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

Fifty-third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 561st MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 30 September 2002, at 10 a.m.

Temporary Chairman: Mr. MOLANDER (Sweden)
Chairman: Mr. YIMER (Ethiopia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION (item 1 of the provisional agenda)

1. The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN declared open the fifty-third session of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

STATEMENT BY THE OUTGOING CHAIRMAN

2. The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN, speaking in his capacity as the Chairman of the fifty-second session of the Executive Committee, thanked the High Commissioner, the Deputy High Commissioner, the Assistant High Commissioner, his colleagues on the Bureau and the staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for their assistance throughout his mandate.

3. Once again over the past year, UNHCR had demonstrated its effectiveness and the indispensable nature of its work in the field, for example by facilitating the repatriation of refugees in Afghanistan, Timor-Leste and Sierra Leone. It had also done fruitful work on determining the main policy directions of its future activities. One of its principal successes had been to encourage dialogue on the very delicate issue of refugee protection. In December 2001, the participants in the Ministerial Meeting of States Parties to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees had solemnly reaffirmed their commitment to fulfil their obligations under that instrument. In June 2002, at the conclusion of the Global Consultations on international protection, the Standing Committee had adopted the Agenda for Protection as a basis for formulating common ground in that area.

4. In the light of the extremely serious allegations of the sexual exploitation of refugee women and children by humanitarian workers in West Africa, an informal working group had been set up to study ways to improve the protection of refugee or displaced women and children whose situation made them particularly vulnerable to abuse of that kind. UNHCR had focused on the legal consequences for the perpetrators and the remedial and preventive action that needed to be taken. The Code of Conduct elaborated by UNHCR and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force would help to clarify what constituted unacceptable behaviour. The goal set by the High Commissioner - that of zero tolerance - could be achieved only by addressing the problem on a global scale, for it was a worldwide problem.

5. A series of informal consultations had also been organized on improving UNHCR's funding. It had been concluded that assessed and negotiated contributions should be given further consideration, private-sector funding should be tapped and new sources of funding should be explored. Those initiatives had gone hand in hand with a new awareness that refugees should be regarded not solely as a burden, but also as agents for development. Despite the very positive tone of the debates about funding, the basic problem remained unresolved, namely, that UNHCR lacked adequate resources to carry out the activities in its programme budget. Accordingly, the membership of the Executive Committee should commit itself to full funding of UNHCR's approved budget, which should be based on current needs.

6. Although the humanitarian community was now devoting greater attention to the needs of internally displaced persons, much remained to be done to afford them increased protection. Moreover, in the current context of the fight against terrorism, which had resulted in a hardening of the position of many traditional host countries, UNHCR had more than ever a crucial role to play in protecting the rights of all refugees.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS (item 2 of the provisional agenda)

7. Mr. DEMBRI (Algeria) nominated Mr. Yimer (Ethiopia) for the office of Chairman.
8. Mr. ULLERUP (Denmark) and Mr. PURI (India) seconded the nomination.
9. Mr. Yimer (Ethiopia) was elected Chairman by acclamation.
10. Mr. NEGROTTO CAMBIASO (Italy) nominated Mr. Boulgaris (Switzerland) for the office of Vice-Chairman.
11. Mr. MACEDO (Mexico) and Mr. DA CONCEIÇÃO ZANDAMELA (Mozambique) seconded the nomination.
12. Mr. Boulgaris (Switzerland) was elected Vice-Chairman by acclamation.
13. Mr. REYES RODRIGUEZ (Colombia) nominated Ms. Lynch (United States of America) for the office of Rapporteur.
14. Mr. KISHIMORI (Japan) seconded the nomination.
15. Ms. Lynch (United States of America) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.
16. Mr. Yimer (Ethiopia) took the Chair.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

17. The CHAIRMAN thanked the members of the Executive Committee for the confidence they had placed in him and paid tribute to the outgoing Chairman, whose wisdom and ability had enabled the Executive Committee to confront the issues of funding and protection that had dominated the past year. He was grateful to the outgoing Chairman for having established a working group to investigate the allegations of exploitation and sexual abuse of refugees in West Africa and to take appropriate steps to prevent such occurrences. The situation in Africa would be a priority in the year ahead; accordingly, he was encouraged by the association between UNHCR and the secretariat of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). While the search for durable solutions to refugee problems was inextricably linked with post-conflict reconstruction, an area in which the international community should shoulder its responsibilities, he would nevertheless like to see the Executive Committee pursue the work begun in 2001 on recognizing the crucial role played by host countries.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS (item 3 of the provisional agenda) (A/AC.96/LIII/L.1)

18. The agenda was adopted.

PRESENTATION BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER (agenda item 4)

19. Mr. LUBBERS (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said he was pleased that the total number of people of concern to UNHCR had dropped from 22 million in December 2000 to 20 million in December 2001; that showed that durable solutions had been found. In Afghanistan, for example, more than 2 million people had returned home since March 2002, including 1.7 million refugees. After decades of bitter conflict, the peace process in Angola had brought renewed optimism that many refugees and displaced persons would soon be able to return home. In the Horn of Africa, most of the Eritrean refugees in the Sudan had now gone home and UNHCR intended to apply the cessation clause at the end of the year. In Sierra Leone, a successful peace process had led to the return of some 190,000 refugees since September 2001. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, foreign troops had started to withdraw and, if the inter-Congolese dialogue was successful, it could eventually pave the way for the return of almost 400,000 Congolese refugees from neighbouring countries. The New Partnership for Africa's Development offered an opportunity to bridge the gap between emergency relief and development assistance in Africa. UNHCR was working closely with the NEPAD secretariat and with donor governments to translate cooperation into concrete plans.

20. In the Balkans, durable solutions had been found for the majority of those displaced by the conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. In Timor-Leste, UNHCR and its partners had facilitated the return of 220,000 refugees and the cessation clause would be applied with effect from 1 January 2003. In Sri Lanka, the signs of peace were hopeful and more than 180,000 displaced people had spontaneously returned to their villages since the ceasefire agreement in February 2002.

21. However, such encouraging developments should not obscure the fact that UNHCR faced major challenges. In countries emerging from conflict, it was important to take an approach based on the "Four Rs", namely repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Much remained to be done in host countries to enable refugees to become self-reliant and make a positive contribution to the local society and economy of their country of asylum. In Afghanistan, security problems were again hampering returns and his Office was deeply concerned about the ill-treatment of some Pashtun minorities in parts of the north. The rehabilitation and reconstruction process must now be accelerated and priority given to reintegration. In Africa, attacks on refugee settlements in Uganda and the imposed return of Congolese refugees from Rwanda were matters of concern. Liberia was once again in turmoil and more than 70,000 Liberians had fled to Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone since the beginning of the year, adding to the huge number of Liberians who had already been displaced. Recent events in Côte d'Ivoire were another reminder of the fragile situation in West Africa.

22. A series of remedial and preventive actions had been taken in West Africa to strengthen the protection of refugee women and children against the threat of sexual exploitation and abuse. While acknowledging the existence of the problem, his Office believed that the many

generalizations that had been made in the draft report of the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) had unfairly tarnished the reputation and credibility of UNHCR staff. That said, UNHCR had faced up to the issue, thereby enabling the Office and its partners to adopt a coordinated and comprehensive approach to dealing with sexual exploitation and abuse not just in Africa, but all over the world. On the other hand, it was a matter of some concern that, following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, certain States had taken indiscriminate steps to counter illegal migration and abuse of asylum systems, resulting in non-admission, denial of access to asylum procedures and even cases of refoulement. Likewise, the general trend towards the increased use of detention of asylum-seekers, often on a discriminatory basis, was an abiding concern, as was the fact that some sections of the media and certain politicians had demonized asylum-seekers and refugees, particularly during election campaigns.

23. With regard to internal management issues, UNHCR intended to evaluate certain regional and subregional refugee situations in such a way as to focus on protection and durable solutions and assess how UNHCR might derive greater benefit from the expertise and capacity of others. The Division of Resource Management had been restructured with the aim of tightening up strict financial discipline and focusing on austerity in personnel management. An Information Protection Section had been established to provide information on refugees' countries of origin and it would assume some of the functions previously carried out by the Centre for Documentation and Research. In the Division of Operational Support, a "Project PROFILE" team had been established to work on the development of new procedures, guidelines and technology systems for registration. Earlier in the year, a task force had been set up to review UNHCR's partnerships and, among other things, to strengthen links with traditional partners in the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and regional organizations such as the newly established African Union.

24. The High Commissioner's decision to re-establish a separate Division for Human Resources illustrated his commitment to improve staff management at UNHCR. The new Division should recruit more young professionals, while at the same time improving gender balance and geographical diversity. Quality performance should also be enhanced, since UNHCR staff existed to serve the cause of refugees and not the other way round. Consequently, the policy of granting permanent contracts should be reassessed. Pending that assessment, a recruitment freeze had been imposed. Lastly, the Division should better manage the problem of staff between assignments, while at the same time preserving the rotation policy which was one of the Office's strengths. UNHCR needed to recognize that its staff were its most valuable asset, yet it should not shy away from difficult decisions. His Office was committed to introducing the necessary improvements in accordance with the United Nations Staff Rules and Regulations and in close consultation with the Staff Council and the various joint staff-management bodies.

25. The new UNHCR Code of Conduct had been signed on 4 September 2002. It was intended to guide staff members in their work, to assist them in dealing with the difficult ethical and moral dilemmas which they often had to face, and to remind them that their effectiveness depended on their ability to uphold the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct at all times. All staff would be invited to sign the Code before the start of 2003. Managers had been informed that it was their responsibility to ensure that their subordinates were familiar with the Code and that they respected it, and that UNHCR's beneficiaries and partners were aware of its contents.

26. As to the present funding situation, UNHCR wished to thank donors for supporting the Supplementary Programme in Afghanistan and their positive response to the Emergency Appeal for Liberian refugees. Nevertheless, in addition to the \$23 million shortfall for the Afghanistan programme, around \$25 million was still needed for the annual programme budget. Unless the latter shortfall was addressed, UNHCR would be forced to reduce staff administrative costs and procurement and operational expenditure, and that would certainly have unfortunate consequences for refugees. The administrative support costs for the implementation of the programmes funded out of the supplementary budget were significant. Since they were not foreseen in the annual budget, they represented a kind of subsidy from the annual budget to the supplementary budget. UNHCR was considering the possibility of attributing a small percentage of supplementary budget contributions to the annual budget, an idea on which the Executive Committee would be consulted at a later date.

27. Together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank, UNHCR was endeavouring to find complementary sources of financing and gain greater access to development funds for reintegration activities aimed at promoting self-reliance among refugees. Much remained to be done to boost private-sector fundraising activities, despite some progress in that field. Thus, for example, the private sector was now the tenth largest contributor to the Afghanistan Supplementary Programme. Finally, the question of up-front financial resources to cope with major crises needed to be revisited: in the past, UNHCR had had a special emergency fund for that purpose, which had subsequently been subsumed in the overall programme reserve. What was the Office to do in the future?

28. At its current session, the Executive Committee was expected to endorse the Agenda for Protection. Together with the Ministerial Declaration of December 2001, the Agenda was one of the most important outcomes of the Global Consultations process. It was a synthesis of UNHCR's protection mandate, carefully defined to cope with the challenges of today's world. It was not a legally binding instrument, nor was it simply a wish list. It should inform priorities and plans for 2003 and beyond. The relevance of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees had been reaffirmed at the Ministerial Meeting in December 2001. However, the Convention was deficient in certain respects and should be supplemented in those areas that it did not cover adequately. For example, refugee burden-sharing between North and South should be made more equitable; comprehensive plans of action should be activated in massive outflow situations; agreements on "secondary movements" should be worked out to define the roles and responsibilities of countries of origin, transit and destination; development assistance in regions of origin should be better targeted by helping refugee-hosting countries to facilitate local integration and enhancing post-conflict reintegration; and multilateral commitments to resettlement should be implemented. It was proposed that a group of experts should be established to provide a useful framework for the multilateral development of special agreements. The group would report each session to the Standing Committee and annually to the Executive Committee on progress achieved.

29. The "UNHCR 2004" process had been launched in 2001 to strengthen UNHCR as a multilateral institution. It involved a review of the Office's capacity to carry out its mandate. A report would be submitted before 2004, when UNHCR's mandate was due to come up for renewal, with the aim of implementing whatever recommendations emerged from the process.

The UNHCR 2004 team had produced a number of interim reports and recommendations during the past year on the evolution of UNHCR's structure, its position within the United Nations system, funding mechanisms and the asylum-migration nexus. The team had also examined ways of better positioning the Office to respond to the challenges of modernity and how best to achieve the goals and objectives set out in the Agenda for Protection. A draft resolution to extend UNHCR's mandate for another five years with effect from 1 January 2004 would be presented to the General Assembly in the weeks ahead.

30. UNHCR was conducting its work in a phased manner. Phase I of the process entailed research work and the drawing up of initial options and recommendations. Phase II, which had only just begun, involved close cooperation with managers throughout the Office to formulate specific proposals and ensure collective endorsement of the process. Phase III, which would begin early in 2003, would involve further consultations, particularly with the Executive Committee, leading to the presentation of the High Commissioner's report to the General Assembly. If credible, special agreements on burden-sharing and durable solutions could be worked out, more countries could be persuaded to accede to the 1951 Convention. Refugee movements had become a globalized phenomenon and States from all regions should therefore participate in addressing the issue. As to UNHCR's position within the United Nations system, the Office had been typecast as a "humanitarian" agency, whereas its work also related to prevention, conflict resolution, peace-building and development. To achieve durable solutions in accordance with its mandate, UNHCR would require close cooperation and strengthened partnerships with United Nations' development actors, the Bretton Woods institutions and the Organization's peace and stability pillars.

31. To become a truly multilateral institution, UNHCR also required a broader funding base, thereby enabling it to respond effectively to the demands placed upon it by the international community. When UNHCR had been set up in 1950, it had been decided that its administrative expenses would be met out of assessed contributions to the United Nations regular budget and that its operations would be funded on a voluntary basis. What may have been a good idea in 1950 was less well suited to current realities. UNHCR received \$20 million from the United Nations regular budget to cover its annual administrative expenses, whereas those expenses actually amounted to \$250 million or 30 per cent of the annual budget. In an initial study, the UNHCR 2004 team had proposed a fifty-fifty combination of "base line" contributions and voluntary contributions. Apparently that proposal had not garnered enough support among members of the Executive Committee. It should be possible to find another solution. Matter of more immediate concern were the 2002 and 2003 budgets. As he saw it, the continuing practice whereby the Executive Committee as a whole refused to fund the budget which it had approved each year was not acceptable.

32. The UNHCR 2004 team had also given much thought to the connection between voluntary and forced migration. It was increasingly clear that the issue of international migration must be addressed in a concerted and comprehensive manner. The High Commissioner for Refugees and the Director-General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) had worked together to take stock of cooperation between UNHCR and IOM and examine ways to form a strategic alliance to address global realities more effectively. Consultations had been reinvigorated at the highest level and through the joint Action Group on Asylum and Migration. It had been agreed that the roles of the two agencies would be clarified to achieve greater

coherence and cost-effectiveness. It was hoped that UNHCR and IOM could move towards a more structured strategic partnership, especially in cases where asylum and migration issues intersected.

33. The link between UNHCR 2004 and the Agenda for Protection was clear: a better positioned and more effective UNHCR would strengthen the goals spelt out in the Agenda.

GUEST SPEAKERS (agenda item 5)

34. Mr. MOUSSA (Secretary-General of the League of Arab States) said that the League of Arab States maintained close links with UNHCR and that the Arab world was very concerned by the situation of refugees, particularly Palestinian refugees. Some Arab countries were magnets or countries of asylum for refugees, and that placed a heavy economic, social and financial burden on them, particularly if they were developing countries. UNHCR played an essential role in protecting refugees and striving to alleviate their suffering, especially in the current international climate characterized by instability and insecurity. It was to be observed that policies of reprisal were being adopted as a backdrop to the theory of the clash of civilizations, and that people had been incited to hate Muslims, thereby exacerbating migratory flows and the suffering of refugees and asylum-seekers, some of whom had been humiliated after being likened to terrorists.

35. UNHCR's responsibilities were now heavier than ever, whereas 50 years previously the international community had considered the Office as something of a makeshift arrangement. UNHCR had to work in increasingly difficult conditions with inadequate resources. Refugee problems were essentially rooted in a lack of hope in the future. That was especially true in the Middle East and Africa, where the situation would not improve until economic and social problems had been resolved in a just and equitable manner and appropriate political solutions had been found.

36. In Palestine, the murder of Palestinian refugees was a humanitarian and a political issue. It was important to resolve the problem of the Palestinian refugees to guarantee peace and stability not only in the Middle East, but throughout the world. The most recent Arab Summit held in Beirut in March 2002 had demanded that a just solution should be found in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948. Since 1987, the Executive Committee had adopted recommendations in support of the rights of Palestinians and refugees. And the Security Council had dealt quite recently with the question of the regular attacks on Palestinian refugee camps. UNHCR had a role to play in ensuring the security of all refugees. The option envisaged by the international community, namely, the creation of a Palestinian state, should make it possible to give Palestinians the protection and the framework they needed to exercise their rights under various international instruments, for example the right to live in peace and without foreign occupation, the right of return and the right to compensation in accordance with the resolutions of international bodies. Financial support should continue to be made available to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Consultations should be held with that body to ensure the protection of the Palestinian refugees. The League of Arab States also urged UNHCR to pursue its efforts to adopt its 1982 recommendation on the protection of refugee camps.

37. The League of Arab States hoped that UNHCR would take advantage of its contacts with bodies established under appropriate human rights instruments in order to address the situation of Palestinian refugees and their sufferings and to ask for the necessary protection in accordance with international principles. It also hoped the UNHCR would make full use of its experience to enable Palestinian refugees to exercise their right of return as soon as a durable solution had been found.

38. Furthermore, the recent Arab Summit had reviewed the problem of refugees in the Sudan and had approved a development plan for the southern part of that country. It had also made efforts to find a solution to the refugee problem in the Sudan and had decided to set up a body to bring together the various parties concerned. It had also decided to organize a conference on the question in October 2002. Lastly, it should be borne in mind that a military attack on Iraq would have tragic consequences: the region would witness an unprecedented flood of refugees which UNHCR would have to deal with. In that and other areas preventive action was called for.

39. The League of Arab States was committed to human values and the principles of international humanitarian law and also to support for UNHCR, whose work it particularly appreciated.

40. Ms. BELLAMY (Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund) said that, over the years, UNHCR and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) had turned the many challenges they had faced into opportunities, thereby strengthening their collaboration. In May 2002, the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children had ended with an agreement by Governments that reaffirmed their commitments pursuant to the 1990 World Summit for Children and their willingness to bring about a significant improvement in child survival, health, education and protection by the year 2015 through the implementation of the programme "A World Fit for Children".

41. The Memorandum of Understanding between UNICEF and UNHCR was currently being revised. The Memorandum provided the framework for a number of joint initiatives to protect the rights of unaccompanied children; provide education and psychosocial services for displaced children; and try to halt the forced recruitment of children as soldiers. As part of joint efforts by the two organizations, and also by NGOs, work had been done to formulate guidelines on unaccompanied and separated children and it had almost been finalized.

42. Despite their best efforts, it had to be admitted that UNICEF and UNHCR all too often failed to resolve the problems of refugee and displaced children. Some of the problems that could be cited were the continuing impunity of those who forced children and their families from their homes, the use of children as soldiers and the repeated denial of humanitarian access to children in need. Traditional responses were no longer sufficient; henceforth it was necessary to shape sustainable, rights-based forms of intervention with assistance from Governments, the United Nations system, NGOs, donors and the communities concerned.

43. Obviously, neither UNICEF nor UNHCR could move forward without donor support. With that in mind, both organizations needed longer-term funding cycles and should find a way to maintain a presence in long-term crisis situations, especially those which had slipped out of

the headlines and could no longer inspire political pressure to act. In the past year, progress had nevertheless been made in a number of theatres, from Sri Lanka to Angola to Afghanistan, and perhaps even the Sudan.

44. Protection, especially against sexual abuse and exploitation, was another area in which the international community needed to take great strides. The alleged sexual abuse of refugee girls and women by aid workers had forced the organizations concerned to act. The IASC working group had established a task force on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian crises, which had developed a plan of action to prevent and respond to such occurrences. The task force had also drawn up six core principles for codes of conduct, which had been endorsed by the heads of all IASC agencies. A key component of efforts in that area was accountability, both personal and institutional. UNICEF was currently developing relevant training and sensitization materials for all its staff.

45. From a child rights perspective, one of the major strategies for promoting accountability to programme beneficiaries was the meaningful participation of young people in humanitarian assistance programmes. Such participation would enable beneficiaries to receive the necessary information about their rights and entitlements, thereby allowing them to hold UNICEF responsible.

GENERAL DEBATE

46. Mr. RUDDOCK (Australia) said that he would be grateful for more details about a recent statement which the High Commissioner had made in Europe and in which he had referred to the slowness of the procedures for considering asylum requests lodged by asylum-seekers in refugee-hosting countries. In the course of his statement, the High Commissioner had mentioned the possibility of simplifying asylum procedures for certain groups of asylum-seekers. It would be interesting to know what kind of simplification the High Commissioner had in mind and how he proposed to determine which group of asylum-seekers should benefit from simplified procedures.

47. Mr. LUBBERS (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that the statement referred to by the representative of Australia had focused on mixed flows of refugees and economic and other migrants. In such cases, the role of UNHCR was to consider, in conjunction with the Governments of refugee-hosting countries, how best to regulate that difficult problem. There was currently a tendency for refugee-hosting countries to consider certain countries as "safe" and incapable of producing refugees. That was a false generalization, although it was true that the probability of certain countries producing refugees was extremely low. One could envision a list of countries which would be unlikely to generate refugees. Refugee-hosting countries could then deport people from those countries following an appealable administrative decision, while allowing UNHCR the opportunity to examine the list of persons awaiting expulsion. UNHCR could thereby satisfy itself, using information at its disposal, that the persons in question were not at risk of imprisonment or torture upon return to their country of origin.

48. Another possibility might be to give applicants for refugee status the opportunity to apply to the embassies of refugee-hosting countries in their country or region of origin. That solution

would have the added advantage of frustrating the activities of people-smugglers and also, by restricting the influx of asylum-seekers into host countries, minimizing recourse to institutions such as “detention centres”, a matter about which he continued to have serious reservations.

49. Mr. DEWEY (United States of America) referring to the situation in Afghanistan, said that it had been possible to alleviate the hardship of millions of people over the past year. Thanks particularly to donors, who had honoured the promises made at the Tokyo Ministerial Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan, recovery - of which the repatriation of refugees was an essential element - was currently under way in Afghanistan. That said, winter was closing in and millions of Afghan refugees would need food aid to survive. It was therefore essential that the World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF and UNHCR should receive additional contributions. Unfortunately, UNHCR’s budget for 2003 was more resource-based than needs-based, and that was unfair on both beneficiaries and donors alike.

50. Elsewhere in the world, whether in Angola, Eritrea, Somalia or Sierra Leone, peace seemed to be within reach and UNHCR should be given the necessary means to organize the repatriation of refugees.

51. The cornerstone of UNHCR’s activity should be refugee protection, as had been so ably demonstrated by Ms. Ogata when she had endeavoured to protect Tutsis from Hutu militias. His Government therefore welcomed the importance attached to the concept of reintegration.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.