



# General Assembly

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## Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Seventieth session

### Summary record of the 721st meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 8 October 2019, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Delmi..... (Algeria)

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High-level segment on statelessness and general debate (*continued*)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**General debate** (*continued*)

1. **Ms. Hagen** (Norway) said that the protection of refugees and a comprehensive response to refugee situations would continue to be a priority for her Government, as outlined in its humanitarian strategy launched in 2018. She hoped that the Global Refugee Forum would provide an opportunity for more equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing. To that end, it was important to take a long-term perspective that took into account environmental and climate-related considerations, to benefit both refugees and host communities. A green response to the refugee situation was also one of Norway's priorities. Moreover, the Government planned to focus on protection and prevention measures for refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees at the Fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, to be held from 25 to 29 November 2019 in Oslo, which her Government would chair.

2. Norway had pledged a record core contribution to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 2019. It would continue to make unearmarked contributions and had, for the first time, made an indicative multi-year pledge of unearmarked funding, subject to parliamentary approval.

3. **Mr. Amadou** (Observer for the Niger) said that his Government associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the African Group. In September 2019, the Government had adopted a national action plan to end statelessness. The plan provided for the establishment of a procedure for granting status to stateless persons, the amendment of the Nationality Code to grant nationality to foundlings, as well as to children born in the Niger who would otherwise be stateless, and the implementation of a study to better identify the causes of statelessness and the groups at risk of statelessness in the Niger. The country hosted more than 438,000 refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees, and was making every effort to provide them with the assistance they needed. Faithful to its tradition of hospitality and solidarity, the Niger also continued to welcome thousands of people who had fled the hellish situation in Libya. Through its emergency evacuation and transit mechanism, the Niger had received, since November 2017, 2,913 persons from Libya: of those, 1,879 had since been resettled in a third country, while 1,055 remained in the Niger. In view of that crisis, his Government once more called on UNHCR to redouble its efforts to increase the pace of outward migratory flows. For its part, the Government was working to find sustainable solutions to the problem of forced displacement. Thus, with financial assistance from the International Development Association and the World Bank amounting to US\$ 80 million, the Government was seeking to promote the socioeconomic integration of refugees. He called on the international community to step up its efforts to assist the 118,000 citizens of Nigeria who had fled to the Niger to escape the terrorist group Boko Haram, and the 35,000 who had entered the country near the city of Maradi.

4. **Mr. Barandagiye** (Observer for Burundi) said that his Government associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the African Group. Burundi hosted a significant number of refugees from neighbouring countries, particularly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Five refugee camps had already been established in Burundi; as at the end of August 2019, they were home to a total of 54,019 refugees and asylum seekers. In addition, Burundi hosted 36,300 "urban" refugees and asylum seekers. With the assistance of UNHCR and other partners, the Government was working to provide assistance to those people in a number of areas, and continued to improve the quality of that assistance, to the extent that available resources permitted.

5. The Nationality Act was being revised to ensure that it promoted gender equality with respect to nationality, and progress was being made towards the adoption of draft laws on accession to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The problem posed by persons living in Burundi claiming Omani nationality had still not been resolved. Figures for 2016 revealed 971 people at risk of statelessness. Although discussions had been held with the Government of Oman, they had not borne fruit.

6. He warmly thanked UNHCR for its assistance in the area of refugee protection and encouraged it to step up its efforts to complete its work in Burundi on the biometric identity management system.

7. **Mr. Dery** (Ghana) said that his Government associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the African Group. Ghana had strengthened its efforts to tackle the problem of statelessness since the launch of the #IBelong Campaign in 2014. In 2015, it had adopted the Abidjan Declaration of Ministers of Member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on the Eradication of Statelessness, and had appointed a coordinator on the issue of statelessness that same year. In 2016, the Ghana Refugee Board had developed a national plan of action for the eradication of statelessness in cooperation with its partners, and in 2017 a regional plan of action to combat the phenomenon had been adopted. In addition, the Government had decided to grant a “Ghana Card” to all refugees in the country, in order to promote their social and economic inclusion and facilitate their access to various public services. His Government continued to offer civil documentation to refugee children born in Ghana to prevent statelessness, and was committed to acceding to the two conventions on statelessness by the end of 2021.

8. **Mr. Ahmed** (Sudan) said that his Government associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the African Group. The priorities set by the transitional Government of the Sudan included tackling the issue of asylum and refugees. In keeping with its open-door policy, the Sudan had always hosted refugees and was cooperating with its partners at the local, regional and international levels to address the problems faced by them. Unfortunately, the country lacked the necessary resources and capacity to meet all the challenges it faced in that regard; there were insufficient funds, including from international sources, to adequately assist refugees – many of whom lived on less than half a dollar a day – and their host communities. He therefore called on the international community to provide the necessary support, with a view to ensuring the self-sufficiency of refugees and host communities. With a view to combating statelessness, the Sudan had implemented legislative reforms, modernized its refugee registration mechanisms and designed a new biometric electronic passport enabling refugees to travel abroad.

9. **Mr. Sonko** (Observer for the Gambia) said that his Government associated itself with the statement made by the African Group and endorsed the strategic objectives of the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness 2014–2024. The Ministry of the Interior, through the Gambia Commission for Refugees and UNHCR and its partners, continued to cooperate with the Constitutional Review Commission to address gaps in the Refugee Act, the Nationality Act and the Citizenship Act. In order to prevent the risk of statelessness, a nationwide campaign had been launched, with assistance from UNHCR, to raise awareness of the importance of birth registration. The Government also planned to carry out and publish a study to gain a better understanding of statelessness and collect relevant data on affected individuals and groups in the country, with a view to finding a solution to the problems they faced.

10. **Mr. Aye** (Observer for Myanmar) stressed the importance of issuing all individuals, including displaced persons from Rakhine State and returnees from Thailand, with citizenship verification cards, which represented a path towards obtaining citizenship. New legislation on the rights of the child enshrined the right of all children to be registered at birth; to that end, birth registration campaigns had been implemented throughout the country. Many people had been displaced following the terrorist attacks perpetrated by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army in 2016 and 2017 in Rakhine State. Those currently in Cox’s Bazar had legal status and could not be described as stateless. Some were in possession of Myanmar identity cards, and those without such documentation would be issued with citizenship verification cards without further delay and could proceed to apply for citizenship. The authorities were aware of the plight of displaced persons and were taking all measures necessary to achieve their goal of expediting the repatriation of those persons. A government delegation had visited Cox’s Bazar on several occasions and informed the displaced persons living there about the repatriation process. Despite the obstacles encountered, 300 people had left Cox’s Bazar to resettle in Myanmar, and many wished to follow in their footsteps. With regard to internally displaced persons, the

Government had recently implemented a national strategy for the closure of camps for internally displaced persons, and relevant action plans would follow.

11. **Mr. Salem** (Observer for Mauritania) said that his Government was striving to ensure the gradual empowerment of refugees and the resilience of local communities within the framework of the National Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity 2015–2030, which aimed to promote diversified, inclusive, green and sustainable economic growth, reduce inequalities and create jobs. The national authorities invested in community projects that promoted the gradual empowerment of Malian refugees and reduced the impact of their presence on the host population. In addition, assistance from the International Development Association, to which Mauritania had acceded in November 2018, would provide local economic opportunities and improve social protection and access to basic services. Mauritania also intended to work with UNHCR and other technical and financial partners to find local solutions until conditions were conducive to the organized repatriation of Malian and other urban refugees.

12. It was important to highlight the dramatic impact of statelessness, which deprived people of basic services, marginalized them and exposed them to exploitation and abuse. The Government was also aware that forced displacement of refugees could lead to statelessness and that host countries had a responsibility to reduce that risk. The Mauritanian Nationality Code, adopted in 1961, provided for the transmission of nationality by both the father and the mother. The Civil Status Code, adopted in 2011, had established a national civil register covering 3,594,000 people, or 81 per cent of the Mauritanian population.

13. Since the launch of the #IBelong Campaign in 2014, Mauritania had made progress on many fronts. In 2017, it had established a national commission to facilitate the procedure for identifying citizens for the purpose of civil registration and, in 2018, had established a procedure to facilitate the civil registration of Malian refugees from Mbera; that procedure had been extended to urban refugees in 2019. As part of the procedure, refugee children born in Mauritania were issued with a birth certificate and refugees over the age of 10 years received a secure identity card.

14. For the next five years of the #IBelong Campaign, Mauritania pledged to register all refugees in the civil registry, to issue them with a national identification number and include them in national statistical systems, to issue birth certificates to all children born in Mauritania, to facilitate access to civil registration and documentation services for all refugees in the country, and to accede to the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

15. **Ms. Dinga-Dzondo** (Congo) said that her Government associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group. The Government was determined to tackle challenges relating to the protection of refugees on its territory. To that end, it had approved a draft law establishing refugee status and the right of asylum, which was currently in the process of adoption by Parliament. Moreover, the Government was currently considering a bill on the introduction of biometric travel documents for refugees. Following the implementation of sustainable solutions, the Congo had seen the number of refugees on its territory decrease from 60,000 in 2018 to 47,000 as at 31 August 2019. Although the Government had held tripartite meetings with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic on the voluntary repatriation of refugees, there were unfortunately very few financial resources available to implement the outcomes of those meetings.

16. The Congo welcomed the progress made through the humanitarian mechanism established following the memorandum of understanding signed on 21 November 2017 between the Government and UNHCR. However, owing to financial difficulties, the Government was unlikely to be able to fulfil its commitments relating to the capacity-building programme for the assistance and protection of refugees and internally displaced persons. Thus, any contribution from the international community in that regard would be appreciated.

17. With regard to the implementation of the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness 2014–2024, the Congo was working to implement all mechanisms to prevent and eliminate statelessness on its territory. Since signing the Brazzaville Declaration on 16 October 2017

during the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Government had: transmitted draft bills to Parliament on the ratification of the conventions on statelessness; adopted, in May 2019, the National Plan of Action on Statelessness; continued the legislative reform process, with a view – inter alia – to eliminating all discriminatory provisions in the nationality law; implemented regular awareness-raising campaigns to promote birth registration; in 2019, conducted a census to determine the number of persons who were stateless or at risk of becoming stateless; and organized a campaign to issue civil status documents to persons who did not possess them.

18. **Mr. Sabrie** (Somalia) said that it was estimated that one in three Somali citizens lived abroad and that a large number of young Somalis continued to risk their lives to reach Europe. The number of displaced persons was currently on the rise in Somalia. At the end of August 2019, some 2.8 million people were of concern to UNHCR, including 2,648,000 internally displaced persons and 128,029 returnees from Kenya and Yemen. The humanitarian aid available to those people continued to dwindle. According to UNHCR, there were 17,546 refugees and 17,494 asylum seekers in Somalia.

19. Somalia was a signatory to the 2017 Nairobi Declaration on Somali Refugees and was working closely with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to develop solutions for refugees, including by creating favourable conditions for returnees in Somalia. His Government had adopted the National Action Plan on Durable Solutions for Somali Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons 2018–2020 and had made significant progress in implementing the action plan related to the Nairobi Declaration. In particular, it had drawn up policies and legislation and taken measures to ensure the reintegration of returnees and access to education for refugee children. It was also working to ensure the inclusion of refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR in its national system and preparing a law on refugees and collaborative frameworks for urban refugees and stateless persons, in cooperation with UNHCR. In addition, the Government was preparing to approve a national policy for refugee returnees and internally displaced persons, an interim protocol on land distribution and a set of national guidelines on evictions. It was also developing a policy on urban refugees, in cooperation with UNHCR. As part of the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness 2014–2024, Somalia was committed to conducting a study to better understand the situation of stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness living on its territory, and to acceding to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

20. **Mr. Kiran** (Turkey) said that, thanks to the progress that his country had made since the beginning of the #IBelong Campaign, nearly 170,000 stateless persons had obtained Turkish nationality. His Government was doing everything within its power to end statelessness: Turkey had become a party to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons in 2015, and the Law on Foreigners and International Protection included an article on statelessness, enabling stateless persons to access basic services, the labour market and housing. It was worth noting that there were very few stateless persons in Turkey since, in line with the Turkish law on nationality, a person born in Turkey who could not acquire the nationality of his or her father or mother would be granted Turkish nationality. The Government intended to start the legislative work required to accede to and implement the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. It was working with UNHCR to raise awareness of the issue among government officials.

21. With 71 million displaced persons worldwide, displacement was a global problem that the entire international community needed to address. Turkey had played a leading role in hosting refugees and believed that the burden should be more equitably shared. He therefore called on all States to implement the global compact on refugees. The forthcoming Global Refugee Forum would provide an opportunity for States to discuss ways to further assist refugees and contribute more to efforts in that regard. He hoped that countries would seize the opportunity to make sustainable commitments, not only financially, but also in terms of resettlement quotas and third-country solutions.

22. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said he was pleased to announce that, following the statement made the previous day by the representative of North Macedonia, the national parliament of that country had authorized the ratification of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. He thanked Norway for its many

contributions to the work of UNHCR and its humanitarian initiatives, and Turkey – the country hosting the largest number of refugees in the world – for its support for the global compact on refugees and its efforts to promote refugees' access to education. He also thanked Myanmar and recalled that procedures for obtaining Myanmar nationality should be explained to refugees. He thanked the Niger for the determination with which it was tackling the many challenges posed by the presence of refugees and internally displaced persons on its territory. He wished to remind the international community that the Niger was a country with scant resources. Lastly, he welcomed the efforts made by Burundi, the Congo, the Gambia, Ghana, Mauritania, Somalia and the Sudan, as well as their support for the activities of UNHCR.

23. **Mr. Bladhane** (Algeria) said that his Government associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the African Group. There was an urgent need to establish a burden-sharing mechanism to allow the international community as a whole to assist refugees in an equitable and predictable manner. His Government looked forward to participating in the first Global Refugee Forum in December 2019 and sharing experiences and good practices with UNHCR and other partners, particularly with regard to education and finding solutions. Algeria supported the #IBelong Campaign to eliminate statelessness and had amended national legislation to regularize the situation of stateless persons on its territory. The measures envisaged as part of the campaign had in fact already been implemented in Algeria since 2005; the country was proud to have resolved nearly all cases of statelessness in its territory. Algeria had hosted Sahrawi refugees near Tindouf for 44 years and strove, with the help of UNHCR and partner institutions, to provide them with a range of services. A recent inter-agency report had noted an increase in the number of such refugees. It was hoped that the report would serve as a basis for revising upwards the level of aid provided to refugees on its territory.

24. **Mr. Imamberdiyev** (Turkmenistan) said that Turkmenistan had ratified the statelessness conventions and had done much to reduce statelessness, both in law and in practice. Citizenship had been granted to nearly 23,000 stateless persons, as part of the #IBelong Campaign. An action plan and a national strategy were being implemented to prevent and reduce statelessness. The Government was focusing in particular on the rights of the child and had launched a reform of the birth registration system, as a result of which the birth registration rate had reached 100 per cent and more children were able to enjoy their rights. In that regard, government bodies were cooperating with UNHCR, other United Nations agencies, civil society and stateless persons themselves. Turkmenistan had organized various international and regional forums and conferences and was ready to continue exchanges with other States in order to create a political climate conducive to the health and well-being of all.

25. **Mr. Apitonian** (Armenia) said that, between 1988 and 1994, hundreds of thousands of people of Armenian origin had been expelled from the countries in which they had been living and had found refuge in Armenia. They had integrated well and enjoyed full citizenship rights. Armenia also hosted a large number of Syrian refugees, who benefited from a fast-track asylum procedure and simplified naturalization process, and who had been granted residence permits and access to health care and education. Armenia also provided humanitarian aid to Syria through its consulate in Aleppo. However, the international assistance it received for the Syrian refugees it hosted was modest. The Government had begun a review of national legislation in 2011 to bring it into line with the country's international obligations. With support from UNHCR, amendments had been made to the law on citizenship, which currently provided for the facilitated naturalization of refugees and stateless persons under certain conditions, as well as the granting of nationality to children born on the national territory who would otherwise be stateless. A law had been drafted on stateless persons, specifying their rights and obligations and regulating the procedure for determining statelessness. Armenia also planned to improve its capacity to detect and protect stateless persons, and to raise awareness of the risks associated with statelessness.

26. **Mr. Quenum** (Benin) said that his Government associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the African Group. Benin had ratified the 1954 and 1961 statelessness conventions and supported the 2015 Abidjan Declaration of Ministers of ECOWAS

Member States on the Eradication of Statelessness and the Banjul Plan of Action on the Eradication of Statelessness 2017–2024 at the regional level. A post had been created at government level to coordinate issues relating to statelessness. Benin supported the drafting of a protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the right to nationality and statelessness. In line with its national plan of action, Benin had launched a review of its Nationality Code in order to remove provisions that discriminated against women in respect of the acquisition and transmission of Beninese nationality, as well as provisions that were incompatible with the best interests of the child. After confirming that 2.5 million of its citizens did not have birth certificates, Benin had launched a birth registration programme. The Government requested assistance from its technical and financial partners to continue its initiatives to modernize the system of birth registration and local administration of civil status.

27. **Mr. Al-Mansouri** (Observer for Qatar) said that his country had always been actively involved in humanitarian aid efforts. Qatar had provided more than US\$ 200 million in governmental and other aid to UNHCR from 2014 to 2019 to help refugees from Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Libya and Sudan. Assistance had also been provided to Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Bangladesh, which hosted refugees. The Government's humanitarian initiatives had always been neutral and transparent, focusing on the fight against poverty and unemployment and assistance for education. Qatar had provided US\$ 1.6 billion in material and in-kind assistance to the Syrian people since the beginning of the conflict in their country. In 2019, it had established a fund, sponsored by the African Union, to cover the costs of evacuating African migrants in an irregular situation and victims of human trafficking from Libya. He pointed out that there were still 5.4 million Palestinian refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); a fair and sustainable solution must be offered to them. More support should be provided to UNRWA for that purpose. Qatari nationality had been granted to foreigners who met the conditions set out in the 2005 Nationality Act and temporary residence permits had been granted to many stateless persons, enabling them to benefit from access to education and employment.

28. **Mr. Nzuza** (South Africa) said that his Government associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the African Group. South Africa continued to strengthen its civil registration process to ensure that all children were registered at birth and granted a nationality. It would continue to work with neighbouring countries to promote the civil registration of all persons at the regional and continental levels, and sought assistance from UNHCR in that endeavour.

29. He urged UNHCR to protect all refugees without discrimination, particularly in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Western Sahara, and to maintain its impartial status in that role. Since gaining independence in 1994, South Africa had received and hosted large numbers of refugees and allocated a huge amount of resources to that end. South Africa had more than 120,000 refugees; 1,500 people had been granted refugee status in 2018. More than 185,000 asylum claims were under consideration and that number was increasing every year. His Government was in favour of action to ensure that economic migrants could not pose as asylum seekers, which was detrimental to persons with a legitimate claim to refugee status. All States were urged to accede to human rights instruments and to guarantee their citizens the full enjoyment of their rights. Those measures would greatly reduce the number of refugees and asylum seekers. South Africa would be introducing smart identity cards in 2020, as part of its modernization programme, which would allow refugees to enjoy the same rights as citizens. His Government was grateful to UNHCR for its assistance in reducing the backlog of asylum appeals and intended to amend the Refugee Act to improve the efficiency of its refugee status determination process.

30. **Ms. Voda** (Observer for Albania) said that her Government had assessed the statelessness situation in the country between late 2017 and early 2018. The assessment had identified some 1,000 people, mostly children, at risk of becoming stateless. It had also identified several obstacles to the registration of Albanian children belonging to the Roma and Egyptian communities, or born abroad to Albanian parents. In October 2018, parliament had amended several provisions of the law on civil status, in particular to simplify judicial and administrative procedures for the registration of the birth of a child

and to ensure that all births were registered. Albania had pledged to end statelessness by 2024. To that end, it intended to fully implement the above-mentioned legislative amendments by 2021, to continue to align the provisions of the law on citizenship with those of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, and to establish – by 2020 – a special procedure under domestic law for determining the status of stateless persons.

31. **Ms. Longa Makinda** (Observer for Gabon) said that her Government associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the African Group. Gabon continued to demonstrate its solidarity with the 700 refugees and asylum seekers living on its territory, in particular by allowing refugee children to go to school and by implementing joint programmes with UNHCR, notably in the fields of health and socioeconomic integration. It was vital to support local host communities in order to avoid any instability that could, in turn, lead to further displacements. The Government had established a multidisciplinary working group to conduct a national study on nationality and statelessness, with a view to ratifying the statelessness conventions and to ensuring the registration of all births on national territory. To that end, the project launched in December 2014, in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund, relating to children without birth certificates, would be extended to the whole country. The project had already identified 15,115 children without birth certificates; 6,010 cases had been processed to date, as part of a programme to issue substitute birth certificates. In addition, a draft bill on the prevention of statelessness was under preparation.

32. **Mr. Alkhayyal** (Observer for Saudi Arabia) said that his Government had adopted comprehensive reforms under the Vision 2030 plan that were people-centred and included measures and programmes relating to various areas, including protection of the right to identity, to health, to education and to work. As a result, more than 50,000 people had been granted Saudi Arabian nationality and more than 800,000 had obtained residence permits. In addition, nationality was granted to children of unknown parentage born on Saudi soil.

33. Saudi Arabia was ranked third in the world with regard to the level of humanitarian and development aid it provided. That aid mainly targeted refugees in regions affected by conflict and war: US\$ 18 billion had been allocated to aid for refugees, including more than US\$ 160 million for Syrian refugees. In addition, the King Salman Centre had established 129 programmes to help Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Greece. The Centre also ran 12 programmes to help Yemeni refugees in Somalia and Djibouti. Saudi Arabia had allocated US\$ 38 million to aid the Rohingya people and had organized a conference of donor countries, in cooperation with UNHCR, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Bangladesh, at which some US\$ 250 million had been raised to fund an integrated plan to manage the crisis. The Government had also allocated US\$ 900 million for assistance to Palestinian refugees and US\$ 50 million had been pledged to UNRWA. Saudi Arabia had 1.74 million refugees, who were treated as visitors enjoying all fundamental rights. The aid provided to those refugees stood in excess of US\$ 16 billion. Saudi Arabia would continue to strive to provide assistance to those persons and to strengthen human rights. A national programme to address the situation of migrants in an irregular situation was under development.

34. **Mr. Masauni** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the United Republic of Tanzania had kept its borders open and currently hosted some 285,714 refugees and asylum seekers, including 212,946 Burundians, 72,393 Congolese and 375 nationals of other countries. At a meeting on 23 August 2019, the Tanzanian Minister for Home Affairs and his Burundian counterpart had made a commitment to implement the agreement reached on 28 March 2019, under which 2,000 Burundian refugees would be voluntarily repatriated each week. It should be stressed that the refugees were registering voluntarily for repatriation, without intimidation; his delegation rejected any allegations of forced repatriation. He called on the international community to provide UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration with the necessary funds to support that process.

35. To tackle statelessness, the United Republic of Tanzania pledged to: accede to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness; establish a task force to drive the development, adoption and implementation of a national action plan on the elimination of statelessness; conduct a



study on statelessness in order to understand the factors behind, and the gravity of, the problem; and raise awareness of the issue among members of parliament, senior officials responsible for law reform and other stakeholders.

36. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he welcomed the efforts made by States and thanked them for supporting the work of UNHCR. He stressed that drawing attention to the situation in a country was not the same as pointing a finger at the State in question, but was intended to encourage the State to find solutions together with UNHCR.

*The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.*