, States should take a holistic approach rather than focusing solely on refugees at their borders. The PROSPECTS partnership mentioned by the representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands was example of an initiative that followed such an approach. He wished to encourage States to come together to create similar upstream projects, which had the potential to help host countries, stabilize refugee flows and identify solutions. With regard to the question the delegation raised about multi-year contributions and sustainable programming, the search for solutions and ways of promoting self-reliance would require a longer-term outlook, for the sake of host countries and development and humanitarian organizations alike. He would be further exploring that important point, as such an approach to sustainable programming might have budget implications, which would need to be reviewed by the member States.

106. He wished to thank Germany for the strong support provided and for its role in facilitating discussions on sustainability among States. The current difficulties would be addressed only if both financing and the support provided to refugees and host countries were sustainable in nature.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.