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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PROGRAMME OF THE UNITED NATIONS
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

Fifty-fifth session

Extraordinary meeting

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 588th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 13 April 2005, at 9.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. ESCUDERO MARTÍNEZ (Ecuador)

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The meeting was called to order at 9.40 a.m.

OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN (item 1 of the provisional agenda)

1. The CHAIRMAN declared open the extraordinary meeting of the Executive Committee, the purpose of which was to elect a new Vice-Chairman.
2. Before adopting the agenda, he wished to express the Executive Committee's condolences to the representative of the Holy See on the death of His Holiness Pope John Paul II. The world had lost one of the most remarkable men of modern times, a spiritual leader who had fought with immense faith and profound conviction for world peace and human dignity.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (item 2 of the provisional agenda) (document without a symbol, distributed at the meeting)

3. The agenda was adopted.

ELECTION OF A VICE-CHAIRMAN (agenda item 3)

4. The CHAIRMAN said that, owing to the reassignment of the current Vice-Chairman, Mr. Oshima, the Executive Committee must, under its rules of procedure, elect a new Vice-Chairman to replace him for the remainder of his term of office. In accordance with the decision adopted by the Executive Committee at its fifty-fifth session in 2004, that term of office would expire on the last day of the fifty-sixth session.
5. Ms. PRINCESA (Philippines) nominated Mr. Fujisaki (Japan) for election as Vice-Chairman.
6. Mr. MOLEY (United States of America) seconded the nomination.
7. Mr. Fujisaki (Japan) was elected Vice-Chairman by acclamation.

OTHER MATTERS (agenda item 4)

8. The CHAIRMAN announced that he had been called to other duties and in a few weeks would no longer be able to continue as Chairman of the Executive Committee. It would therefore be necessary for the Committee to choose a successor to complete his term of office, until the end of the fifty-sixth session. Another extraordinary meeting, similar to the current meeting, would need to be held to elect his successor. The date of that meeting would be the subject of further consultations with the members.

CLOSING REMARKS BY THE ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER AND THE CHAIRMAN (agenda item 5)

9. Ms. CHAMBERLIN (Acting United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) congratulated Mr. Fujisaki on his election as Vice-Chairman and looked forward to the prospect of working with him in the coming months, which would be a difficult period for refugees worldwide.

10. She thanked the Chairman for his professionalism and devotion, for which the UNHCR staff would always be deeply grateful.

11. Msgr. DE GREGORI (Holy See) thanked the Chairman for his kindness in recalling the memory of the late Pope John Paul II. No doubt that thought was shared by all the members since the Pope had been a staunch champion of refugees, whom he had defended not only through his teachings but also by visiting them in their camps.

12. The CHAIRMAN expressed his deep appreciation to the members of the Executive Committee and the Bureau who had supported him in his task. He believed that the Executive Committee was efficiently and effectively accomplishing its dual role as a governing body responsible for supervising the High Commissioner's programmes and budgets and as an advisory body for providing a valuable perspective on the High Commissioner's protection duties. He was confident that his successor would receive the same support and encouragement. He declared closed the extraordinary meeting of the Executive Committee.

The meeting rose at 10 a.m.