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Summary record of the 676th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 29 September 2014, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Comissário (Vice-Chairperson) (Mozambique)

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

High-level segment on enhancing international cooperation, solidarity, local capacities and humanitarian action for refugees in Africa (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Zawde** (President, Africa Humanitarian Action) said that Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA) had been established in 1994 in order to provide a timely and effective indigenous response to Africa's disasters. Early action was the key. For example, AHA had begun work to contain the Ebola virus in the Bahn refugee camp in Liberia weeks before the outbreak of the disease in that country had been confirmed officially. While the death toll from the disease in the surrounding area was soaring, there had been only one death in the camp. In spite of its meagre resources, AHA had mobilized the first 54 health-care specialists and other professionals for the African Union's mission to combat Ebola.

2. There was no shortage of experience and expertise among African humanitarian actors, but African agencies had little to show for their efforts to forge international partnerships. Such partnerships had in fact largely resulted in the subcontracted delivery of menial tasks. Respect for African agencies was lacking and they remained unable to work and develop independently. Capacity-building had also proven ineffectual. Although dependent on cheap local labour, the foreign organizations that dominated emergency response left few lasting resources behind them in Africa. Little had been done, even by UNHCR, to promote African-driven solutions to conflict and poverty. Only with real support and investment from UNHCR, donors and African governments could African agencies take on a key role in tackling the continent's crises.

3. **Mr. Egeland** (Secretary-General, Norwegian Refugee Council) praised AHA and host countries in Africa, which had given the world a lesson in generosity. The continent faced multiple crises in the shape of war, two looming famines and the threat posed by Ebola. South Sudan was a symbol of broken promises, where the political and military elite had torn asunder all the good work done to create the new State. Conflict prevention was critical. In trouble spots such as South Sudan, the Central African Republic and Somalia more had to be done to promote reconciliation and to make it painful for political elites to fail their own people. The increasingly lethal mix of armed conflict and natural disaster induced by climate change must be tackled. More must be done to protect the most vulnerable. Access by humanitarian organizations to conflict areas must be improved and it was incumbent on governments to protect humanitarian workers. In spite of the gloomy overall picture, there were signs of hope. Twenty-two African States had signed the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Africa (Kampala Convention). IDPs were indeed more vulnerable than refugees and the Norwegian Refugee Council wished to work with African governments to help them.

4. **The Chairperson** thanked the guest speakers for their statements and opened the floor for statements by member States and observers.

5. **Mr. Porter** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Serbia, Albania, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, noted the presence of more than 13 million displaced persons in Africa at the end of 2013. More than half of the refugee population in Africa were children. Countries that continued to host sizeable refugee populations were to be commended. More States should ratify the Kampala Convention, which was a positive initiative, and those that had done so should incorporate its provisions into domestic law.

6. The European Union (EU) had proposed the Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative with a view to combating the human trafficking, recruitment by armed groups and violence to which displaced populations were often exposed in that part of Africa. The

initiative would be presented in a joint declaration on migration and development by the EU and the African Union in November 2014. The undertaking by countries in the region to take part in the initiative was welcome. The EU had contributed more than €1.4 billion by the end of 2013 to deal with emergencies in Africa. As well as providing local capacity-building, host community investment and support for civil society, it was addressing root causes through programmes such as the Alliance Globale pour l'Initiative Résilience (AGIR) in the Sahel region and the Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience (SHARE) programme. The EU was considering stepping up its regional protection programmes, which were calibrated to enhance protection and asylum capacity and to improve relations between refugees and host communities. To date, Kenya, Djibouti, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt had benefited from those programmes.

7. UNHCR should strengthen its protection activities for displaced persons in South Sudan and the Central African Republic. Although the European Union supported the tripartite agreement between Kenya, Somalia and UNHCR on repatriation of refugees from Kenya, conditions in Somalia were not yet conducive to large-scale returns. Given that voluntary returns or relocations remained problematic in many regions, UNHCR should increase efforts to boost the self-reliance of displaced populations, including through subsidies, access to education, vocational training, job markets and development aid for host countries.

8. **Mr. Aguirre Martínez** (Observer for Paraguay), speaking on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), commended the African Union and African countries for their efforts to alleviate the suffering caused by the numerous crises afflicting the continent. Africa's traditions of generosity and hospitality had enabled hundreds of thousands of people to find refuge. He also welcomed the efforts of UNHCR to promote sustainable solutions, assist host communities, identify stateless people and build capacity at the local and national levels. Conflict prevention and strengthening the resilience of vulnerable communities was vital, as was the need to protect civilians. Latin American and Caribbean countries would mark the 30th anniversary of the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees in December 2014 by announcing a new declaration and action plan on the subject in Brazil. They were committed to the principle of regional and international solidarity and burden-sharing.

9. **Mr. Kussuma** (Observer for Angola) said that, between July 2003 and June 2012, more than half a million Angolans had returned home from neighbouring countries. Although many had remained abroad since adoption of the cessation clause on 30 June 2012, the process of repatriation was proceeding along the lines agreed between Angola, the host countries and UNHCR. Mechanisms were in place to speed up the distribution of identity documents, a process that had been plagued by delays. The Government of Angola was committed to facilitating the return and reintegration of all former refugees.

10. **Ms. Mukantabana** (Rwanda) said that the number of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Rwanda had risen by 35,000 to 80,000 between 2012 and 2013, straining local resources and sharpening the need for humanitarian aid. Although UNHCR had striven for the declaration of a cessation clause for Rwandan refugees by mid-2013, little progress had been made in that regard. Even in some of the seven countries that had made the declaration, Rwandans continued to benefit from refugee status. The Government of Rwanda had therefore stepped up efforts to promote voluntary returns. More than 24,000 Rwandans had returned home and others who remained abroad had given up their refugee status and applied for Rwandan passports. The activities of the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR) terrorist group, which continued to maim, kill and kidnap Rwandans wishing to return home, remained a serious obstacle to their repatriation. The Government of Rwanda called on the international community to do all in its power to

neutralize the FDLR. UNHCR and host countries should step up efforts to implement the cessation clause regarding Rwandan refugees.

11. **Mr. Mohamed** (Djibouti) said that, while his Government was striving to resolve the problems faced in its territory by long-term refugees from Somalia and other countries, donor interest in their plight had subsided. Recent efforts to again mobilize international support for Somali refugees were therefore welcome. The Government of Djibouti would fulfil the pledges it had made at a regional ministerial meeting held in Addis Ababa in August 2014, and it encouraged others to do the same in order to alleviate the suffering of people fleeing the fighting in Somalia. It was to be hoped that such a commitment would encourage donors to finance the relevant aid programmes. In order to ward off the menace posed by terrorist groups such as Al-Shabab, the Government of Djibouti had introduced surveillance measures in conjunction with UNHCR in order to monitor the movement of refugees. It also supported initiatives aimed at achieving sustainable solutions for long-term refugees, including the promotion of remunerated work, vocational training and better living conditions.

12. **Mr. Abd al-Rahman Zain al-Abdin** (Sudan), noting that 38 per cent of the world's refugee population was in Africa, said that aid to the Sudan from UNHCR and the international community was not commensurate with the burden on the State's resources posed by its long-term refugee population. Many projects to help refugees in the Sudan had not seen the light of day. Moreover, conflicts in neighbouring countries had led to a renewed influx of refugees from South Sudan, from which 150,000 refugees had fled since December 2013, and the Central African Republic. In total, there were approximately half a million refugees in the Sudan, many of whom had been present for decades. Refugees were also leaving inadequately supplied camps for the cities, thereby placing local infrastructure under further pressure. The international community should honour its pledges and help to restore resources, such as water supplies and forest cover, which had been heavily depleted by refugee settlements.

13. **Mr. Hamid** (Observer for Chad) welcomed the support offered by the international community to Chad, host for the past decade to more than 500,000 refugees and 200,000 returnees, who enjoyed access to arable land and basic services. However, continuing crises in neighbouring countries were likely to provoke further inflows into the country, which, since the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad in 2010, shouldered alone the burden of ensuring the security of both refugees and humanitarian staff and provided 90 per cent of the funding required. It had also set aside land for the UNHCR office in N'Djamena and fully supported the work of its staff.

14. **Ms. Iivula-Ithana** (Namibia) said that her country had celebrated World Refugee Day 2013 under the motto "Working towards a world without refugees". Each small step towards that ambitious goal was a worthwhile contribution in itself. It was essential to promote the durable solutions outlined by the High Commissioner and to focus on preventing conflicts, which were often ignored internationally until humanitarian intervention had become unavoidable. Noting that Namibia, like many African countries, found that assisting refugees placed an additional burden on its own economy and development, she called for increased support from the international community. In cooperation with UNHCR, Namibia had helped thousands of refugees to return to their homes the previous year, and the interest shown by the delegations present gave hope that the dream of a world without refugees might be achieved.

15. **Ms. Chohan** (South Africa), recalling the principle that everyone mattered, on which Nelson Mandela had based his liberation struggle, said that all nations, peoples and cultures had contributed to the world's diversity through enormous accomplishments. All religions recognized a creator to whom, their followers believed, everyone mattered. Wars around the globe were based on the construct of "the other", but Nelson Mandela — who

had been regarded as “the other” during his 27 years of imprisonment — had shown that that “other” was but a reflection of one’s own self in different circumstances. The principle that everyone mattered was the key that could unlock the tragedies of many countries currently suffering from violence and destruction. The United Nations had instituted an international day in honour of Nelson Mandela even during his lifetime. As a citizen of the world, he had left a legacy that belonged to all: if allowed to thrive, it would help humanity to prosper.

16. **Mr. Chilangwa** (Zambia) said that regrettably, although States had clear obligations to refugees within their own territories, the absence of binding legal obligations on the international community to contribute to the international protection of refugees left many programmes underfunded. He called for the introduction of formal funding arrangements between the international community and host States, as a way of guaranteeing solidarity and burden-sharing.

17. Furthermore, UNHCR could make more effective use of partnerships with regional organizations to bring solutions to the African region. African governments had invested heavily in capacity-building to handle even the most complex refugee situations, paving the way for UNHCR to free up resources for other projects by entrusting its operations in the region to national staff. He called on the High Commissioner to share the findings of the study on the contributions made by host governments and communities, which had been promised at the sixty-second session of the Executive Committee.

18. National and local authorities, humanitarian agencies and development actors should work together to facilitate durable solutions, without which the continued marginalization of refugees would be an obstacle to peace, stability, recovery and reconstruction in post-conflict settings. Zambia was working on a programme to integrate former Angolan and Rwandan refugees in the country, but saw a clear need for greater coordination between donors and aid agencies to overcome gaps in the humanitarian response; if the programme failed, others might be discouraged from similar endeavours.

19. **Mr. Hasanov** (Azerbaijan) expressed concern at the mass migration of refugees and internally displaced persons both within and outside Africa, which placed an additional burden on UNHCR in its efforts to resolve humanitarian crises in different parts of the world. His country’s recently established development agency, in cooperation with the Islamic Development Bank, had implemented health projects in several African countries. Azerbaijan had also provided financial assistance to Burkina Faso after the 2011–2012 drought and had contributed to humanitarian relief in South Sudan.

20. Azerbaijan itself had for more than 20 years suffered from the problem of internal displacement, as a result of the occupation of part of its territory by ethnic Armenians. He stressed the importance of enabling Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their homes and called for international pressure to be put on Armenia to release three Azerbaijani nationals recently taken captive in occupied territory, one of whom had been killed.

21. **Mr. Berberi** (Observer for South Sudan) noted that all the preceding speakers had referred to the situation in his country, which had resulted in the displacement of around 1.7 million persons within and outside its borders, in addition to the 235,000 refugees from other countries that it hosted. That problem was exacerbated by the country’s poor infrastructure, the spontaneous nature of certain refugee settlements, the scarcity of resources and the lack of institutional and technical capacity. A new act on refugees demonstrated South Sudan’s commitment to burden-sharing. Relocating refugees to safer areas and issuing them with identity cards were protection priorities. However, following the December 2013 crisis, even displaced persons within reach of assistance were still suffering hardship, and durable solutions were needed to allow them to return to their

homes. Peace talks, which should contribute to that process, were under way in Ethiopia under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. South Sudan was grateful for the support of its partners from the United Nations family, NGOs and the donor community, and the priority it was given by the High Commissioner, without which it would not have been able to manage the challenges it faced.

22. **Mr. Muzenda** (Observer for Zimbabwe) said that Zimbabwe currently bore the heavy burden of hosting more than 8,000 refugees, to whom it endeavoured, with UNHCR assistance, to provide education, food and security. Birth certificates were issued to refugee children born in the country, as were identity documents to adult refugees, who were able to undertake income-generating projects and employment. Flooding in February 2014 had displaced a further 17,000 persons, triggering a major humanitarian response from United Nations agencies and other international humanitarian organizations, but burden-sharing was essential to enable Zimbabwe to meet the enormous demands placed on the national budget.

23. **Mr. Mero** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the refugee situation in many parts of Africa had worsened in recent years, augmenting the importance of international cooperation and solidarity. As a demonstration of his country's commitment to alleviating the plight of refugees, naturalization certificates had been issued to some 200,000 former Burundian refugees who had been living in three settlements in the United Republic of Tanzania since 1972. Following similar initiatives in respect of some 3,000 Somali Bantu refugees who had been in the country since 1991 and 32,000 Rwandan refugees naturalized in 1982, the measure marked the inauguration of a local integration programme, ensuring freedom of movement and settlement, as well as full citizenship rights, for the persons concerned, which would surely serve as a model to be followed by other countries. The Government's strong partnership with UNHCR and development partners would doubtless ensure proper funding and support for the process, but further support was requested from the international donor community for the renewal of aging infrastructure and socioeconomic institutions that would enable the new citizens to build their future in the three settlements.

24. **Mr. Guterres** (High Commissioner) congratulated the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania on the announcement of its courageous decision to proceed with the naturalization of the 200,000 Burundian refugees who had been in the country since 1972.

25. **Mr. Wu Hailong** (China) said that urgent action was needed to remedy the protracted refugee situations caused by violent conflicts and natural disasters, which hindered the economic and social development of African countries and undermined peace and stability in the region. The international community should do more to assist African countries in their efforts to accommodate large numbers of refugees. International partners should share relevant information and improve their overall coordination of relief efforts. Their interventions in the region should be based on the principle of respect for the sovereignty of African countries and they should avoid politicizing refugee issues. Humanitarian workers in the region should be afforded adequate protection. African countries should take steps to prevent armed conflict, which was one of the root causes of refugee situations.

26. In the future, UNHCR should continue to enhance the efficiency of its operations and work more closely with humanitarian organizations. China had decided to increase its contribution to UNHCR in 2014. China had provided emergency food aid to help alleviate the crisis in the Horn of Africa; humanitarian and material assistance to South Sudan; and food aid and material assistance to the West African countries affected by the Ebola virus epidemic.

27. **Mr. Strässer** (Germany) said that 2014 had seen a sharp increase in the number of forcibly displaced persons and humanitarian crises in the African region. Germany was deeply concerned by the Ebola virus epidemic in West Africa and welcomed the establishment of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response. Germany had launched a national call for medical volunteers to travel to the region and help contain the epidemic. However, the Ebola virus epidemic should not draw attention, or funding, away from other humanitarian crises in the African region. Germany had maintained the amount of financial assistance it provided to the African region and remained committed to working with UNHCR and other relevant stakeholders on humanitarian projects to assist vulnerable groups of refugees and internally displaced persons. It was important for international donors to make long-term commitments in order to improve the situation of African refugees.

28. **Ms. Sipiläinen** (Finland) said that sub-Saharan Africa alone was currently hosting nearly 3 million refugees and a significant number of internally displaced persons. The African region was already facing a number of humanitarian crises, the most recent of which was the current Ebola virus epidemic. The international community should take immediate and significant action to address that crisis. Finland welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 2177 (2014) concerning the outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa and had recently decided to double its financial contribution to the cause of remedial action.

29. Those African countries that continued to open their borders to refugees in need of protection were to be commended. Finland allocated a considerable amount of financial assistance to those fleeing the violence in South Sudan and the Central African Republic. Ending violence was important in the short term but the root causes of that violence had to be addressed in order to prevent future conflicts and to promote peace. Education and decent work were central to achieving that objective. Moreover, development assistance should be tailored to the needs of both displaced populations and their host communities. International partners should consider reflecting the needs of displaced populations in local and national development plans.

30. Finland had allocated €44 million in humanitarian assistance to the African region in 2014, and Africa accounted for some 40 per cent of the country's development assistance budget. Finland encouraged UNHCR to find durable solutions to protracted refugee situations and was following the Global Initiative on Somali Refugees with great interest. In 2014, Finland had allocated nearly €20 million in development and humanitarian assistance to Somalia to promote inclusive politics and accountable local governance, and to improve health conditions in the country.

31. **Mr. Nzenge** (Observer for Gabon) said that Gabon had traditionally played a role in addressing humanitarian challenges in the Central African region. Moreover, it offered protection to asylum seekers and took part in initiatives aimed at preventing refugee situations from developing. The issue of refugees was of particular concern to the countries of the Central African region on account of the ongoing crisis and the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The asylum system in Gabon was not under threat despite considerable migration pressure, owing to the country's institutional stability and robust economy. Despite the negative impact of the global economic crisis on the country, Gabon remained committed to offering protection to those in need. The National Commission for Refugees continued to function effectively despite having limited financial and material resources at its disposal. Gabon continued to open its borders to asylum seekers and refugees in search of a safe haven and applied the principle of non-refoulement even when the asylum seeker in question was not from a neighbouring country. Gabon was currently hosting close to 4,000 asylum seekers. Joint efforts undertaken by the Gabonese authorities and those of the Republic of the Congo had led to the voluntary repatriation of a

considerable number of refugees from the Congo. However, there was a need for increased burden-sharing among the States parties to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

32. The international community should show more solidarity with countries such as Gabon, which continued to welcome persons in need when other countries were closing their borders to such persons.

33. **Mr. Manicom** (Canada) said that Canada had been long committed to Africa and worked to provide timely and effective humanitarian and development assistance to crisis-affected populations. The international community should take collective action to provide protection, assistance and solutions in the wake of the recent crises that had plagued the African region. Canada recognized the generosity of neighbouring countries in providing refuge and assistance to those fleeing conflicts and the positive impact of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. Canada commended UNHCR on its efforts to strengthen regional coordination and to devise initiatives to lessen the impact of the humanitarian crises on the region and, in particular, its work with religious leaders in the Central African Republic to counter religious intolerance.

34. Priority should be given to identifying and implementing durable solutions to protracted situations of displacement. All voluntary repatriations should be conducted in a safe and dignified manner and comply with domestic and international law. It was regrettable that efforts to respond to some of the crises in Africa had been hindered by a lack of humanitarian access, which was attributable to unsafe conditions, administrative obstacles and the remoteness of many locations. Gender-based and sexual violence against civilian populations and displaced persons were also cause for grave concern. Furthermore, thousands of people were being subjected to abuse by terrorist groups, State agents and criminal networks as they moved from the East and Horn of Africa. The international community needed to do more to address those issues. Canada had contributed Can\$ 24.5 million to UNHCR operations in the Central African Republic, South Sudan and Somalia, and had made multi-year commitments to resettling Eritrean and Congolese refugees.

35. **Mr. Tshibal** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that 2.9 million of the world's refugees were located in sub-Saharan Africa. The Democratic Republic of the Congo was currently hosting more than 400,000 refugees from the Central African Republic, Rwanda, the Sudan, Somalia, the Congo and Angola, in addition to 2.6 million displaced persons and 159,000 Congolese nationals who had returned from neighbouring countries.

36. In situations of forced displacement, it was imperative that the home country, humanitarian actors, UNHCR and the international community should remain involved until the situation had come to an end. The Democratic Republic of the Congo had identified 245,820 Rwandan refugees who had found asylum in the country following the Rwandan genocide of 1994. However, those refugees would have to be registered before durable solutions could be implemented. In addition, some 48,000 former Angolan refugees were still living in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, nearly 30,000 of whom were candidates for voluntary repatriation. In cases of repatriation, the home country should play an active role in the process by introducing a mechanism to facilitate the return of asylum seekers and their reintegration into society. More and more refugees from the Central African Republic were arriving in the Democratic Republic of the Congo each month and it was unlikely that they would be able to return home in the near future. Lastly, he underscored the need to respect the neutrality of humanitarian workers and to protect the civilian population in the wake of humanitarian crises.

37. **Mr. Béké Dassys** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the humanitarian crises in the Central African Republic, the Sudan and Somalia had served to exacerbate the protracted refugee situations in the region. The number of populations covered by the UNHCR mandate had grown significantly in 2014. However, the limited funding received by UNHCR hindered its efforts to assist those populations. Côte d'Ivoire endorsed the recommendations contained in Conclusion No. 109 (LXI) of the UNHCR Executive Committee on protracted refugee situations and, in particular, the Executive Committee's call to the international community at large to ensure, in a spirit of burden-sharing, timely availability of adequate funding in order to provide assistance and achieve durable solutions in protracted refugee situations.

38. Voluntary repatriation was often the most appropriate solution to refugee situations, provided that it was carried out in a safe and dignified manner. The international community should focus on encouraging refugees to return home and lead a normal life in their country of origin.

39. Côte d'Ivoire had opened its borders to persons fleeing conflicts in neighbouring countries. Integrating refugees into the local community was far preferable to placing them in refugee camps, as it provided them with an opportunity to rebuild their lives. Côte d'Ivoire had been forced to postpone the repatriation of thousands of refugees on account of the outbreak of the Ebola virus in the region. Local NGOs and private partners should be more involved in identifying innovative solutions to the refugee situations in Africa.

40. **Mr. Alghunaim** (Observer for Kuwait) said that the lack of security and political stability in the African region had led to the migration and displacement of a large number of people. Kuwait had undertaken a number of initiatives to lessen the burden that asylum seekers and displaced persons placed on their host countries. Moreover, Kuwait had recently donated US\$ 5 million to the World Health Organization with a view to halting the advance of the Ebola virus epidemic in West Africa. Development and investment issues has been discussed at the third Africa-Arab Summit in Kuwait, and Kuwait had also launched a programme under which African countries could request loans for the purpose of accelerating their development.

41. **Mr. Getahun** (Ethiopia) said that Ethiopia currently hosted 636,000 refugees from South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea and the Sudan. African countries hosting large refugee populations were paying a heavy cost in terms of degradation of the environment, deforestation and the deterioration of infrastructure. Nevertheless, they remained steadfast in their efforts to meet critical refugee needs such as shelter, health care, food and water. Those countries deserved due recognition and adequate and timely assistance from the international community as they continued to honour their obligations under the various international instruments relating to refugees. It was necessary to address the root causes of the massive flow of refugees in Africa in order to provide durable solutions. More support should be provided to subregional organizations, such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in the areas of conflict prevention and resolution. Ethiopia called upon the international community to help the Government of Somalia, host countries and UNHCR to give effect to the Addis Ababa Commitment towards Somali Refugees adopted on 20 August 2014.

42. The international community should support African countries in developing their economy and infrastructure, and in consolidating democracy and the rule of law in order to prevent conflicts and mass displacement. Voluntary repatriation, followed by reintegration in the country of origin, was the most durable solution to refugee situations, and Ethiopia recognized the critical role played by UNHCR in that regard. In view of the large number of protracted refugee situations in Africa, States should adopt flexible criteria to facilitate the resettlement of refugees.

43. **Mr. Delmi** (Algeria) agreed with the observation made by UNHCR that durable solutions had not been found to a number of refugee situations in Africa owing to a lack of political will and financial resources. Priority should be given to voluntary repatriation, which should be carried out in a safe and dignified manner, and the international community should share the burden associated with African refugees until a durable solution could be found. Dialogue was a key component of the commitment to preventing crisis situations from arising.

44. Algeria had recently welcomed thousands of Sahrawi refugees, as well as hundreds of Libyan, Syrian and Malian nationals, and had taken steps to guarantee a safe environment for relief workers in Sahrawi refugee camps. Furthermore, the Ebola virus epidemic should not be used as a pretext for countries to close their borders to African refugees.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.