

Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme

Statement by India

(05 October 2010)

Mr. Chairperson,

We convey our felicitations to the High Commissioner on his re-election to a second 5-year term. We thank him for his comprehensive opening statement, which provides an overview of the major challenges confronting UNHCR today, and the steps being taken by UNHCR, in cooperation with Member-States, to overcome them. India commends the commitment and efforts of the High Commissioner to strengthen UNHCR's identity in international protection. We remain committed to cooperating with UNHCR in strengthening its capacities for protection, including rapid response in emergency situations, coupled with the ongoing process of structural and management reforms for strengthening its financial stability.

02. The priorities identified by the High Commissioner which include reinforcement of protection capacity, refugees in urban areas and strengthening of emergency preparedness and response, draw their sustenance from UNHCR's core mandate, i.e. international protection of refugees. We share the concerns on the shrinking of protection space for refugees and the increasingly insecure environment in which many UN officials perform their tasks. The recent establishment of a Permanent Security Steering Committee of UNHCR and appointment of a Special Representative to the UN Secretary-General on sexual violence in armed conflict are welcome measures in this context.

03. The High Commissioner has emphasised other growing challenges to international protection, namely the intractability of conflicts and protracted situations. These challenges, coupled with a rising population of refugees, are a matter of concern and need to be addressed through practical measures. We recognise the complex features of the contemporary environment in which refugee protection has to be provided and support UNHCR's advocacy of repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction. At the same time, this policy can be effective and sustainable only if it is implemented in cooperation with the host State and the humanitarian and development agencies concerned and provided that the necessary financial resources are made available in adequate measure and on time. The role of the developing countries that are host to a large number of refugee movements, has to be recognised and their concerns addressed, in direct proportion to the magnitude of the burden they carry. We would, therefore, recommend a constructive, cooperative and collaborative engagement of States with UNHCR and relevant institutions and organisations to co-ordinate efforts towards durable solutions.

04. In the area of disaster management, where the primary responsibility is that of the State, we believe that UNHCR has a supportive role complementing and supplementing the disaster management and humanitarian tasks performed by States and humanitarian agencies such as the Office for the UN Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). In this context, we are saddened by the loss of life and property that Pakistan has suffered as a result of the recent unprecedented floods. In a spirit of solidarity with the people of Pakistan in their hour of need, we pledged US\$ 25 million aid which is being channeled through OCHA and the World Food Programme for flood relief efforts to provide succor and relief in a

timely manner to the victims. We also recall the earthquake in Haiti in January this year and the role played by UN agencies, including UNHCR in providing relief to its victims.

05. We appreciate the ongoing implementation of the Global Needs Assessment Initiative, facilitating the prioritisation of activities in the area of international protection and rationalising the earmarking and provision of funds. The Initiative has been useful in providing comprehensive assessments, identifying protection gaps and formulating targeted projects and budgets. We look forward to an improved management of financial resources of the revised 2010-'11 biennium budget, through continued implementation of the Global Needs Assessment, also in keeping with the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and the Financial Rules for Voluntary Funds Administered by UNHCR. The prioritisation of activities must match the available resources on realistic need-based requirements, based on principles of transparency, cost-effectiveness and reliable delivery, without compromising UNHCR's core and strategic activities. We also recognise the need to increase capacity-development in activities that require differentiating between vulnerable individuals in need of protection and other migrants that seek displacement voluntarily to improve their economic conditions.

06. While we appreciate the implementation of the core mandate of UNHCR being effected under challenging circumstances and that too, through a process of ongoing management and structural reforms, the relationship between UNHCR and Member-States must be reinforced further to recognize and acknowledge the in-kind-contribution and services of the States hosting refugees. We look forward to the results in mid-2011 of the structural management changes implemented in

2010. We also await the finalised Terms of Reference of the Independent Advisory Committee to conduct oversight coordination.

07. The importance of UNHCR is manifested by the increasing interest displayed by the large number of observers (both States and international organisations) which wish to participate in its deliberations. We urge full application of paragraphs 3,4, and 6 of article E on the Decision on Working Methods of the Executive Committee that have established the guidelines for interaction for observers and non-governmental organisations with the Executive and Standing Committees. This would be in keeping with the decisions of UNHCR and in accordance with practice in comparable organisations within the UN system.

08. We look forward to participating in the deliberations of the Executive Committee, and wish a productive outcome of this session. We are happy to note the increase in the membership of the Executive Committee to 79 and congratulate UNHCR's newest member to the Executive Committee - Slovenia.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.
