



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
7 November 2018  
English  
Original: French

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## Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Sixty-ninth session

### Summary record of the 714th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 3 October 2018, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Dalil.....(Afghanistan)

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General debate (*continued*)

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

**General debate** (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Alam** (India) said that one sixth of the persons of concern to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) were hosted on the Indian subcontinent, which received less than one tenth of the organization's total budget. In addition, most of the burden was being borne by the countries of the region themselves, which was not equitable. Although staffing had increased by 59 per cent and funding had more than doubled since 2010, the resource gap persisted. UNHCR should improve efficiency and ensure greater systemic coherence. India urged it to help strengthen and use national capacities and work with local responders on a much larger scale, which would ensure the implementation of solutions adapted to the local context and promote ownership of the process. India welcomed the increased use of cash-based interventions, but considered that UNHCR should seek longer-term, unearmarked contributions in order to ensure the increased flexibility, predictability and continuity of humanitarian action and avoid any conflict of interest.

2. India was among the States that had taken a generous approach to hosting refugees despite not being parties to the international refugee instruments. The monitoring by UNHCR of the refugee situation in one of the country's provinces did not fall within its mandate. The organization's perception that individuals had initially been excluded from the national register of citizens was unfounded and tendentious. The Government of India ensured due process for any application or objection related to the register. India was a responsible, democratic State founded on the rule of law. It called for a comprehensive strategic review of UNHCR by 2023, particularly with respect to its indefinite and expanding mandate, overlapping reporting, multiple governance mechanisms, potential conflicts of interest, capacity to address the root causes of problems and the global compact on refugees. UNHCR should be more inclusive and effective and should be driven by Member States.

3. **Mr. Kow Jr.** (Cameroon) said that his country aligned itself with the statement made by Uganda on behalf of the African Group. Since 2013, the humanitarian situation had deteriorated considerably in the east, north and far north of Cameroon because of the political crisis and repeated attacks by the Boko Haram terrorist sect. Cameroon was currently host to 370,150 refugees representing more than 20 nationalities, approximately 321,240 internally displaced persons and 83,141 returnees. Most refugees residing outside camps lived in perfect harmony with host communities. In the various host communities, refugee camps and adapted sites, refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees benefited from social benefits provided by the Government, partner countries, UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations.

4. Cameroon welcomed the important work done by UNHCR for refugees in its territory and encouraged the organization to move from humanitarian action to local development, taking into account the fact that the Government had expressed reservations about the opening of new refugee camps in the country. Cameroon noted with satisfaction the strong condemnation by UNHCR of the human rights violations in the North-West and South-West regions. In the face of such abuses, Cameroon had decided to implement an emergency plan for humanitarian assistance in those regions in June 2018. The implementation of the plan, at an estimated cost of US\$ 22 million, would require the support of national and international humanitarian organizations. In terms of protection, Cameroon had taken measures to issue identity documents to Rwandan citizens wishing to remain in the country following the application of the clause on the cessation of their refugee status. In addition, Cameroon would issue a replacement document for refugees who had lost their birth certificate. The President of Cameroon had recently requested that studies should be conducted in view of the signature of the draft Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the specific aspects of the right to a nationality and the eradication of statelessness in Africa. In May 2018, Cameroon had been the first country to receive a grant of US\$ 130 million from the International Development Association Refugee Sub-Window to support low-income countries hosting large numbers of refugees. Cameroon was also taking measures to benefit from the opportunities provided by the nineteenth replenishment of the International Development Association. Lastly, Cameroon had established a procedure with Nigeria for

the voluntary repatriation of refugees. Negotiations were also under way on the establishment of such a procedure with the Central African Republic.

5. **Mr. De la Puente Ribeyro** (Peru) said that his country associated itself with the statement made by Colombia on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group. The Peruvian refugee and migrant management policy was based on solidarity and a commitment to the protection of human rights. The humanitarian crisis in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had driven more than 2.6 million people into exile, which had had direct repercussions on many countries in the region. In the face of such an unprecedented crisis in Latin America, Peru had, in a spirit of cooperation, supported regional action by promoting various regional meetings and participating in the meeting on human mobility recently organized by the Government of Ecuador. There were more than 460,000 Venezuelan nationals in Peru. The number of asylum applications had increased dramatically in the past few years, up from 433 in 2015 to 14,000 per month in the first quarter of 2018. More than 800 requests were now being received every day. The Government had introduced a temporary residence permit to regularize the situation of those Venezuelans and enable them to access the labour market and the various public services on offer. UNHCR had assisted Peru in strengthening its logistical and operational capacity to enable it to deal with the asylum applications. UNHCR had also decided to establish a joint office with the International Organization for Migration in northern Peru to help the country manage the unusually high influx of persons arriving on its territory every day.

6. **Ms. Mansfield** (Australia) said that she wished to extend condolences to Indonesia following the disaster in Sulawesi and announced that her country would provide 5.5 million dollars to the Indonesian Government to help it recover from the disaster.

7. With more than 68 million displaced persons worldwide, displacement remained the greatest challenge of modern times, and protection needs were increasing in all parts of the world. Australia supported UNHCR by providing multi-year funding, in particular for regional efforts in the Syrian Arab Republic, which represented the country's largest multi-year humanitarian commitment. Proud to be a leader in refugee resettlement, Australia had strengthened its generous resettlement programme to assist 18,750 persons in 2018. It paid particular attention to groups that were most in need of resettlement, particularly women and children. Australia welcomed the fact that the global compact on refugees would address its priorities in terms of humanitarian action, as it was gender-sensitive and contained strong provisions on the protection of women and girls. Australia continued to encourage UNHCR to include issues related to gender and disability in its operations.

8. **Mr. Amil** (Pakistan) said that his country was proud to have always shown generosity towards refugees, regardless of their ethnicity or religious beliefs. Despite its limited resources, the country was currently hosting 2.8 million refugees. The way in which Pakistan had dealt with Afghan refugees over the past 40 years could serve as an example in terms of refugee management. Indeed, Afghan refugees had been provided with employment opportunities and access to health services and education. Hundreds of thousands of refugee children enjoyed access to public and private educational institutions in Pakistan. Therefore, it came as no surprise that many individuals who had succeeded in different fields in Afghanistan had once been refugees in Pakistan. However, while compassion might be infinite, available resources were limited. The international community had a duty to provide assistance to refugee-hosting countries. It must further contribute, through UNHCR, to the provision of health and educational services for Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Pakistan remained committed to ensuring the repatriation of Afghan refugees in safety and dignity. However, in order to do so UNHCR must create incentives and conditions conducive to their sustainable return and reintegration. In the meantime, the Government of Pakistan would take steps to facilitate the stay of Afghan refugees in its territory. To that end, it had extended the stay of registered Afghan nationals in its territory up to June 2019. In addition, the Government had implemented a project to register undocumented Afghan nationals in Pakistan and issue them with identity documents. Some 900,000 Afghans had been successfully registered as part of that exercise, but it was estimated that approximately 500,000 more were still undocumented. It should be recalled that 1.4 million Afghan nationals had already been registered. Repatriation trends had not been very encouraging in 2018 compared to 2016, when the repatriation grant of between US\$ 200 and US\$ 400 had

enabled many Afghan refugees to return home. Pakistan encouraged UNHCR to consider the possibility of reintroducing such grants.

9. **Mr. Rizzo Alvarado** (Observer for Honduras) said that the progress made in the development of national policies in the context of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS), which was considered a pioneering initiative, had served to strengthen links between relevant stakeholders in the search for lasting solutions for displaced Hondurans and the establishment of fast-track procedures for the identification and referral of persons in need of protection. The Honduran Government was working with UNHCR to review project documentation developed under MIRPS, which would be supported by development actors and would, inter alia, ensure the availability of qualitative and quantitative data on populations affected by forced displacement, mitigate risks and protect and register real property.

10. **Ms. Vares** (Estonia) said that her country aligned itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. Estonia believed that it was extremely important for greater attention to be paid to the most vulnerable displaced persons, namely women and children. The education of refugees and internally displaced persons was key to the achievement of durable solutions. For that reason, Estonia provided information technology training to children in the Zaatari and Azraq refugee camps in Jordan and the Duhok camps in Iraq. Her Government appreciated the work done by UNHCR and was grateful for the assistance it had extended to Estonia in the development of its new resettlement and relocation practices. Since 2015, the country had relocated 147 persons and resettled 59 more and was preparing to resettle a further 80 persons by the end of 2019.

11. **Mr. Aspelund** (Observer for Iceland) said that women and girls were disproportionately affected by forced displacement, given that sexual violence and gender-based violence remained widespread and that access to reproductive health services continued to be a challenge. Iceland therefore encouraged UNHCR to continue to prioritize gender equality in its work. In recent years, Iceland had significantly increased its support for UNHCR. It was currently in the process of renewing its national strategy for international development cooperation for the period 2019–2023, of which humanitarian action was an integral part. UNHCR would be among the major humanitarian partners of Iceland under the strategy. In addition, in line with the country's commitments at the World Humanitarian Summit, the draft strategy included the provision of predictable and flexible funding to strengthen the links between humanitarian action and development and to enhance local and national capacity.

12. Iceland had invested heavily to respond to the large influx of refugees and migrants. In 2018, it had resettled 52 refugees, mainly from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as a number of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender refugees. In addition, it had granted protection to more than 100 asylum seekers and applicants for family reunification. Such figures might not seem significant, but given the very small population of Iceland they were. Iceland fully supported the work of UNHCR on behalf of internally displaced persons and would like to become a full member of the Executive Committee.

13. **Ms. Martinavičiūtė** (Lithuania) said that her country aligned itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. Lithuania reiterated its commitment to sharing some of the burden on European Union member States most affected by the refugee crisis. It continued to carry out relocation and resettlement programmes and had recently taken in new Syrian refugees. Lithuania wished to draw the international community's attention to the situation of internally displaced persons, in particular those fleeing the conflict zone in Ukraine, who were particularly vulnerable, most of them older persons and children. Lithuania was grateful to UNHCR for the protection and legal assistance, as well as emergency shelter and material assistance, it provided to them.

14. **Mr. De Maeyer** (Belgium) said that Belgium believed that the implementation of the global compact on refugees and the comprehensive refugee response framework should be followed up on the basis of detailed information from the field. Belgium supported inter-agency cooperation, including with the International Organization for Migration, as well as the collaboration between UNHCR and the World Bank. It welcomed the reform process being undertaken by UNHCR and stood ready to support it in that endeavour. In 2018,

Belgium had increased the amount of its unearmarked contributions, which amounted to 8 million euros per year for the next three years. It also funded UNHCR interventions in Tanzania and Rwanda for refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq for Syrian refugees. Belgium also supported the UNHCR Innovation Fund. Additional resources had been allocated to UNHCR interventions in the Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen, bringing the Belgian contribution to 20 million euros. Finally, Belgium supported refugee resettlement programmes and had resettled 714 Syrian refugees.

15. **Ms. Paik** (Republic of Korea) said that UNHCR should broaden its donor base by diversifying its funding sources. The organization had received US\$ 400 million from the private sector in 2017, a tenfold increase in 10 years. As one of the three countries in which private sector funding for UNHCR was the highest, the Republic of Korea would make every effort to ensure that the target of US\$ 1 billion in contributions by 2025 was achieved. In 2018, the Republic of Korea had participated to a greater extent in interventions and increased its financial contribution for refugee assistance. It had recently launched its second pilot resettlement programme for 2018–2019 and doubled its annual quota of resettled persons.

16. **Mr. Klymenko** (Observer for Ukraine) said that Ukraine aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. It was regrettable that the global compact on refugees did not pay sufficient attention to internally displaced persons, who accounted for approximately two-thirds of all persons on the move. There were currently hundreds of thousands of displaced persons in Ukraine, and their situation would only improve if the causes of displacement were tackled, namely the Russian hybrid war against Ukraine. His Government hoped that UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations active in the territories temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation in the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk would fully comply with Ukrainian legislation and the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, particularly resolution 68/262 on the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Some 1.5 million persons had been registered as internally displaced in the territory of Ukraine, including 49,000 persons with disabilities, 232,000 children and 793,000 older persons. The Ukrainian Government was doing its utmost to provide them with adequate protection. In November 2017, a national strategy for the integration of displaced persons and the implementation of long-term decisions on internal displacement, developed with UNHCR, the World Bank, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Council of Europe, had been adopted. The strategy aimed at the socioeconomic integration of displaced persons and the establishment of long-term solutions. Given its limited resources, Ukraine would be grateful to receive appropriate funding under the United Nations Humanitarian Response Plan for 2018 and UNHCR programmes.

17. **Mr. Jurkovič** (Holy See) said that half of all refugees were under 18 years of age. The Holy See considered it essential to allocate adequate resources for the education of minors. Early investment in children's education would protect them against various forms of exploitation. In addition, the principle of the best interest of the child should prevail in all refugee status determination processes and in the search for appropriate solutions. The rights of refugees must be respected in the implementation of the global compact on refugees. In that regard, the Holy See underlined the contribution that religious leaders and faith-based organizations could make in the implementation phase of that instrument. The Holy See reiterated its concerns in relation to natural disasters and environmental degradation, which affected the most vulnerable populations and were increasingly combined with displacement situations, and recalled the words of Pope Francis that a true ecological approach always became a social approach.

18. **Ms. Majali** (Jordan) said that the Syrian crisis had generated 5.6 million refugees in the region. Jordan believed that the displacement would continue until a political solution was found. It underlined the importance of supporting Syrians in reaching a solution in accordance with Security Council resolution 2254. Jordan hosted 1.38 million Syrian refugees, 10 per cent of whom were in camps. The financial impact of that crisis alone on the country was estimated at US\$ 2 billion annually. The crisis had had an impact on all areas, including employment, infrastructure and education, and had affected local communities. To respond to those challenges, the Jordanian Government had developed a number of comprehensive, integrated plans. However, the most recent of those plans had received only

18 per cent of the required funding. Jordan was grateful to the international community for the support extended to date but stressed that sustained support would be required in order to be able to continue to provide protection and services to refugees. Jordan would like to thank the World Bank for its support in the form of a partnership. Such schemes, which were important tools for building resilience in middle-income countries, should be strengthened, including through funding for refugees in the context of the eighteenth replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA-18). It was unfortunate that the global compact on refugees did not provide for sharing the burden of refugees more equitably among States. Instead of creating parallel systems, Jordan had incorporated refugees into society, including in the areas of health and education. Currently, more than 132,000 Syrian children attended schools in Jordan and 100,000 Syrians had a work permit. Such measures were temporary and should come to an end upon the refugees' return to their home country, which remained the preferred solution. Resettlement must be reinforced; Jordan encouraged UNHCR to increase the number of resettlement places available and to draw up new resettlement programmes and expand existing ones.

19. **Mr. Abbas** (Observer for Iraq) said that, despite the large exodus caused by the occupation by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant of large parts of the Iraqi territory, which had resulted in the displacement of some 6 million Iraqis, his country's efforts, in cooperation with UNHCR, other United Nations agencies and other partners, with financial support from the international community, had had a positive impact and brought about the return of many displaced persons. Indeed, 3.9 million Iraqis had returned home by August 2018. The situation in some regions was not conducive to the return of the remaining 1.9 million internally displaced persons, largely due to the destruction of infrastructure and the presence of explosive remnants of war. The Iraqi Government had taken a number of steps to alleviate the suffering of refugees and displaced persons, including the education of children and young people, the provision of financial assistance and assistance in kind, and the issuance of identity documents. With regard to combating statelessness, changes had been made to the Citizenship Act to ensure that children born to unknown parents or to a foreign father could obtain Iraqi nationality. It was clear from the Iraqi experience that return was the preferred solution for all refugees when economic and security conditions permitted. It was necessary to clear areas contaminated by explosive remnants of war and to rebuild the infrastructure destroyed by terrorist groups to enable a safe return. Iraq called on UNHCR to find more durable solutions for countries of origin and host communities and to improve the protection of refugees in camps in neighbouring countries.

20. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he welcomed the efforts made by various countries and thanked them for supporting the work of UNHCR. As the delegation of the Holy See had said, migrants were people, not numbers, and special attention should be paid to children. It was important to remember that there had been a long tradition of providing refuge throughout human history and across all continents.

21. **Mr. Guillond** (Congo) said that his delegation aligned itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the African Group. The Congo was currently hosting more than 60,000 refugees, most of them from the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda and almost 40 per cent of whom were under the age of 35. It was currently developing a funding request in the context of the eighteenth replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA-18), which would help address the problems faced by refugees and host communities. On 21 November 2017, the Congo had signed a memorandum of understanding on building capacity to meet the protection and assistance needs of refugees and internally displaced persons and, in 2018, it had organized a discussion on the international protection of refugees and a seminar on ownership of the humanitarian mechanism by the ministries involved in the management of refugees. Thanks to the good collaboration between the Congolese Government and UNHCR, the situation was improving when it came to dealing with internally displaced persons in the Pool region, applying the clause on cessation of refugee status for Rwandan nationals, effective as of 31 December 2017, and facilitating the voluntary return of 2,500 refugees from the Central African Republic.

22. **Mr. Okaniwa** (Japan) said that Japan did not only contribute financially to the work of UNHCR, but also supported the activities of the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

Japan was deeply concerned about the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and would continue to support efforts to address the humanitarian needs of the region. In addition, it would continue to do its utmost, including at the highest level, to allow for the return of displaced persons in Rakhine State. Japan would hold the ministerial meeting of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development in the coming days and the seventh summit of the Conference in August 2019. In conclusion, he emphasized the humanitarian-development nexus, which could be strengthened through collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and other international development organizations.

23. **Mr. Foradori** (Argentina) said that his country associated itself with the statement made by Colombia on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group. Argentina had welcomed some 2,050 Syrian refugees outside the special humanitarian visa programme for foreign nationals affected by the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic (*Programa Siria*) and more than 380 people under that programme, which aimed to facilitate the travel and stay of the persons concerned in the framework of the Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism.

24. Due to the humanitarian crisis in their country, 130,000 Venezuelan nationals had arrived in Argentina, some of them as asylum seekers or refugees. Argentina reaffirmed its international commitment to the protection of all refugees, reflecting a steady improvement in standards of protection and the search for creative solutions, including through the application of the MERCOSUR agreement on conditions of stay to Venezuelans, despite the suspension of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela from that economic community.

25. Argentina wished to strongly emphasize that the principle of non-indifference should prevail among States. Indeed, in the event of a humanitarian crisis, nations should not feel obliged to look away on the grounds of non-interference in the affairs of other States.

26. **Ms. Whyte Gómez** (Costa Rica) said that her country supported the statement made on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group. She stressed that it was particularly important to address capacity-building, accountability, international solidarity and cooperation and the application of a human rights perspective. Costa Rica had benefited from the support of UNHCR to implement the National Chapter of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework in Costa Rica (MINARE) and was one of the 15 countries that was formally implementing the comprehensive refugee response framework, which reflected the commitments of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. It had always made the protection and early integration of refugees and asylum seekers a priority, providing them with access to employment, facilitating integration into the education system and enabling the most vulnerable to access public social welfare programmes.

27. The adoption of the global compact on refugees and its future implementation should facilitate more reliable, predictable, effective and humane treatment of refugees and greater solidarity at the international level. In view of the unacceptable tendency to politicize the issue of refugees and migrants worldwide, human rights education was now, more than ever, an essential component of any society.

28. **Ms. Raz Shechter** (Israel) said that it was crucial to identify how different countries could contribute to the global response to crises, based on the proper use of resources and expertise. For example, Israel had played a leading role at the global level in securing water resources through simple and practical scientific solutions. Israel had shared that knowledge for decades and stood ready to use its expertise to assist refugee communities to meet their basic needs and contribute to capacity-building in their countries of origin. It urged UNHCR to keep in mind the key role that innovation could play in the implementation of the comprehensive refugee response framework and its action plan, both in terms of emergency measures and long-term development. Technical cooperation had a key role to play in areas such as water and sanitation.

29. **Mr. Vitsas** (Greece) said that his country had been seriously affected by the refugee crisis in Europe since 2015 and was taking all the necessary measures to provide assistance to affected populations. Since the beginning of 2018, over 17,400 new arrivals had been registered in Greece, and the country was working closely with UNHCR and the European

Union to find a solution to the worrying situation in some of the refugee camps on the Greek islands. The Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation programme (ESTIA), run by UNHCR and the European Union, had provided shelter to 25,000 asylum seekers, but thousands more remained on the islands. Greece had been actively engaged in the drafting of the global compact on refugees, which gave reason to hope that the European Union member States and the international community as a whole would continue to support those in need. In the light of that instrument, Greece was working to improve reception conditions for refugees in overcrowded camps. In collaboration with UNHCR, it continued to transfer eligible refugees to reception centres on the Greek mainland, where additional facilities had been made available for them. In addition, the implementation of the legislation on asylum adopted in May 2017 was yielding positive results and the process of establishing eight additional appeal commissions would soon be completed. Greece attached particular importance to the integration of refugees and had recently adopted a new comprehensive strategy for integration. To facilitate integration, the State provided language classes for refugees, which would benefit approximately 15,000 persons over the next three years, as well as training and employment opportunities. In addition, refugee children enjoyed free access to education. In the 2017 school year, over 8,000 refugee children had attended Greek public schools, and that figure would increase to 9,500 in 2018.

30. **Ms. Alfaro Castillo** (Colombia) said that over the past two years, her country had hosted almost one million Venezuelan refugees, and thousands more were entering the country every day. The Government was seeking to regularize the situation of those refugees and had adopted a series of measures to enable them to settle and work in the country for two years. Unfortunately, the funds disbursed by the State to ensure their access to education and health, among other basic services, fell well short of what was needed, and it would be appreciated if the international community strengthened its cooperation efforts to provide integrated solutions to the migration crisis. The unprecedented situation in Colombia was taking place in a very particular context. Indeed, just two years after the signature of the peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the country needed to restore stability. It was true that the number of internally displaced persons had decreased significantly in recent years, thanks to the actions of the Government, and more than 800,000 victims of the conflict had been able to obtain redress. Nevertheless, the work was far from complete, and the support of the international community was essential.

31. **Ms. Celasin Rende** (Turkey) said that Turkey had opened its doors to all those seeking international protection, without discrimination. The country was currently hosting 4 million refugees, 3.5 million of them from the Syrian Arab Republic. Every effort was being made to improve their living conditions and alleviate their suffering; in particular, they had access to education, health and psychological care and were encouraged to enter the labour market. Syrian refugees were not obliged to live in camps, and most of them had settled in urban areas. Turkey hoped to be able to share its experience in hosting in urban areas during the High Commissioner's Dialogue to be held in December. It had allocated US\$ 32 billion to the hosting of refugees. However, that amount, which had been drawn from the national budget, was not sufficient to shoulder the heavy burden on the country as a result of the Syrian crisis. It was to be hoped that the international community would embrace the principle of international solidarity and establish mechanisms to share the burden and responsibility with a view to finding a lasting solution to the refugee crisis.

32. **Mr. Ndiaye** (Senegal) said that his delegation aligned itself with the statement made by Uganda on behalf of the African Group. The Government of Senegal made the promotion and protection of refugee rights a priority. In coordination with the national committee for the management of the situation of refugees, returnees and displaced persons, it had updated the country's legal arsenal, incorporating the Guidelines on International Protection. Refugees had access to education, employment, health care and basic social services under the same conditions as citizens of Senegal and, in the north of the country, they had been issued with biometric identity cards to facilitate their integration. With the assistance of UNHCR, the country had recently adopted a multi-year, multi-partner protection and solution strategy for refugees for the period 2018–2021, the purpose of which was to strengthen the protection of refugees and asylum seekers, promote access to basic services, facilitate the integration of refugees and stateless persons, simplify procedures for obtaining civil



documentation, improve living conditions and ensure that a dialogue was established with the Government.

33. **Ms. Cáceres Valdéz** (Observer for Guatemala) said that her delegation associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group. Along with five other countries of the region, Guatemala was implementing the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS). It had also adopted concrete measures and comprehensive human rights-based plans to assist persons seeking international protection. In 2016, the country had adopted a new Migration Code, which also focused on protecting the human rights of migrants and refugees, and had started making the necessary legislative changes to ensure its implementation. In the light of the evolving situation in the region, Guatemala, which had once been a country of origin, transit and return, had become a country of destination. Of the Guatemalan citizens leaving the country, 97 per cent did so for economic reasons or family reunification and the remaining 3 per cent to escape violence.

34. **Mr. Al Zaabi** (Observer for the United Arab Emirates) said that his country had opened its doors to more than 130,000 Syrians since the beginning of the conflict and had committed to take in a further 150,000; it had also granted citizens of countries that were at war the option to extend their visas by one year. The United Arab Emirates provided direct support to UNHCR, through several funding streams, and to refugees, including Syrian refugees in Jordan, Iraq and Greece, the Rohingya in Bangladesh and Palestinians supported by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). His country believed in the importance of empowering refugee women and girls and enabling refugees generally to benefit from renewable and sustainable energy sources so that they could tackle the energy poverty they faced.

35. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he welcomed the efforts made by various countries and their support for the activities of his Office.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*