



General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 November 2017
English
Original: French

**Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations
High Commissioner for Refugees
Sixty-eighth session**

Summary record of the 705th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 4 October 2017, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. McCarney (Canada)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

General debate (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Alwasil** (Observer for Saudi Arabia) said that Saudi Arabia had welcomed 291,000 Syrians, who had received education and health-care services, and that 114,000 young people were enrolled in educational establishments at all levels. In addition, Saudi Arabia had received over 600,000 Yemenis since the beginning of the crisis in that country and that 258,000 young people were enrolled in school.
2. The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre was currently involved in 153 projects for Yemen and Yemeni refugees, in particular in the areas of housing, food security, rapid recovery, sanitation, and water and food supply. The total cost of the projects was approximately US\$ 630 million.
3. The Kingdom was very concerned at the suffering of the Rohingya, and King Salman had donated US\$ 15 million to efforts in that connection. Visits had been carried out to Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh and the King Salman Centre was currently considering projects to address health and the humanitarian situation in the camps.
4. **Ms. Maramba** (Observer for Zimbabwe) said that Zimbabwe aligned itself with the statement made by Togo on behalf of the African Group. Zimbabwe was home to nearly 11,000 refugees, some of whom had arrived in the 1990s, while others were fleeing the resurgence of conflict in Mozambique.
5. She stressed the need to act together to provide international protection for refugees and asylum seekers and to end conflict and persecution. In that connection, her delegation supported the strategic directions 2017-2021 document adopted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Regarding the situational analyses conducted by UNHCR, she was of the view that, in future, all situations should be taken into account in the documents submitted to the Executive Committee, not merely those of the main host countries.
6. **Mr. Chir** (Algeria) said that his delegation aligned itself with the statement made by Togo on behalf of the African Group.
7. He noted that it was primarily developing countries that continued to face the influx of asylum seekers and that geographical proximity could not in itself entirely explain the asymmetry. In order to implement the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, UNHCR should draw up a map of needs with the aim of properly assessing the burden of hosting refugees and the contribution of host countries and communities. Regarding the promotion of durable solutions, voluntary return in safe and decent conditions remained the most appropriate solution. He urged UNHCR to collaborate with partners and the international community as a whole to ensure that effective action was taken in the three fundamental areas, namely assistance, protection and the search for durable solutions.
8. Lastly, he drew attention to the fact that Algeria had, for the past 42 years, been hosting refugees from Western Sahara, who hoped to see an end to their forced exile, and remained interested in any UNHCR initiative in that regard.
9. **Ms. Shino** (Japan) said that Japan had already given UNHCR some US\$ 150 million in 2017. Under the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, she had personally travelled to Uganda, where she had observed the importance of meeting the needs of refugees and host communities. In her opinion, the international community had much to learn from the experience and the practice of Uganda.
10. Education and livelihood assistance were necessary to encourage self-reliance among refugees and prepare them for repatriation or resettlement. In that connection, Japan had welcomed 28 Syrian students to its higher education institutions in the hope that the experience would build the capacity of the young people who were to rebuild Syria.
11. She was deeply concerned about the situation of the Rohingya and welcomed the efforts of Bangladesh to host the massive influx of refugees. Japan had decided to add US\$ 4 million to the US\$ 12 million already disbursed in 2017 in order to respond to the humanitarian and security emergency.

12. **Ms. Londoño Soto** (Colombia) said that the thematic consultations that would shortly be taking place on the global compact on refugees provided a unique opportunity to develop hands-on tools to resolve the refugee crisis. The global compact should be designed as a flexible instrument that could adapt to different contexts and take account of national capacity. Furthermore, the twentieth anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement should be an opportunity to assess progress and the main difficulties.

13. At the national level, it should be noted that the armed conflict in Colombia had produced 7 million displaced persons who had been placed at the heart of the peace and development process with the adoption of the Victims Act (*Ley de víctimas*) in 2011.

14. **Mr. Aryasinha** (Observer for Sri Lanka) said that Sri Lanka was a country of destination for refugees from neighbouring countries and continued to cooperate with UNHCR to address the difficulties involved in hosting refugees and asylum seekers.

15. The Government strongly condemned the attack against 30 Rohingya refugees in its territory. Measures had been taken to ensure the safety of the refugees and bring those responsible to justice. He stressed that, without prejudice to the right of States to control their borders, the closure of borders in times of humanitarian crisis could result in escalating violence and also in human trafficking and smuggling.

16. **Mr. Serra** (Italy) said that Italy endorsed the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

17. Approximately 106,000 migrants had arrived in Italy since the beginning of 2017, in addition to the 180,000 people who had reached its shores in 2016. Italy was becoming a country of destination rather than transit, as illustrated by the 47 per cent increase in requests for asylum and other forms of protection between 2015 and 2016. In that context, the authorities had taken steps to reduce bottlenecks in the asylum system and to provide assistance tailored to vulnerable refugees.

18. Italy was of the view that it was essential to test the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework in situations with various challenges in order to retain good practices and apply them to current crises where possible.

19. **Mr. Gaffey** (Ireland) said that Ireland aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

20. In 2016, Ireland, together with Jordan, had led the negotiations that had delivered the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. It was determined to ensure that diplomatic, political and humanitarian efforts were made more coherent, integrated and focused on the needs of refugees. The situation in Africa underlined the importance of a global compact on refugees that provided for more equitable sharing of burdens and responsibilities.

21. Sexual and gender-based violence were a feature of refugee situations. Ireland commended UNHCR for its work in that connection, as well as for the comprehensive training programme developed with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to protect persons belonging to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

22. **Ms. Kostadinova** (Bulgaria) said that Bulgaria endorsed the statement made on behalf of the European Union and stood firmly behind the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework.

23. In order to respond to the influx of migrants, the Bulgarian authorities had undertaken to reform the national protection and reception system. Despite the challenges that it faced, Bulgaria fulfilled its obligations, providing asylum seekers and refugees with shelter, food and other services to the best of its ability. In addition, it took part in European Union relocation and resettlement plans.

24. The number of child asylum seekers had increased sixfold over six years in the European Union. In that context, Bulgaria and UNHCR jointly organized training sessions on how to treat unaccompanied minors.

25. **Mr. Mercado** (Argentina) said that Argentina had adopted a special visa programme (*Programa Siria*) with the aim of welcoming Syrian refugees and facilitating

family reunification. It was pleased to be a part of the Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism, launched at the Leaders' Summit on Refugees in September 2016.

26. Argentina would soon be completing its assessment of the implementation of the Brazil Plan of Action, under which it had committed itself to developing a resettlement programme and local integration mechanism. In that connection, the country would be hosting two subregional consultations in November 2017 with a view to assessing the implementation of the Plan of Action and programmes on asylum and the eradication of statelessness.

27. Lastly, an initiative had been undertaken jointly with Italy, under the aegis of the World Health Organization, whose purpose was to promote stronger health-care systems in order to better respond to the needs of refugees. He stressed the need to include a chapter on health in the global compact.

28. **Mr. Vierita** (Romania) said that Romania aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. Romania was a country of resettlement and as such had, in August 2017, welcomed 1,942 refugees who had arrived in Greece and Italy. In 2016, the Romanian border police had been involved in European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) operations in the Mediterranean and the Aegean in the course of which 1,800 people had been rescued. Romania also took part in operations in the Black Sea against refugee smugglers. Since its establishment in 2008, the emergency transit centre in Timisoara had provided shelter to over 1,700 refugees, whose resettlement was being processed. What had begun as a pilot project had now become a permanent means of protection. Romania would continue to support UNHCR financially, including through unearmarked contributions.

29. **Mr. Šćepanović** (Montenegro) said that Montenegro had adopted a new strategy to provide refugees and displaced persons with durable solutions. Priorities had been defined from that perspective with a view to guaranteeing voluntary return to countries of origin or facilitating integration in Montenegro, for example by issuing temporary or permanent residence permits. In addition, Montenegro was involved in the regional housing programme, which would provide over 6,000 displaced persons from the former Yugoslavia with a long-term solution to their housing problems and thereby enable the closure of collective centres. Steps had been taken to identify the number of stateless persons and provide them with assistance and to encourage birth registration.

30. **Ms. Whyte** (Costa Rica) said that, in recent years, Costa Rica had had to contend with increasing requests for refugee status, up by 159 per cent in 2015 compared with the previous year, 203 per cent in 2016 and 83 per cent in the first half of 2017. That trend was expected to continue. In response to the situation, and in accordance with the commitments made in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, Costa Rica had held national consultations with various sectors of society and, on that basis, developed a national integrated framework to protect refugees and address the refugee situation, under the leadership of the Government, which coordinated the various institutions, and with technical support from UNHCR. Through the measure, which complemented previous initiatives catering for refugees, Costa Rica hoped to contribute to the implementation of the global compact, to which it would bring its experience and good practices. Costa Rica had welcomed 100 people under the transit protection mechanism.

31. **Mr. Johnson** (Togo) said that Togo had recently adopted a new law on asylum that took into account advances in refugee law. The Government regularly joined forces with UNHCR, for instance in rolling out a farming project to support the economic self-sufficiency of refugees in October 2016. In addition, the Government strove to find definitive solutions for long-term refugees, especially those from neighbouring countries, for example by issuing them with identity documents. It proposed to hold a national forum by the end of 2017 to seek durable solutions for all refugees in Togo. A restructuring of the UNHCR Country Office in Togo begun in 2015 would be completed in 2017, with many responsibilities being transferred to government entities.

32. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) welcomed the efforts made by the different countries and their support for the activities of his Office. He

commended Colombia, which had always focused on displaced persons and was carrying out a victim-centred reconstruction process. He thanked Argentina for establishing its Syria Programme, which he hoped would constitute a precedent in the region. He was keenly aware of the considerable burden borne by Italy with regard to the reception of refugees and requested other European countries to take on a larger share of the responsibility incumbent upon them under the resettlement programme. He thanked Bulgaria for the steps taken to reduce the number of cases of statelessness and to better care for unaccompanied minors. He would like the international community to take into account all aspects of the arrival of unaccompanied minors, to avoid detaining unaccompanied minors and to adopt an approach based on the best interests of the child. Lastly, he welcomed the ongoing transfer of UNHCR responsibilities to government authorities in Togo and hoped that many other countries would follow that example.

33. **Ms. Majali** (Jordan) recalled that Jordan was the country hosting the largest number of refugees in the world, with that community representing 29 per cent of the population. The reception and stay of refugees had had a negative impact on the country's economic growth and budget and had put pressure on infrastructure. Unemployment had risen to record levels, reaching 18.2 per cent in the first quarter of 2017. The cost of the Syrian crisis was estimated to be US\$ 2 billion per year, or 5 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) of Jordan. In recent years, the Government had developed a number of comprehensive integrated response plans to address the Syrian crisis and to find a sustainable solution based on investment and growth that would promote economic development and provide opportunities for both Jordanians and Syrians to participate in economic life. Jordan counted on the international community and donors to continue providing the necessary support for its latest action plan. It believed that the World Bank's new global concessional financing facility would be very useful to the country. Meanwhile, the aid provided to host countries should be predictable, institutionalized and uninterrupted; the root causes of flight in countries of origin should be addressed swiftly; and refugee status should end once the reasons justifying it no longer applied. Lastly, Jordan was of the view that a political solution to the Syrian conflict should guarantee the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic and allow for the return of refugees.

34. **Mr. Lorenz** (Luxembourg) said that Luxembourg aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. He recalled that Luxembourg had signed a multi-year agreement with UNHCR in order to help it with budgetary predictability by providing constant and stable financial contributions. In addition, Luxembourg was involved in humanitarian emergencies and had recently deployed an online platform (emergency.lu) in the Lake Chad basin. Developed through a public-private partnership, the platform provided UNHCR with a satellite-based system to re-establish communication, via telephone or the Internet, in crisis situations around the world. In addition, Luxembourg had welcomed asylum seekers and refugees and remained in favour of a European asylum system and of the roll-out of refugee resettlement programmes.

35. **Mr. Garcia** (Philippines) said that the Philippines would continue to implement the emergency transit mechanism with UNHCR and IOM, whereby refugees at risk of refoulement and persecution in their country of origin could be evacuated immediately, despite the human and financial problems facing the Philippines on account of the natural disasters that hit the country every year. The Philippines was, moreover, the only country in Asia to have established a refugee status determination procedure. At the multilateral level, the Philippines supported initiatives to address the causes of cross-border movements. In that connection, it continued to be involved in the platform on disaster displacement. It had been actively involved in the discussion of a global compact on safe, regular and orderly migration and had launched a national inter-institutional consultation to contribute to the development of the compact. Furthermore, the Philippines continued to provide UNHCR with financial support and to respond to calls for extrabudgetary funding to cover extraordinary refugee situations.

36. **Ms. van Daalen** (Netherlands) said that the Netherlands aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. The global compact should address the meaning of shared responsibility, so that it was clear what was expected of States. Responsibility could take the form of multi-year support for UNHCR and other

organizations supporting refugees, efforts to strengthen the self-reliance of refugees and their host communities or support through development cooperation. The implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework should lead to a radically new way of working. All relevant actors should cooperate to that end, at the same time aiming for long-term development.

37. The Netherlands welcomed UNHCR support for the reform of the development system initiated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It congratulated UNHCR on its progress in meeting the commitments made under the Grand Bargain, invited it to follow more closely the transparency standards set by the International Aid Transparency Initiative and commended it for its solid finances. The Netherlands strongly supported unearmarked funding, supported the internal reforms UNHCR had undertaken and welcomed its long-term strategy on private sector fundraising. Like the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Netherlands urged UNHCR to improve its communication.

38. While it commended UNHCR for undertaking collaborative strategic planning with the United Nations Development Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other stakeholders with regard to the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan, the Netherlands would like to know what priorities UNHCR had set in relation to the Syrian crisis. The massive displacement of Rohingya, the scale of the crisis in South Sudan in terms of protection needs, the need to improve detention conditions in Libya, the lack of progress in Yemen and the ongoing displacement in Somalia were all issues on which action must be taken.

39. **Mr. Lomónaco** (Mexico) said that Mexico endorsed the statement by Australia on behalf of the Friends of UNHCR #IBELONG Campaign to End Statelessness. Mexico had announced measures to strengthen refugee status determination procedures, in line with international standards, to encourage alternatives to administrative detention and to promote the socioeconomic inclusion of persons who obtained refugee status.

40. In response to the challenges raised by growing refugee flows and the diversity of those flows, Mexico, which had a long history of welcoming refugees, had decided to boost its collaboration with UNHCR. Thus, the first strategic dialogue on protection had been held in Mexico City in March 2017. In addition, Mexico had joined the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework in the Americas and would be presenting its national action plan at the high-level round table on the regional framework to be held in Honduras on 26 October 2017.

41. **Mr. Krivas** (Lithuania) said that Lithuania aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and that it highly valued the activities of UNHCR, including the development of a global compact on refugees. Refugee responses should be guided by respect for the human rights principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Even if the influx of refugees to Europe was now better controlled and more manageable, the situation remained fragile. Lithuania reaffirmed its commitment to sharing the burden with the European Union member States that had been particularly affected by the refugee crisis, for example by means of its resettlement programmes.

42. **Ms. Rodríguez Mancía** (Observer for Guatemala) said that Guatemala had recently become a country of destination for migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers. On 19 May 2017, Guatemala had hosted the regional dialogue on protection. In recent months, it had been involved in the development of a comprehensive regional framework on protection and solutions, which would be based on the commitments made under the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the San José Action Statement. In addition, it had designed a national action plan to respond in a comprehensive manner to the issue of refugees and had adopted a new migration code focused on the protection of migrants and refugees.

43. **Mr. Aala** (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic) said that developing countries and least developed countries continued to provide the lion's share of assistance to refugees in the world, despite the fact that the international community had committed itself to sharing the burden and responsibilities more fairly, notably in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. It was regrettable that the management of refugee flows was

politically motivated. The issue of forced displacement would not be resolved until its root causes were addressed, which should not be done selectively. The Israeli occupation of Palestine, the Syrian Golan and other Arab territories remained the main reason for the presence of Palestinian refugees in his country. Foreign interference in the internal affairs of governments, especially the support for terrorism, had been a source of instability in the region for several years. The Syrian Government wished that aid programmes were not dictated by political decisions and would like to be more closely involved in the aid projects designed for displaced persons in the Syrian Arab Republic. By breaking the siege of Dayr al-Zor, the Government had enabled the distribution of humanitarian aid and the return of tens of thousands of refugees. The Government was following the Astana talks closely and hoped that the hostilities would end. In addition, it hoped that the conditions for reconciliation would be achieved, that terrorism would be eradicated, that stability would be restored and that voluntary returns would be possible throughout the country. The success of a political solution and the improvement of the humanitarian situation would also depend on the climate at the international and regional levels, the fight against terrorism and the end of unilateral coercive measures against the Syrian population.

44. **Mr. Digna** (Sudan) said that the Sudan aligned itself with the statement made by Togo on behalf of the African Group. The Sudan was home to over 2 million refugees, more than half of whom were originally from South Sudan. It recorded on average 500 asylum requests per day, chiefly in the eastern and southern regions of the country. International aid remained weak in the face of the massive influx and covered only 20 per cent of needs. A high commission had been established to help the South Sudanese, with the support of the private sector, local and international organizations and civil society.

45. In cooperation with UNHCR and the Government of Chad, a tripartite agreement had been signed on 31 May 2017 regarding the return of refugees from Chad to the Sudan and vice versa. The Sudan wished to reaffirm its commitment to cooperation, coordination and the fair and sustainable sharing of burdens and responsibilities.

46. **Mr. Ambrazevich** (Belarus) said that the Republic of Belarus had held national consultations involving all interested partners in an effort to formulate a national position regarding future global compacts on safe, orderly and regular migration and on refugees. It should be recalled that the rise in the number of migrants and refugees recorded in recent years was a direct consequence of wars and conflicts, many of which had begun because some countries had violated the rules of international law. Belarus was of the view that the international community was facing problems because of countries' inability to bring an end to the cold war. Twenty-five years earlier, the countries considered the victors of that war had established a new world order into which they had failed to integrate other countries. For that reason, the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, had suggested the launch of a new peace process that would enable the key global players to discuss a new world order. Minsk stood ready to host such a dialogue.

47. **Mr. Klymenko** (Observer for Ukraine) said that Ukraine endorsed the statement made on behalf of the European Union. The global compact on refugees should address the topic of displaced persons, who constituted a large proportion of the persons who came under the mandate of UNHCR. The attack by the Russian Federation against Ukraine had caused the displacement of over 1.5 million Ukrainians, who continued to receive assistance from the Government of Ukraine and international partners. For example, measures had to be taken to restore water and electricity supplies for the displaced persons in Donbas, to repair damaged infrastructure and to provide housing and psychosocial support to those displaced. The so-called local authorities, supported by the Russian Federation, constantly barred the Government of Ukraine and international organizations from access to the territories over which the authorities of Donbas had temporarily lost control. Ukraine called upon the Russian Federation to respect its obligations under the Minsk agreements, namely to withdraw its troops and mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine and to stop supplying weapons and munitions to illegal armed groups. The humanitarian situation in south-eastern Ukraine would then quickly stabilize, thereby enabling those who had been forced to leave to return home and resume a normal life. The occupation authorities were reluctant to allow UNHCR access to the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea to assess the humanitarian needs of individuals falling

under its mandate. Ukraine would be grateful if UNHCR would redouble its efforts to fulfil its mission in that part of the country. In addition, Ukraine requested all its international partners to continue to provide assistance, especially in terms of funding the humanitarian response plan and UNHCR programmes. As a result of the situation, the Government of Ukraine had acquired unique experience in dealing with massive internal displacement, which might be useful in the development of the global compact on refugees.

48. **Ms. Korka** (Greece) said that her delegation was grateful to UNHCR, the European Union and IOM for their vital assistance to Greece with the unprecedented influx of refugees. Given that the issue of refugees did not concern only Greece and the European Union and required global action based on shared responsibilities, Greece fully endorsed the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and welcomed the opportunities that it offered. The mandate of UNHCR, as the custodian of humanitarian principles, should be strengthened. The international community must collaborate not only to fight the root causes of war and persecution but also to provide assistance to individuals eligible for international protection. Furthermore, every effort should be made to integrate persons who were granted asylum. In that connection, Greece had adopted laws on free education for all refugee children, access to basic health care free of charge and the social and solidarity economy.

49. The number of refugees arriving on Greek shores continued to rise; the country had already recorded 31,000 asylum requests and asked its partners for help in managing the massive influx by showing solidarity and respecting the principle of shared responsibilities.

50. **Mr. Paul** (India) said that developing countries hosted 86 per cent of refugees and their capacities were severely stretched. The international community should assist the States that hosted the largest number of refugees and build their capacity. Given the expanding mandate of UNHCR and increasing gaps in humanitarian funding, it was necessary to find innovative means of financing to enable host countries and communities both to respond to humanitarian emergencies and to satisfy their needs in the longer term. Furthermore, countries should allocate more unearmarked funds and multi-year funding in order to ensure the predictability and continuity of humanitarian response. India welcomed UNHCR efforts to increase the efficiency of its operations, in particular through an increase in cash-based interventions. It hoped to see an early conclusion of the change management process and recommended its progressive application in field operations.

51. The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework should fully utilize the age, gender and diversity approach and link humanitarian and development efforts. It should also provide for ways to help countries of origin and host countries to prevent, stabilize and regularize the situation of refugees through voluntary return and resettlement. In view of the 41 per cent deficit announced by UNHCR in 2016, India requested the Organization to continue to prioritize its activities so that refugees in the most difficult circumstances were protected and to take action in other situations only if that was warranted. It urged UNHCR to strengthen the capacity of national and local responders and to step up collaboration with them in order to adapt solutions to the local context and ensure that ownership of the process was taken by the people affected concerned and host communities. In addition, India recommended that UNHCR should allocate more financial and human resources to its campaign to end statelessness, and in particular increase funding under pillar 2.

52. The protection of displaced persons was primarily the responsibility of the State concerned; UNHCR should not under any circumstances act as a substitute for the State but should, rather, act with the consent of the State concerned to complement its efforts. India had a long tradition of hosting a large number of refugees and would continue to welcome them. The protection regime enjoyed by refugees in its territory derived from the Constitution and other relevant legal provisions. India continued to refine its legal framework and administrative mechanisms in order to provide greater hospitality for refugees.

53. **Mr. Šuc** (Slovenia) said that Slovenia aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. At the national level, more needed to be done to strengthen the link between humanitarian and development agencies and to ensure self-reliance and resilience. Slovenia was a regular contributor to UNHCR, increasing its contribution almost

threefold between 2015 and 2016. It would also shortly be contributing to UNHCR efforts for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. In keeping with the commitment that it had made at the Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region, held on 5 April 2017, Slovenia would continue to provide UNHCR with funding for Syria in 2018 and 2019. In addition, Slovenia supported a number of projects focused on the empowerment of refugee women, especially in Jordan, Lebanon and Uganda. Under the European Union's resettlement programme, Slovenia had resettled 40 per cent of the refugee quota that it had been assigned. Following the World Humanitarian Summit, and in line with the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, Slovenia had begun to apply a new way of working in the area of humanitarian assistance. The National Assembly had recently adopted a resolution on development cooperation and humanitarian assistance that formed the basis of a new strategic framework designed to enable Slovenia to address crises in a more effective and coherent manner. The resolution underlined the linkages between humanitarian and development work.

54. Slovenia was doing its utmost to provide support for the asylum seekers in its territory. It provided accommodation for refugees and persons who requested international protection, paying special attention to vulnerable groups. A pilot project was in place whereby unaccompanied minors were provided with all-day professional care.

55. **Mr. Zhaoxu Ma** (China) said that the refugee issue required a global solution. The international community should increase its support for UNHCR and host countries, eliminate xenophobia and discrimination against refugees and address the social instability and developmental shortcomings that were at the root of much of displacement. It should also strive to resolve conflicts through dialogue, increase assistance to developing countries and create the conditions for stability and development in developing countries. Furthermore, it was necessary to promote international solidarity. UNHCR should incorporate into the global compact the lessons learned from pilot projects on the implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. The compact should not contain provisions that exceeded what was decided by the General Assembly or the provisions of the Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. As for the reception and settlement of refugees, the situation and capacity of host countries should be taken into account. Moreover, countries should remain objective and neutral, avoid politicizing humanitarian action and respect the principle of non-intervention. In May 2017, China had held a forum on the "One Belt, One Road" initiative to promote international cooperation, which had resulted in the signing of 270 cooperation agreements under which it would supply food and tents in countries along the Silk Road. China had also signed an agreement with UNHCR to donate US\$ 8 million for technical and economic cooperation.

56. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) welcomed the efforts of Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Belarus, Greece, the Sudan, Mexico, Guatemala, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Philippines, India and China. Replying to the questions raised by the Netherlands, he said that UNHCR was looking into the use of the International Aid Transparency Initiative and that the Office's priority regarding the Syrian crisis was to support countries of asylum and help individuals who wished to return home. In reference to Ukraine, he requested all the parties to redouble their efforts to resolve the conflict in order to improve the situation of displaced persons.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.