



**United Nations**

**United Nations High Commissioner  
for Refugees**

**Report of the Executive  
Committee of the Programme  
of the United Nations High  
Commissioner for Refugees**

**Sixty-second session  
(3-7 October 2011)**

**General Assembly  
Official Records  
Sixty-sixth Session  
Supplement No. 12A**

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## I. Introduction

### A. Opening of the session

1. The Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme held its sixty-second plenary session at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, from 3 -7 October 2011. It was opened by the Chairman, His Excellency Ambassador Hisham Badr (Egypt), who briefed the Committee on his recent mission to the East and Horn of Africa. The Vice-Chairman, His Excellency Ambassador Jan Knutsson (Sweden), presided over a number of meetings.

2. The Chairman welcomed Bulgaria, Cameroon, Congo, Croatia, Togo and Turkmenistan, who were attending their first plenary session as members.

### B. Representation on the Committee

3. The following members of the Committee were represented at the session:

Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Holy See, Hungary, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Yemen, and Zambia.

4. The Governments of the following States were present as observers:

Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Monaco, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Oman, Panama, Peru, Qatar, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Uruguay, and Zimbabwe.

5. The European Union, Palestine, and the Sovereign Military Order of Malta were represented as observers.

6. Also present were the following intergovernmental organizations and other entities:

African Union, Council of Europe, Economic Community of West African States, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Labour Office, International Organization for Migration, International Organization of La Francophonie, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and the World Bank Group.

7. The United Nations system was represented as follows:

United Nations Office at Geneva, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and World Food Programme.

8. 27 non-governmental organizations attended.

### **C. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters**

9. The Executive Committee adopted by consensus the following agenda (A/AC.96/1096):

1. Opening of the session
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters
3. Introductory statement by the High Commissioner
4. General debate
5. Consideration of reports on the work of the Standing Committee:
  - (a) International protection;
  - (b) Programme budgets, management, financial control and administrative oversight
6. Consideration of reports relating to programme and administrative oversight and evaluation
7. Consideration and adoption of the Biennial Programme Budget 2012-2013
8. Review of the Annual Consultations with non-governmental organizations
9. Other statements
10. Meetings of the Standing Committee in 2012
11. Consideration of the provisional agenda of the sixty-third session of the Executive Committee
12. Election of officers
13. Any other business
14. Adoption of the report of the sixty-second session of the Executive Committee
15. Closing of the session.

### **D. Election of officers for the sixty-third session**

10. Under Rule 10 of its Rules of Procedure, the Committee elected the following officers by acclamation, to serve the Committee from the day immediately following their election to the end of the last day of the following annual plenary session:

Chairperson: His Excellency Ambassador Jan Knutsson (Sweden)

Vice-Chairperson: Her Excellency Ambassador Alicia Arango Olmos (Colombia)

Rapporteur: Ms. Thararut Hanlumyuang (Thailand)

## II. Work of the sixty-second session<sup>1</sup>

11. As the basis for the general debate, the High Commissioner delivered an opening statement, the text of which is available on UNHCR's website ([www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)). Following the High Commissioner's statement, the guest speaker, the Acting President of the Republic of Tunisia, His Excellency Mr. Fouad Mebazaâ, addressed the Executive Committee. During the session, UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador, Ms. Angelina Jolie was welcomed as a special guest.

12. A summary of the general debate, delivered by the Chairman, is contained in Annex II.

## III. Decisions of the Executive Committee

### A. General decision on administrative, financial and programme matters

13. *The Executive Committee,*

(a) Recalls that the Executive Committee at its sixty-first session approved a budget for 2011 covering total requirements of \$3,320.8 million; notes that the additional needs under supplementary budgets in 2011 amount to \$459.7 million; approves the total revised requirements for 2011 amounting to \$3,780.5 million; and authorizes the High Commissioner within these total appropriations, to effect adjustments in Regional Programmes, Global Programmes and Headquarters budgets;

(b) Confirms that the activities proposed under the Biennial Programme Budget for the years 2012-2013, as set out in document A/AC.96/1100, have been found on review to be consistent with the Statute of the Office of the High Commissioner (General Assembly Resolution 428 (V)), the High Commissioner's other functions as recognized, promoted or requested by the General Assembly, the Security Council, or the Secretary-General, and the relevant provisions of the Financial Rules for Voluntary Funds Administered by the High Commissioner for Refugees (A/AC.96/503/Rev.9);

(c) Approves the programmes and budgets for Regional Programmes, Global Programmes and Headquarters under the 2012-2013 Biennial Budget amounting to \$3,310,335,700 for 2012 and \$3,145,880,200 for 2013, including the United Nations Regular Budget contribution towards Headquarters costs, as well as an Operational Reserve (representing 10 per cent of programmed activities under Pillars 1 and 2) of \$248,848,800 in 2012 and \$240,711,800 in 2013 and an amount of \$20 million for the "New or additional activities – mandate-related" Reserve in both 2012 and 2013 respectively; notes that these provisions, together with those of \$12.0 million for Junior Professional Officers in both 2012 and 2013 respectively, bring total requirements for 2012 to \$3,591,184,500 and for 2013 to \$3,418,592,000; and authorizes the High Commissioner within these total appropriations, to effect adjustments in Regional Programmes, Global Programmes and Headquarters budgets;

(d) Notes the Report of the Board of Auditors to the General Assembly on the Accounts of the Voluntary Funds administered by the United Nations High Commissioner for

<sup>1</sup> See summary records of the session for a full account of the deliberations of the Committee, including statements or other interventions by delegations under all agenda items, and their comments on the draft conclusion and decisions, as well as summing up and closing statements by the High Commissioner and by the Chairman.

Refugees for the year ended 31 December 2010 (A/AC.96/1099), and the High Commissioner's Measures Taken in Response to the Recommendations of the Report of the Board of Auditors (A/AC.96/1099/Add.1); as well as the Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on UNHCR's Biennial Programme Budget for 2012-2013 (A/AC.96/1100/Add.1) and the various reports of the High Commissioner related to oversight activities (A/AC.96/1101 and A/AC.96/1102); and requests to be kept regularly informed on the measures taken to address the recommendations and the observations raised in these various oversight documents;

(e) Requests the High Commissioner, within the resources available, to respond flexibly and efficiently to the needs currently indicated under the Biennial Programme Budget for the years 2012-2013, and authorizes him, in the case of additional new emergency needs that cannot be met fully from the Operational Reserve, to create supplementary budgets and issue Special Appeals under all pillars, with such adjustments being reported to each subsequent Standing Committee for consideration;

(f) Acknowledges with appreciation the burden that continues to be shouldered by developing and least developed countries hosting refugees; and urges Member States to recognize this valuable contribution to the protection of refugees and to participate in efforts to promote durable solutions; and

(g) Urges Member States, in the light of the extensive needs to be addressed by the Office of the High Commissioner, to respond generously and in a spirit of solidarity, and in a timely manner, to his appeal for resources to meet in full the approved 2012-2013 Biennial Programme Budget; and to support initiatives to ensure that the Office is resourced in a better and more predictable manner, while keeping "earmarking" to a minimum level."

## **B. Decision on a revision of the financial rules for voluntary funds administered by the High Commissioner for Refugees**

14. *The Executive Committee,*

Having considered the proposed revision of the current financial rules for voluntary funds administered by the High Commissioner for Refugees (A/AC.96/503/Rev.9),

Notes the comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) (A/AC.96/1101/Add.1);

Recalls the decision of the Standing Committee, at its fifty-second meeting, to request the High Commissioner to submit a final draft to the sixty-second session of the Executive Committee; and

Endorses the proposed revision and requests the High Commissioner to promulgate the revised financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.10) with effect from 1 January 2012.

## **C. Decision on the programme of work of the Standing Committee in 2012**

15. *The Executive Committee,*

Having reviewed the issues before it at its sixty-second session, and bearing in mind the decisions adopted at that session,

(a) *Decides* to convene no more than three formal meetings of the Standing Committee in 2012, to be held in March, June and September;

(b) *Reaffirms* its decision on the framework for the Standing Committee's programme of work (A/AC.96/1003 paragraph 25, sub-paragraph 2(c)), authorizes the Standing Committee to add and delete items, if appropriate, to this framework for its meetings in 2012 and requests member States to meet in December 2011 to draw up a detailed work plan for formal adoption by the Standing Committee at its first meeting in 2012;

(c) *Calls upon* its members to continue efforts to ensure that debate at the Executive Committee and its Standing Committee be of a substantive and interactive nature, yielding practical guidance and clear advice to the High Commissioner, in keeping with the Committee's statutory functions; and calls on the Office of the High Commissioner to be explicit and analytical in its reports and presentations to the Committee and to submit documentation in a timely manner;

(d) *Further* requests the Standing Committee to report on its work to the sixty-third session of the Executive Committee.

#### **D. Decision on observer participation in meetings of the Standing Committee in 2011-2012**

16. *The Executive Committee,*

(a) *Approves* applications by the following Government observer delegations for participation in meetings of the Standing Committee from October 2011 to October 2012:

Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Honduras, Iraq, Malaysia, Nepal and Slovakia.

(b) *Authorizes* the Standing Committee to decide upon any additional applications from Government observer delegations to participate in its meetings during the aforementioned period;

(c) *Approves* the following list of intergovernmental and international organizations to be invited by the High Commissioner to participate as observers in relevant meetings of its Standing Committee from October 2011 to October 2012:

United Nations specialized agencies, departments, funds and programmes, African Union, Council of Europe, East African Community, Economic Community of Central African States, Economic Community of West African States, European Union, Executive Secretariat of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, International Centre for Migration Policy Development, International Committee of the Red Cross, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Organization for Migration, League of Arab States, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, International Organization of "la Francophonie", Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Southern African Development Community and Sovereign Military Order of Malta.

**E. Decision on the provisional agenda of the sixty-third session of the Executive Committee**

17. *The Executive Committee,*

Recalling its decision on working methods adopted at its fifty-fifth plenary session (A/AC.96/1003 paragraph 25),

Decides to adopt as the provisional agenda for the sixty-third session of the Executive Committee the standard model contained in sub-paragraph 1(f) of the above-mentioned decision.

## Annex I

### List of decisions adopted by the Standing Committee in 2011

In accordance with the authority vested in it by the Executive Committee, the Standing Committee adopted a number of decisions which are annexed to the reports of the different Standing Committee meetings, as follows:

- (a) *Report of the fiftieth meeting of the Standing Committee (A/AC.96/1097)*
  - Decision on programme budgets and funding in 2011
- (b) *Report of the fifty-first meeting of the Standing Committee (A/AC.96/1104)*
  - Decision on funding of end-of-service and post-retirement liabilities
  - Decision on the establishment of an Independent Audit and Oversight Committee
  - Decision on overall programme budgets and funding for 2011
- (c) *Report of the fifty-second meeting of the Standing Committee (A/AC.96/1105)*
  - Decision on overall programme budgets and funding for 2011
  - Decision on a proposed revision of the Financial Rules

## Annex II

### **Chairman's summary of the general debate**

The Chairman began by thanking the High Commissioner and the Acting President of Tunisia, His Excellency M. Fouad Mebazaa, for their thoughtful and stimulating presentations. These had set the stage for the excellent discussions during the General Debate of the Executive Committee's 62<sup>nd</sup> Session. The Chairman had also been pleased to report on his recent trip to refugee camps, with a view to drawing the international community's attention to the ongoing plight of the Somali refugees.

The Acting President had stressed the importance of the Committee's collective commitment to the notion of protection, emphasizing the values of solidarity, cooperation, and burden sharing. And the High Commissioner had recalled that, as shown by events in Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and Somalia unfortunately, refugee emergencies were not a thing of the past. Not only had these emergencies stretched UNHCR's resources to the limit, but they had also placed extensive, and in some cases additional, burdens on host countries. In this regard, the High Commissioner had highlighted the continuing difficulties posed by protracted refugee situations, the importance of resettlement and local integration efforts, and the need for burden sharing. He had also called attention to the continuing threat to protection space caused by racism and xenophobia, attitudes which "diminish us all".

Complex emergencies also required UNHCR to enhance its response capacities. The High Commissioner had discussed internal reform efforts to strengthen UNHCR's organizational response to emergencies and improve accountability, financial and programme control and risk management. He had also stressed the importance of partnerships, of broadening the donor base and of more unrestricted, or flexibly earmarked, funding. Finally, he had called attention to the upcoming intergovernmental event in December that would commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the Refugee Convention and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, respectively.

Delegations had contributed to the general debate in a positive and constructive manner. They applauded the work of the High Commissioner, thanking him for his leadership and his vision. Most speakers also commended the work of his dedicated staff, many of whom work in very dangerous and difficult circumstances, and they called upon UNHCR to further strengthen measures to ensure their safety and security.

Member States also recognized that UNHCR works in an increasingly complex environment. Trends such as climate change, natural disasters, food and water insecurity, as well as growing vulnerabilities and armed conflicts, stretch the humanitarian system.

Two of the most demanding situations that arose in 2011 - in North Africa and the Horn of Africa - received considerable attention. Many delegations praised the generosity and solidarity shown by neighbouring countries in hosting refugees. However, concerns were expressed about the burdens borne by these and other host countries, and the need for the entire international community to provide assistance and participate in burden sharing. Several speakers also praised UNHCR's activities regarding displaced persons from these regions and supported the Office's efforts to strengthen its overall emergency preparedness and response capacity.

While paying specific attention to these current emergencies, delegations also expressed concern about protracted refugee situations. All of these required the pursuit of durable solutions. Several speakers noted that voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity remained

the preferred solution, but pointed out that it was important to address local conditions to ensure that returns were sustainable. Others stressed the importance of resettlement, especially where repatriation was not an option, and called upon States to increase the number of resettlement opportunities. In terms of local integration, several delegates expressed support for UNHCR's work to promote self-reliance among refugees. A few speakers also made reference to specific groups of refugees, encouraging UNHCR to pursue its efforts to assist urban refugees and its programmes to address gender-based violence. Many delegations also welcomed UNHCR's efforts on behalf of internally displaced persons, in cooperation with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

Delegates pointed out, however, that UNHCR could not undertake its primary mission of protection and the achievement of durable solutions on its own. Partnerships and coordination were necessary and important components of its activities. States called upon UNHCR to work closely with the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and to continue or enhance partnerships with other humanitarian organizations such as the World Food Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and the International Organization for Migration; development actors, including in the framework of the Transitional Solutions Initiative (TSI); the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement; non-governmental organizations; and, in some cases, regional bodies.

States also recognized that UNHCR had been enhancing its own effectiveness and efficiency through a number of reforms. They expressed support for its ongoing structural and management reforms; efforts to improve overall accountability; and its continued use of results-based management and the Global Needs Assessment. In particular they welcomed its efforts to analyze displacement patterns and gaps in the protection system; to improve financial, risk and performance management; to create an Independent Audit and Oversight Committee; and to establish a steering committee that would assist in the research project on the cost and impact of hosting refugees. Some delegations, while commending UNHCR's progress in addressing concerns of the Board of Auditors, indicated that they were looking forward to further results and called for UNHCR to fully implement the International Public Service Accounting Standards (IPSAS) in 2012.

Delegations also stressed the importance of funding for UNHCR, with several delegates strongly encouraging the Office to continue its efforts to broaden its donor base, including from the private sector. There were also calls for more unearmarked funding to enhance UNHCR's flexibility in dealing with underfunded programmes.

Many delegations spoke of measures being undertaken in their own countries to address issues relating to refugees and stateless persons. The Chairman commented that it had been gratifying to hear of continued cooperation with UNHCR and information about new policies and legislation devoted to improving the conditions of refugees or asylum procedures, and to assisting the stateless. Moreover, it was encouraging to learn of many meetings at the international or regional level being devoted to these issues. At the same time, it was clear from many interventions that host countries continued to make significant contributions and needed assistance to address the considerable burdens they faced in helping refugees within their borders.

Finally, most delegations expressed their strong support for UNHCR's efforts to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. There had been calls for States to ratify these Conventions, and it had been especially gratifying to hear from those delegations who had indicated that they planned to ratify - or had already ratified - the Conventions on Statelessness. Moreover, many delegations welcomed the upcoming intergovernmental event

at the Ministerial level in December and noted that this would be an opportunity to pledge their support to displaced persons and to reaffirm the fundamental principles of these Conventions. In a year when the number of displaced persons had again increased, the Conventions had proved themselves to be just as relevant as they had been at their creation. The Executive Committee needed to use the opportunity provided by these commemorations to once again hear the voices of the refugees, and to send them a message of hope for the future. This sentiment had been eloquently echoed by UNHCR's Goodwill Ambassador, Ms. Angelina Jolie, in her remarks to the Committee.

In closing, the Chairman urged all delegations to sensitize their capitals to the importance of high-level participation in the commemorative event in December. He called for commitment to concrete action to better the lives of the refugees, displaced and stateless.

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