



Security Council

Seventy-second year

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Thursday, 2 November 2017, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Amendola (Italy)

Members:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
China	Mr. Wu Haitao
Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
France	Mr. Delattre
Japan	Mr. Bessho
Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
Russian Federation	Mr. Zagaynov
Senegal	Mr. Seck
Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin-Nyoni
Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Rycroft
United States of America	Ms. Sison
Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

Briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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

Expression of sympathy in connection with the terrorist attack in New York City

The President: On behalf of the members of the Security Council, I should like to condemn, in the strongest terms, the cowardly and unconscionable terrorist attack on 31 October in New York City — home to United Nations Headquarters — that targeted innocent civilians. The members of the Security Council express their deepest condolences to the families of those killed, and offer their sympathy to the people and Governments of the United States of America, Argentina and Belgium. I ask members to stand for a moment of silence for the victims.

The members of the Council observed a minute of silence.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President: As this is the first public meeting of the Security Council for the month of November, I should like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Security Council, to pay tribute to His Excellency Ambassador François Delattre, Permanent Representative of France, for his service as President of the Council for the month of October. I am sure I speak for all members of the Security Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Delattre and his delegation for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Grandi.

Mr. Grandi: A few weeks ago, I was in Bangladesh, at the border with Myanmar, witnessing the most rapid refugee exodus since the massive population

movements of the mid-1990s. It was a stark illustration of what happens when the root causes of conflict and violence are not addressed and when the relationship between a State and some of its people breaks down. The result is a human tragedy on a dramatic scale.

Around the world, countries that border crisis zones are struggling to absorb the social, economic and political shocks of large-scale refugee movements, while the broader consequences of unresolved conflicts reverberate across and beyond regions. Protecting refugees is a binding obligation, reflecting core principles and shared values, but it is also a contribution to regional and global stability. That is why I am grateful to the Council and the Italian presidency for the opportunity to address the Council today.

My predecessor's last comprehensive briefing to the Security Council as High Commissioner for Refugees was in January 2009 (S/PV.6062). In that briefing, he shared his concern that we might be entering a period of deepening and interlocking crises. Almost nine years on, that bleak prospect has become a stark reality. The number of people who are forcibly displaced worldwide is now approaching 66 million, up from 42 million in 2009. That includes 17.2 million refugees under the responsibility of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), representing a 70 per cent increase since then.

A succession of major new crises has caused massive displacement across virtually all regions. The cataclysmic conflict in Syria has driven 11 million people from their homes. Syria and Iraq today account for a quarter of all those forcibly displaced globally. New crises have developed in Libya, Mali, Ukraine, Yemen and the Lake Chad basin. Many have unfolded in ungoverned spaces, driven by varying combinations of poverty and underdevelopment, environmental degradation, inequality and persecution. In northern Central America, gang violence has become a main cause of displacement. Situations that appeared to have stabilized, including some that had seen voluntary repatriation movements, as in Burundi, South Sudan and the Central African Republic, have been affected by fresh crises, triggering new refugee outflows.

At the same time, protracted crises have remained entrenched. Refugees fled Afghanistan almost 40 years ago, but more than 2 million remain in Iran and Pakistan. The terrorist attack in Mogadishu last month was a grim illustration of the instability affecting Somalia.

Some Somali refugees are returning and need support, but 800,000 still live in sprawling settlements or cities across the region. Young Afghans and Somalis are moving further afield as part of mixed migratory flows.

The sharp rise in forced displacement reflects weaknesses in international cooperation and declining capacity to prevent, contain and resolve conflicts. Competing interests are being pursued through proxy wars instead of being resolved through diplomacy and dialogue. Neglected local crises gather pace and become transnational, with broader implications. The focus is on short-term interests rather than on long-term collective stability.

Have we become unable to broker peace? I ask this question here in the Security Council — whose *raison d'être* are peace and security — because I see the direct impact of these failures every day on the lives of tens of millions of people who have been forced to abandon their homes, with grim prospects of being able to return, sometimes for generations. When I meet refugees, their first question is not about food or shelter, but about peace and security — because it is security, and peace, that will convince them to return home.

And weaknesses in international solidarity are also eroding protection for those who flee. Many refugee-hosting States, particularly those neighbouring conflict zones, keep their borders open and generously host thousands — sometimes millions — of refugees. But certain States — often those least impacted by refugee flows, and often wealthy ones — have closed their borders, restricting access to asylum and deterring entry.

Last year's Summit for Refugees and Migrants, and its concluding New York Declaration, called for comprehensive responses to refugee flows, extending beyond humanitarian action and leading up to a global compact for refugees. Since then, important steps have been taken in pursuit of this vision by Member States, development institutions such as the World Bank, civil society and the private sector. We are making significant progress, but a full response to today's massive displacement can be achieved only through action to restore security, resolve conflict and build peace. I wish to draw the Council's attention to five areas where I see particular scope for the Council's engagement.

The first area is prevention. Prevention is possible. Decisive action last January helped resolve a political

crisis in Gambia and allowed refugees to return home quickly. We need more such concerted efforts. Early action is critical to addressing the causes of conflict and to avoiding deepening displacement crises. Displacement, on the other hand, is a symptom of a new or worsening crisis.

A current example is the Central African Republic. Ongoing conflict along religious grounds has once again driven over 1 million people from their homes, with internal displacement up 50 per cent since January. I fully support the Secretary-General's call for fresh efforts to build peace through dialogue, and his reminder to the international community to support the courage and resilience of the Central African people.

The situation in Burundi also demands renewed attention. There are 420,000 refugees from Burundi in the region. The Government of Tanzania has been publicly encouraging returns, and UNHCR is working closely with both Governments to ensure that these are voluntary, safe and dignified. But without concerted action to build stability inside Burundi, further conflict, as well as internal displacement and refugee outflows, may occur. Responding to refugee crises in Africa, generally speaking, continues to be frustrating, as they are often generated by conflicts suffering from a deficit of political attention, and they are made more difficult by a serious deficit of resources.

A second area relates to the critical role of peacekeepers. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as in other countries, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in that country has played an important role in enhancing security and enabling displaced people to progressively rebuild their lives. However, fresh and ongoing conflict is driving further displacement. Over 100,000 Congolese refugees have fled in the past year alone, and internal displacement has swelled to over 4 million people — 50 per cent higher than just two years ago. As displacement escalates, we count on the Mission to once again play an important role — for example, in increasing access and enhancing security in Kasai, as humanitarian efforts are scaled up.

And, as in other operations, such as in South Sudan, Darfur Mali, and the Central African Republic, peacekeepers contribute to the safety of humanitarian staff and help enhance our access, including through security escorts, health facilities and evacuations. We must preserve the neutral, impartial character of humanitarian action, but these examples show that it

is often necessary and indeed possible to work with peacekeeping missions in a manner that draws on our diverse strengths for the protection of civilians we are all mandated to serve. That is a key perspective for the Council to consider in its discussions over mission mandates.

A third and growing area is addressing complex migratory movements in fragile, unstable situations. These frequently take place where institutions are weak or absent and violent extremism and criminal networks have taken hold. Along the Central Mediterranean route to Europe in particular — stretching from sub-Saharan Africa through Libya to Italy — refugees and migrants continue to face grave exploitation and abuse. Together with the International Organization for Migration, we are working on a comprehensive set of protection and solution interventions in countries of origin, transit and asylum, addressing the drivers of these movements, strengthening the capacity of countries to address refugee and migratory flows, and expanding resettlement and other legal pathways. Lack of security, especially in Libya, complicates these efforts, but working in coordination with the United Nations Support Mission there, we are expanding our presence and making progress.

In parallel, strong, collective action is needed to tackle the horrific abuses perpetrated by traffickers and to identify and prosecute them. I commend the important initiatives already undertaken by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, the European Union Naval Force in the Eastern Mediterranean and others. I wish to ask the Council to also consider the use of sanctions against known senior figures and companies engaged in trafficking.

Fourthly, sustainable peace is critical to securing solutions to displacement. Very few displacement situations in the past decade have been brought to a definitive conclusion. One was in Côte d'Ivoire. Early, resolute political intervention by regional actors brought to a grave political crisis a close. That enabled more than a quarter of a million refugees and large numbers of internally displaced persons to return home. But that is an exception, sadly. Only half a million refugees worldwide returned home last year. The peace process in Colombia offers hope, but has not yet translated into significant solutions for refugees and the internally displaced.

In Myanmar, security and the establishment of respect for human rights and the rule of law in Rakhine state are essential prerequisites for the return of refugees. Progress on citizenship for the stateless Rohingya is absolutely crucial, as will be community reconciliation and investment in inclusive development, benefiting all communities. The recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State are a recognized blueprint in those respects.

It is critical that the United Nations, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the international community at large work constructively to assist both countries. UNHCR stands ready to provide support and expertise, including through the joint working group discussed in bilateral talks between Bangladesh and Myanmar. We believe that our role is critical to ensuring that international standards are met and returns are sustainable. I seek the Council's support in conveying that message to the concerned States.

In South Sudan, the promise brought by independence has been tragically squandered. One-third of the population is displaced and abandoned by its political leaders. Two million South Sudanese refugees are now in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Sudan and Uganda. More than half a million arrived this year alone. The pressure on host countries is immense.

The situation of the 2 million internally displaced people in South Sudan is also dire. More than 200,000 live in overcrowded, poorly serviced protection-of-civilian sites. Together with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, we are trying to identify alternative solutions so that the displaced can start to carve out a more stable existence. The support of the Security Council for that effort will be important, but what is crucial is to break the political stalemate.

The announcement by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development of a high-level revitalization forum is welcome. I urge the Council to press further for time-bound, meaningful actions that can bring about a joint ceasefire upheld by all parties and the full and inclusive implementation of the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. I fear that failure to do so will mean that humanitarian efforts will soon reach their limit and more people will die.

Finally and linked to my last point, protection must be sustained while solutions are pursued, including through support to host countries. Here, I turn to Iraq and Syria, where we are moving into a new and complicated phase. In Iraq, despite military progress, grave protection challenges, including new displacement, forced evictions and revenge attacks, must be overcome to prevent further displacement and allow for return. Investments in security have prevailed so far, and with reason. Peacebuilding, recovery and stabilization are now critical to bringing communities together and guaranteeing a conflict-free future for a diverse nation.

In Syria, civilians continue to bear the brunt of major military confrontations at key strategic locations. Meanwhile, fragile ceasefires and shifts in territorial control have restored relative calm to some parts of the country. Although there has been substantial new displacement, many internally displaced people and much smaller numbers of refugees have returned home this year, often to places devastated by the conflict.

Signs of resilience are starting to emerge, and it is important that those be nurtured, especially if progress on de-escalation is achieved in parallel at the Astana talks. Meanwhile, significant obstacles to sustainable return persist, including ongoing military operations, insecurity and other protection risks; a lack of legal status and documentation; housing, land and property challenges; destroyed shelter and infrastructure; and a lack of services and livelihoods.

International protection and support for Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries must be sustained during this uncertain period. Yet, funding for refugee and resilience programmes has dropped, with only 49 per cent of the funds needed received so far in 2017. As a result, the situation of Syrian refugees deteriorates and pressures for onward movement continue to grow. My appeal is that, as the members of the Council focus on the different tracks, hopefully leading to peace in Syria, they do not lose sight of the need to support refugees and countries hosting them. We must resist the pressure for premature returns, as that would be a destabilizing factor in that fragile context. On the other hand, voluntary and supported returns — when the time comes — will be a key contribution to sustainable peace.

I wish to share my appreciation to the Security Council for the visits it has undertaken to meet refugees, internally displaced people and other crisis-

affected communities. As I am sure those present will agree, listening to their voices is a profoundly moving experience, and also a powerful reminder of the responsibility that we all share to ensure that they are protected and their plight is resolved.

As I address the Council, millions of severely traumatized children, their lives blighted by atrocities witnessed and deprived of education, are facing an uncertain future. Women are struggling to care for their children on their own, in makeshift shelters with little privacy, with their partners dead or missing. Elderly people see their lives drawing to a close in a country that is not their own. Thousands of people are stranded at borders, frustrated and confused by arbitrary and dehumanizing treatment and new barriers to entry, and suffer deep scars from the persecution they fled and the mistreatment they suffered in their flight to safety.

International cooperation has the power to bring about real change to their lives. I am fully committed to ensuring that the UNHCR plays its role, and I know the same is true of UNICEF, the World Food Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other trusted humanitarian partners. But giving hope to millions of uprooted people and avoiding a repeat of the recent massive outflows will ultimately rest on political solutions. We and they, the uprooted people, are counting on the leadership of the Council to help deliver those solutions.

The President: I thank Mr. Grandi for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): I start by vehemently condemning the terrorist attack in New York and expressing solidarity with the United States.

As this is the first meeting of the month, I would like to congratulate Italy on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and to pledge the fullest support of my delegation. I also wish to express our appreciation to France for its very successful presidency last month, and in particular for the very timely initiative to try to shine a light on the security and other related challenges facing the member States of the Group of Five for the Sahel.

We thank the Italian presidency for organizing this important briefing on the issue of refugees, which has become one of the most pressing challenges of our time. We are very pleased to see the United Nations

High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, and we appreciate his briefing on the challenges and the way forward regarding international protection for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. We appreciate the work he has done since assuming the heavy responsibility of leading that critical agency, all the more so today when the challenge has become so enormous.

Reports of the unprecedented levels of global forced displacement, which have surpassed the number of persons forcibly displaced as a result of the Second World War, are indeed very alarming. Even more worrying is that there is no encouraging trend, neither with respect to the conditions causing such displacement nor the response at the global level to address the challenge.

The number of forcibly displaced persons in Africa continues to increase, primarily due to conflict, persecution and a lack of durable solutions. The Security Council missions to the Lake Chad basin and the Sahel region certainly helped to enhance our understanding of the enormity of the challenge. In our subregion, with nearly 1 million refugees and 1.5 million internally displaced persons, Somalia has remained one of the most protracted displacement situations in the world.

However, with the ongoing conflict in neighbouring South Sudan, Ethiopia, as well as other neighbouring countries, is receiving large numbers of South Sudanese refugees. The recent surge in the number of refugees and internally displaced persons has created unprecedented challenges, and the burden on countries hosting large numbers of refugees is constantly increasing, something that is often overlooked. The great deficit in burden-sharing must be recognized — I am more or less repeating here what the High Commissioner already stressed. I also agree with what he said about the need for a speedy resolution of the political problem in South Sudan.

The matter of burden-sharing and enhanced cooperation in the search for international protection and a durable solution — that is, local integration, resettlement and voluntary repatriation and reintegration for refugees — is more urgent than ever before. Countries hosting large numbers of refugees, such as mine, continue to open up their borders to refugees and to provide international protection through the provision of employment opportunities, out-of-camp policies and self-reliance schemes. That

is also in line with the commitment that we made at the United Nations Global Compact Leaders Summit in 2016. However, we continue to face serious challenges in funding programmes that support refugees — for instance, Ethiopia's refugee response plan for the year 2017 has a funding gap of 75 per cent, which will impact the integrity of humanitarian assistance and has so far resulted in food cuts of 19 per cent.

While commending the generosity of countries that offer resettlement for refugees, which remains indispensable in terms of sharing the burden with countries that host large numbers of refugees, the number of resettlement opportunities remains minimal. As such, with the difficulty in financing refugee response plans in such countries, and with limited resettlement opportunity at the global level, the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of refugees continues to be the preferred solution in the majority of refugee situations.

We believe it is important to create favourable conditions for the sustainable, voluntary return of refugees to their countries of origin and to ensure the safety and security of returnees. In that regard, tackling the root causes of some of the protracted refugee situations, and thereby facilitating conditions for voluntary repatriation and return, as well as the reintegration of refugees, is absolutely imperative. That serves to underscore the need to find durable political solutions to conflicts so as to ensure that people are not compelled to flee their countries of origin in the first place in order to find safety as a result of conflict, terrorism and violent extremism.

Furthermore, countries emerging from conflicts certainly need sustained international support; for instance, reports from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees during this session of the General Assembly indicate that approximately 34,000 Somali refugees have returned to Somalia in 2016, while the fragility, instability and insecurity of the country continue to affect its reabsorption capacity and to hamper further voluntary returns.

In our view, the voluntary return of Somali refugees will be sustainable only with the continued support of the international community in maintaining peace and security in the country, particularly with sustained support to the Federal Government of Somalia and in fighting Al-Shabaab. That will be critical in creating

conditions that are conducive to further repatriation and reintegration of Somali refugees in Somalia.

At the end of the day, there is no better approach than prevention, as well as sustaining peace and addressing root causes to ensure that meaningful progress is made to tackle the vexing challenge of refugees, and the displacement of people in general. The High Commissioner is right in highlighting that aspect of the challenge we face and in his emphasis on prevention. Of course, no meaningful progress can be made when the issue is politicized, as often happens. Our region has not been entirely free from that, which only complicates matters. Part of the remedy is for the Council to maintain unity in the initiative it takes to address displacement issues.

I would like to conclude by affirming Ethiopia's commitment to working with all the relevant parties in addressing some of the root causes of forced displacement in our subregion, as well as to continue providing international protection to refugees in Ethiopia and maintaining an open-door policy towards refugees.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): At the outset, Sir, I wish you all the best in your month of the presidency. I also want to thank United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Grandi for his compelling, but concerning, remarks this morning.

We meet today at a crucial time for global displacement, as the number of people forcibly displaced is at an all-time high since the Second World War and, sadly, the trajectory is only upwards. Today I want to share the story of just one of the 65 million people currently displaced around the world. It is the story of a mother from Rakhine state faced with the hardest decision of her life: to flee into the unknown or face the violence engulfing the province that she calls home. She told a journalist last month:

“We were happy, but now we are in this chaos; they are killing people and burning houses, and people are unable to stay”.

Faced with such brutality, she had no choice but to flee with her husband and children, risking the journey to Cox's Bazar. She said:

“When we got in the boat, we were scared, as water were getting in. I was scared that it would sink. People were crying.”

Her husband went missing as they fled. “I don't know if he is dead or alive”, she said.

Together with her children, she eventually reached safety, and I pay tribute to Bangladesh for the humanitarian assistance provided to her and to so many others.

But that family's story has been repeated and repeated and repeated over the past months. Only two days ago, a boat carrying refugees to Bangladesh capsized, claiming the lives of at least four people. It a story that will only keep being told until the conflict pushing them away is fundamentally addressed and they are allowed to return home.

As Filippo rightly said, whether in Burma, in Syria or anywhere else in the world, the Council has a unique role to play in maintaining the peace and security that would have stopped that family and so many others like them from having to flee their home. We have a special responsibility also to hold to account those who do not respect international humanitarian law or refugee law and those who fuel displacement.

Simply put, the stark number of people in need today tells us that what we doing is not working. Refugees are spending longer and longer displaced, often in poverty, with a dwindling hope of return. A new global approach is now needed to tackle protracted crises, and a more comprehensive response is required to help the growing number of people currently displaced.

That is why the United Kingdom strongly supports the aims of the comprehensive refugee response framework. It focuses on long-term, sustainable solutions. These help build the self-reliance of refugees and ease pressure on countries such as Kenya, Uganda or Lebanon, which have generously welcomed and hosted so many. The framework means delivering jobs, education and better services to refugees and host communities, while also better coordinating the international response.

The United Kingdom actively supports this approach where the new refugee response framework is being rolled out. We are also already delivering the sort of long-term response to refugees' needs that the framework recommends, including through job compacts to provide tens of thousands of refugees with the opportunity to work in countries such as Jordan or Ethiopia, as well as innovative education programmes and support for host communities and refugees alike.

To make these approaches work, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has a vital role to play in dialogue with Governments, partnerships with other actors, and giving advice and support where needed. In Jordan, we welcome the cash assistance that it is giving to refugees to meet basic food needs. In Turkey, we support the assistance that it is providing to refugees to prepare for the oncoming winter, and in the response to the crisis in Burma, it also has a role to play in the returns process, in cooperation with the Bangladeshi authorities.

But to deliver all this and more, it is clear that UNHCR, like all the other parts of the United Nations, will have to reform, and I welcome High Commissioner Grandi's commitment to this. UNHCR has a central role working with other agencies in reforming the humanitarian system. It is important that UNHCR continue to work better and more collaboratively with partners on the ground, including with development actors. We want to see improved transparency, increased accountability to beneficiaries, more multi-year programming and a continued scale-up in the use of cash.

In the face of an unprecedented need, it is clear that we cannot just do business as usual. We need a new approach, and we look forward to working with colleagues from the Security Council, UNHCR and elsewhere to achieve that new approach.

Ms. Schoulgin-Nyoni (Sweden): Let me just start by saying how saddened we are at the horrific attack in New York. We convey our condolences to everyone affected, and our thoughts are with them.

Let me also thank France for its presidency last month and welcome Italy as well as wish it good luck for this month.

Let me begin by thanking the High Commissioner for being here and briefing us today. Our work and that of the High Commissioner and his Office are intimately linked. For when we fail to prevent or resolve conflict, it is the High Commissioner and the staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) that stand with neighbouring countries and humanitarian partners to provide refuge and relief to those forced to flee their homes. At the same time, how the international community responds to forced displacement across borders has clear consequences for international peace and security.

There are now more people than ever in need of UNHCR's assistance. We commend the High Commissioner and his staff for their continued leadership and for providing a voice to refugees, who arrive with nothing except heartbreak, fear and their futures stolen and erased by conflict and displacement.

High Commissioner Grandi began his presentation at the border between Myanmar and Bangladesh. Like him, we are deeply concerned by the situation in Myanmar and Bangladesh. We know he needs our support to respond to the needs of those on both sides of the border. We welcome the important financial contributions to the response made at the Myanmar conference in Geneva some weeks ago, and we encourage all Member States to ensure that he and his partners have the resources they need to do their job.

If the Rohingya refugees are to return home, a political solution to the crisis is essential. Sweden fully supports the way forward laid out by the Secretary-General. We must address the immediate crisis by ending the violence and ensuring humanitarian access, while at the same time taking steps to achieve a lasting resolution to the conflict in Rakhine state. This includes the issue of citizenship for the Rohingya. Only then will refugees be able to return home voluntarily and to dignified conditions, where they can begin to rebuild their lives with confidence in the future.

The United Nations should be invited to assist in this process. UNHCR has a key role to play in providing support, expertise and experience in upholding international standards, and ensuring sustainable conditions for return.

Sweden was one of the original 26 countries that negotiated the 1951 Convention. Since then, our commitment to the plight of refugees has not waned. Today UNHCR continues to have our full political support. The growing numbers of forcibly displaced people mean that there is also a need for enhanced and sustained financial support for UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations. Support is not needed only in those places that are currently grabbing the headlines, but also, as the High Commissioner reminded us today, in protracted situations that risk being forgotten, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We encourage all Council members to maintain and increase their financial support to UNHCR, in particular through flexible, unarmaked financing that allows UNHCR to respond quickly in crisis situations.

The High Commissioner has illustrated the clear links between conflict and refugee flows. As I mentioned at the beginning of my statement, the inability to prevent and resolve conflicts often results in large-scale refugee flows that have enormous human and political costs. These flows often in turn contribute to instability and conflict, resulting in a mutually reinforcing cycle of conflict and displacement.

The protracted refugee crisis in Syria is a clear illustration of the need for early warning and early action to prevent conflicts and subsequent forced displacement. We commend UNHCR's efforts in addressing the needs of the millions of displaced persons resulting from the Syria crisis.

We agree with the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner that we must redouble our efforts to prevent conflict from emerging, to manage and end conflicts when they do, and to prevent a slide back into conflict when peace is achieved. That is the mission of the United Nations, and all parts of the Organization must work together to that end. The Council must live up to its responsibility by using all the tools at our disposal to end conflict and sustain peace. By doing so, we can enable people to return home.

International humanitarian law and human rights law are essential for the protection of the lives, health and dignity of persons caught up in conflict. They must be respected at all times. In addition, humanitarian organizations must be given full and unimpeded humanitarian access to refugees in need of assistance and protection. Half of the world's refugees are children. Refugee children, particularly unaccompanied minors, are particularly vulnerable and should receive protection, health care, education, psychosocial support and the hope needed to rebuild their futures.

Humanitarian relief can be only one part of the response to forced displacement. Millions of people around the world are trapped in protracted refugee situations and living in limbo. Providing dignity, particularly for refugees trapped in these circumstances, requires both short-term approaches and long-term, durable solutions. We continue to see generosity and solidarity towards refugees across the world. It is essential that we recognize the role of those countries and communities that are hosting large number of refugees and provide them with support. Working together, the international community and host-country Governments can provide for refugees'

self-reliance, livelihood opportunities and host-community development. This will also help to maximize the positive contribution that refugees make to their host communities. We also welcome the important partnership of UNHCR with the World Bank in this regard.

By working closely together, the United Nations system can ensure that refugees are not left behind in development processes. We strongly support UNHCR's coordination roll, building on the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, in reaching agreement on the global compact on refugees, to be adopted next year. The new global compact will provide an important framework for comprehensive responses to large-scale and protracted displacement.

Let me conclude by thanking High Commissioner Grandi once again for his briefing. In light of the clear interlinkages between our work and his, we would encourage the High Commissioner to come back to the Council more often and to alert us when he believes early action or support from the Council is needed. We would also welcome the opportunity to receive another update and to have another broad exchange with him in the course of 2018.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): Let me first congratulate you personally, Sir, and wish Italy every success in its presidency of the Security Council. I also thank you for your high praise of the French presidency and assure you of France's full support.

I also thank the High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, for his important briefing and pay tribute more broadly to him and his teams for their outstanding work and exemplary commitment. In the words of the President of the Republic, Mr. Emmanuel Macron, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is for France "the guardian of our lodestar". It is a compass that must guide our action, and France will always be at its side so as to guarantee refugees the protection they need and that it is our moral, legal and political duty to provide.

The insecurity and massive violations of human rights that fuel conflicts, as well as the impunity that accompanies them, are the primary causes of displacement, which in turn destabilizes States. It is therefore up to the Security Council to remedy this situation in the context of its mandate as guardian of international peace and security. I also recall that the forced transfer of populations is likely to constitute a

crime against humanity as defined by the Rome Statute. The Security Council has the responsibility to prevent such crimes.

As the High Commissioner said, there have never been more refugees in the world than in 2017 — more than 66 million people in total, more than 10 million of whom are stateless. I should like to address a number of situations he addressed that are of particular concern to us.

First, I would like to express our deep concern about the humanitarian situation of the refugees, mostly Rohingya, who have fled and continue to flee Burma. France has tirelessly condemned the attacks perpetrated since 25 August against the civilian population in Rakhine state. The ethnic cleansing has already forced more than 600,000 people — the majority of whom are women and children — to cross the border in the hope of surviving, without counting the internally displaced, whose numbers we do not know.

We have three specific priorities for resolving this crisis. They have been relayed and stressed to the Burmese authorities, notably at the Security Council's Arria Formula meeting that France organized with the United Kingdom, with the participation of Mr. Kofi Annan, during its presidency last month. The High Commissioner spoke at that meeting. In the short term, the military operations of the Burmese army must stop, and safe and unimpeded access to humanitarian aid must be restored in order to allow the safe, voluntary and sustainable return of Rohingya refugees to their country. The key to a solution lies in compliance with those three requirements.

I wish to reaffirm France's support for Bangladesh, which has opened its borders and welcomed hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees. The international community must continue to support Bangladesh in its efforts. At the donors' conference in Geneva on 23 October, France contributed almost €3 million. I would also like to stress the need for the dialogue between Burma and Bangladesh on the return of refugees to include UNHCR. That is a critical point on which I must insist, in support of the statement just made in that regard by Mr. Grandi.

Finally, the safe, voluntary and sustainable return of Rohingya refugees will ultimately depend on the effective consideration of the root causes of the crisis, and particularly the question of citizenship and equal rights for all persons belonging to the Rohingya

community. France will remain fully engaged, together with the United Kingdom and its partners, in developing a strong and united Council response. It is time to translate our words into action, and we must do so urgently in response to the ethnic cleansing taking place before our very eyes.

In Africa, the situation in the Central African Republic is particularly worrisome, with the number of Central African refugees in neighbouring countries similar to the level we experienced at the height of the crisis in 2013. This situation is the consequence of the deterioration of the security situation that has been observed for several months in the east and north-west of the country, owing to the growing number of clashes between armed groups, whose sole purpose is to monopolize territories and resources and discredit the Central African authorities and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

This spiral must be interrupted and a positive dynamic revived, as the Secretary-General said during his recent visit to the Central African Republic. In that context, the forthcoming renewal of the MINUSCA mandate should allow us to increase the Mission's human resources and refocus its action on the priorities of protecting civilians, supporting the political process and humanitarian access.

Finally, I would like to return to the humanitarian situation in Syria, which remains extremely worrying. More than 11 million Syrians have been uprooted by the conflict, while some 6.3 million are internally displaced and suffer limited access to humanitarian assistance. The plight of internally displaced persons in eastern Ghouta, Idlib governorate and around the berm is particularly tragic. In addition, 5 million refugees have taken refuge in Syria's neighbouring countries. On behalf of France, I again thank Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey for hosting a large majority of those refugees.

Hosting refugees is not only a moral duty, but also an obligation under our international commitments. In meeting these challenges, we have an imperative to provide legal and safe channels for those in need of protection, in particular by strengthening the fight against traffickers and smugglers. It is in that spirit that last month France established the first protection missions for the resettlement of refugees in Europe in the framework of the Central Mediterranean action plan adopted in August with our partners.

Hosting refugees is also important in terms of solidarity with countries neighbouring conflict zones, which are on the front lines of these large-scale displacements — whether they are the neighbouring States of Syria, the countries of the Lake Chad basin or the Horn of Africa, or more recently, Bangladesh. In order to support their efforts, France has decided to increase its financial aid to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration by €10 million in support of such States in the Middle East and Africa. This solidarity also requires the sharing of responsibilities. That is why France has made the commitment to resettle 10,000 refugees from Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, the Niger and Chad by 2019.

As rightly pointed out by High Commissioner Grandi, only a comprehensive approach will deliver an effective and lasting response to the challenges posed by the increase in forced displacement. The Security Council has a particular responsibility to contribute to identifying and implementing this new approach. Mr. Grandi may rest assured of France's steadfast commitment to that end at his side.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): We would like to thank Mr. Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for his briefing. It is good to have him here with us this morning. The United States remains steadfast in our support for the High Commissioner's mandate and for the work of his Office, which is more critical now than ever.

With new and protracted crises leaving over 65 million people forcibly displaced worldwide — over 22 million of whom are considered refugees — the stakes of this global challenge could not be higher or more evident. The Council has a vital role to play in curtailing the underlying political dysfunction and conflict that give rise to and prolong mass displacement and humanitarian need.

When we act on our mandate and follow through consistently, we can be successful. It is therefore imperative that we do more to act on our mandate and work to prevent and mitigate conflicts, especially by following through on the decisions we make in this Chamber. As we do so, it is important to have briefings like today's from the High Commissioner in order to remind us of the critical nature, real-world impact and human dimension of crises occurring worldwide. As described to us today by the High Commissioner,

several situations globally highlight the importance of more robust action to solve these problems.

In Burma, more than 603,000 Rohingya have fled into neighbouring Bangladesh only since late August to escape escalating insecurity and alleged human rights abuses by security forces. An unknown but likely significant number of Rohingya are internally displaced within Burma after their villages were burned or they were forced out of their homes. While reported violence has lessened, continued insecurity and fear of further violence threaten to drive more Rohingya into neighboring countries.

The Government of Bangladesh has stepped up impressively, taking in the displaced and providing for their safe temporary care, but undeniably this is a burden on Bangladesh's resources and, of course, many Rohingya simply want to be able to return safely to their rightful homes in Burma. We welcome Burmese State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi's commitment that refugees will be able to return home. We encourage the Governments of Burma and Bangladesh to work closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) throughout this process and to allow it and other relief organizations full access to displaced populations across the country.

In South Sudan, we can see the human cost of a Government's failure to uphold its most basic obligations to its citizens. More than 2 million South Sudanese have fled to Uganda, the Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and other countries. Refugees have found safety and protection in those neighbouring countries, but the resources of host communities and Governments are limited. Inside South Sudan, another 1.9 million people are displaced, facing ongoing food insecurity and threat of famine.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, nearly 4 million people are now internally displaced. Many internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo live in protracted displacement due to continuing conflict, limited access to livelihoods and basic services, and the absence of political will on the part of the Government to address conflict and underdevelopment, thereby deterring the investments needed to pave the way for durable solutions. The devastating impact of renewed and intensifying conflicts in the Kasai region there have led to the displacement of nearly 1.3 million people over the past

year, both within the Democratic Republic of the Congo and into neighbouring countries.

As the civil war in Syria continues, an estimated 13.5 million people remain in dire need inside Syria alone, including 6.3 million IDPs and another 5.3 million refugees. These numbers are simply staggering, amounting to half of Syria's population before the civil war began. In Syria, the Al-Assad regime has used chemical weapons against civilian populations and bombed entire cities into ruins, in explicit and irrefutable contravention of international law. Adding to this, the Syrian regime's obscene refusal to allow humanitarian organizations to access vulnerable populations, its continued practice of redirecting humanitarian assistance for political purposes, and its military tactics further compound suffering. Those who make it out alive have fled, largely to neighbouring countries like Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon, which are playing an indispensable role in providing safety and support to these refugees in the midst of the unimaginable and indescribable conditions caused by both the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) and the Al-Assad regime.

The spread of violent extremism over the past decade has also created a new wave of suffering and displacement, characterized by unthinkable violence and inhumanity. Boko Haram, for example, has continued to drive the humanitarian crisis in Nigeria and the Lake Chad basin to devastating proportions, while recent gains against Boko Haram and ISIS in West Africa have led to nearly 1.3 million persons returning to areas of origin; nearly 2 million still remain internally displaced or are refugees in neighbouring countries.

Ultimately, in each of these situations and in others around the world, a sustainable resolution to the underlying political conflict and development are essential to ending the global refugee crisis. The Council must therefore take action towards these ends. We also have a duty to press Member States to step up and ensure that UNHCR is fully resourced for delivering on the growing demands it faces. Given the magnitude of this global crisis, the UNHCR 2018 budget and the wider global humanitarian appeals have once again climbed above last year's figure to historic highs, reflecting the extraordinary humanitarian needs of forcibly displaced people all over the world. The United States provided over \$8 billion in humanitarian aid in the fiscal year 2017 — representing a historic high — including nearly \$1.5 billion to UNHCR.

We must all follow through on our commitments to increase contributions to humanitarian appeals and promote durable solutions for the displaced. We all too often throw around numbers — 20 million, 4 million, 600,000 — to describe people in a way that is easier to handle. We talk about numbers instead of actually talking about real people.

However, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo last week, Ambassador Haley met with women in camps who described living in absolute fear — fear that if they left the camp, they would be raped, and fear that if their children left the camp, they would be abducted. No person should have to live like that. No individual should have to experience what those individuals experience each and every day.

But in the photos from Ambassador Haley's trip of those same camps, there are children smiling and waving, showing the innocent hope and joy that they still have while living in a world where horrible things are happening all around them. The sad reality is that without action by their Government and the engagement of the international community, they will likely end up like their parents, with their fathers pulled off to war and their mothers living in constant fear.

However, we can change that. If those children can have hope in such a dire situation, so should we. We must translate that hope into concrete action to change their lives for the better. We owe it to them and to children all over the world to take our mandate as a Council seriously and to hold those Governments accountable when they fail to protect their people. Only then can we do our part to create a future where they can live, live out their dreams and fulfil their potential. We want those children to know that we hear their voices, we are here for them and we will act for them.

Mr. Zagaynov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We join others in wishing the Italian presidency every success, and we also extend our gratitude to the French delegation.

We welcome the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and thank him for his briefing.

Assistance to refugees and stateless persons is today a key component of the comprehensive efforts aimed at maintaining international stability. We commend the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to boost the effectiveness of the international protection regime. We

note the leading role of UNHCR in drafting a global compact on refugees and introducing a corresponding set of measures. We believe that if the efforts of the international community are combined, those measures will significantly improve the situation of refugees.

The current situation of refugees is largely a consequence of interference in the internal affairs of States, primarily in the Middle East and North Africa. We believe that those who have taken an active part in such interference bear the primary responsibility for delivering assistance to the victims of those policies, namely, refugees and forced migrants. What will most help to alleviate the suffering of refugees is the establishment of lasting peace in Syria, Libya and other conflict-ridden countries. It is also important to consistently fight terrorism. Assistance to host countries and countries of origin is key, including to create the conditions necessary for the voluntary return of refugees and ensuring their reintegration into society.

Our hope is that the experience and professionalism of UNHCR will allow us to achieve swift progress in addressing the situation of refugees from Myanmar, who, thanks to the consistent and steadfast efforts of Bangladesh, have been greeted with a warm reception.

The urgent challenge still remains to prevent refugees from being subject to political manipulation by forces inciting ethnic and religious enmity. It is also important to pursue efforts to prevent terrorists from infiltrating among refugees, and avoid the use of refugee camps for the recruitment and training of militants.

Our country strives to facilitate international efforts to assist refugees. We are a donor to UNHCR, and we host and provide arrangements on our territory for a significant number of refugees and forced migrants from various countries. We also provide substantial amounts of bilateral and multilateral humanitarian assistance. We trust that UNHCR will actively facilitate that process by taking measures to create suitable conditions for the return of refugees to their homes in Syria.

Russian territory is currently hosting more than 1 million Ukrainians fleeing conflict zones, to whom we are providing a decent life. We are in constant contact with UNHCR on that issue. On a regular basis, we send part of our voluntary donation to finance UNHCR operations in Ukraine, and we provide significant amounts of humanitarian assistance to victims in south-eastern Ukraine. We thank the Office

for its efforts to draw the attention of the international community to this issue, and we call for ongoing, objective coverage of the humanitarian consequences of the Ukrainian crisis to facilitate the reintegration of returning refugees and internally displaced persons to south-eastern Ukraine.

In conclusion, I reaffirm our high praise for the activities of UNHCR, which frequently acts as a lifeline for millions of people who are forced to flee their homes.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China condemns the terrorist attack that took place in New York and expresses its condolences to the victims.

We appreciate the efforts of the French presidency and congratulates Italy on its assumption of the presidency.

China thanks Italy for convening today's meeting and welcomes the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Italy, Mr. Vincenzo Amendola, who has come to New York to preside over this meeting. We also thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, for his briefing.

The situation of refugees around the world continues to deteriorate. Armed conflicts and natural disasters have resulted in an increase in the number of internally displaced persons. Refugee issues are complex and have many underlying causes, and have become protracted and hybrid in nature. Factors such as terrorism, turbulent regional situations and mixed flows of refugees and migrants have added to the difficulty of providing refugees with protection.

Over the past year, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), under the leadership of High Commissioner Grandi, has actively pushed for internal reforms, intensifying its coordination efforts and improving its emergency response capacity, thereby making significant contributions to protecting the welfare of refugees and responding to refugee crises. China appreciates all those efforts and supports the Office in maintaining its positive role in that regard.

Faced with the complex refugee situation and related challenges, the international community should continue to work within the framework of international law, including the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, and on the basis of mutual respect. Enhanced international cooperation will create synergy in addressing the global refugee

problem. The issue requires tackling both the symptoms and root causes by increasing support and assistance to host countries and communities, and eliminating discrimination against and prejudice towards refugees. We must also focus on the root causes that give rise to refugees by peacefully settling disputes through dialogue, increasing development aid to countries in need of assistance, creating the necessary conditions for the return of refugees to their homes, and promoting ongoing development in their countries of origin.

In handling matters related to refugees, the international community should uphold the principles of objectivity and neutrality, avoid interference in the internal affairs of the countries in question and prevent the politicization and abuses of international refugee protection mechanisms.

China has long cooperated with UNHCR. In June, High Commissioner Grandi made a successful visit to China, where both sides achieved firm consensus on deepening our ties of cooperation. Pursuant to the outcomes reached at the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in May, China will work with the relevant international organizations in a joint push to implement a tranche of international cooperation projects for countries along the Belt and Road, including providing food, tents, prefab buildings and other refugee relief items to those countries; establishing refugee scholarships; and financing the participation of refugee athletes in international and regional competitions.

During the leaders' round of the Forum, the Ministry of Commerce of China also signed a cooperation agreement with UNHCR, whereby it pledged \$8 million to the Office as an appropriation to the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation. China will earnestly honour and effectively implement the aforementioned assistance initiatives. China is ready to work with all parties in actively participating in the intergovernmental negotiations on a global compact on refugees, to be launched next year, so as to contribute to the improvement in the global governance of refugees.

The problem in Rakhine state of Myanmar involves complex historical, ethnic and religious factors. Many differences and contradictions have been brewing for a long time. The Government of Myanmar is now working actively to ease the tensions in Rakhine state, and the situation there is now moving towards stability.

Myanmar and Bangladesh are now seeking a settlement of the problem of the Rakhine state through bilateral negotiations and consultations. The United Nations and the international community should remain patient and provide constructive help and cooperation to Myanmar by working together for an appropriate solution to the problem.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): Since this is our first public meeting under the presidency of Italy, Mr. President, I would like to congratulate your country on assuming this post and wish you every success in steering the Council's work during this month.

I thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for his comprehensive overview of the situation with refugees globally and for outlining the main challenges, operational and policy priorities of his Office, with prevention featuring prominently among them. We commend the endeavours of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to tackle problems that refugees are facing in different parts of the world. Its efforts are indispensable in addressing and solving related humanitarian crises that, unfortunately, are still a sad reality in the twenty-first century.

Ukraine commends the activities of the United Nations High Commissioner in this field, in particular the adoption of its five strategic directions for 2017-2021, which will guide the Office's engagement with all people of concern. Given the scale of conflicts on the global map and the constantly growing number of affected persons, the process of reforming UNHCR and its capabilities to respond to new challenges is very welcome. The persistent work to involve international development actors in the search for long-term solutions to humanitarian crises is noteworthy. We commend and encourage further progress on this track.

The historical commitments made by Member States in September 2016, here in New York, through the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants should lead to the successful elaboration of the global compact for refugees so as to address forced displacement situations more comprehensively and provide all affected people with better protection. Ukraine welcomes UNHCR's significant efforts and engagement to protect and assist internally displaced persons throughout the world, who represent a major percentage of persons of concern to UNHCR under its mandate.

We welcome the High Commissioner's visit to Ukraine last year, which generated a positive momentum in response to the situation of internally displaced persons in my country. As a result of the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine, there are 1.7 million internally displaced persons in my country. All these persons were forced to leave their homes in Crimea and certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions following the military occupation of these territories by the Russian Federation, which, as we just heard, presents itself as a humanitarian donor while in fact it has been a donor of heavy weaponry, mercenaries and regular troops in the Donbas.

Population displacement on this scale on the European continent is not something to be overlooked, brushed aside or glossed over, and those people deserve to be mentioned, just as the High Commissioner rightly did, along with refugees and internally displaced persons in Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, Myanmar and other countries. In that light, we thank UNHCR and its international partners, including individual Member States, for the valuable assistance provided in response to the displacement crisis in Ukraine. For our part, we will continue to actively support the activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, including those in my country.

Mr. Sadykov (Kazakhstan): I thank the Italian presidency for highlighting the plight of refugees and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Grandi for his comprehensive briefing.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, most countries agreed to protect refugees under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. However, this vision of a better world has eroded with the unfolding of a global unprecedented humanitarian crisis. We therefore need collective solutions, visionary leadership and global cooperation on a massive scale. Primary among these are the ending of conflicts, persecution, terrorism and violent extremism that force people to flee; the implementation of peace agreements; upholding ceasefires, and allowing humanitarian access.

The Astana platform supporting the Geneva process to mitigate the situation in Syria is a good illustration. The protection of civilians should be the key responsibility of Member States which in conflict areas must be helped with capacity-building in the rule of law, good governance, security sector reforms,

promoting human rights and investing in development to create political, economic and social stability.

It is therefore obvious that the protection of civilians should be an integral element of all multidimensional peacekeeping operations and political mission mandates. In addition, protection experts must be strategically positioned in all mission units and other mechanisms, working closely with United Nations country teams and the Governments of host countries, as well as with police- and troop-contributing countries. Training must be provided on the protection of refugees, women and children. Care must be taken to see that refugees in camps have adequate food and water and are not subject to forced labour, sexual abuse and exploitation.

Understanding the root causes of displacement is necessary to long-term development and to strengthening the security-development nexus by investing in poverty reduction, education, job creation and basic services. Protection of civilians criteria must also be part of relevant sanction committees, and perpetrators must be brought to justice.

We call upon all Member States to carry out all measures related to counter-terrorism, in full compliance with international law. It is equally critical to harmonize legislation and amend criminal codes accordingly. Additionally, the fight against terrorism must not lead to the killing of civilians or their expulsion, causing them to flee to other countries. Hospitals, ambulances, schools and critical energy, transport and communications infrastructure need to be protected to serve local populations. Intensive programmes should be initiated to enable refugees and internally displaced persons to return home.

Addressing the Security Council last month, Secretary-General Guterres, quoting World Food Programme statistics, indicated that "a 1 per cent increase in food insecurity leads to a 2 per cent increase in refugees" (*S/PV.8069, p. 4*). Conflict in one country places demands on its neighbours to provide food and basic services to refugees. That can lead to further instability, which affects the security of an entire region and beyond. Therefore, only a region and subregional approach would make concerted action across borders possible. The magnitude of the refugee crisis is so alarming that the international community has to step up to increase support for UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). A determined effort would enable the setting up of a strong refugee system

that offers asylum for legitimate claims and provides basic survival kits and supplements, even to families who host refugees. Nearly 84 per cent of refugees today are hosted by middle- and low-income countries. They need to be supported.

Likewise, we should open up safe routes for refugees and initiative resettlement programmes. Similarly, saving lives should be our key goal, so that no one dies crossing a border or fleeing in a boat. Together with investing in search and rescue operations and helping those in distress, all countries are expected to investigate and prosecute trafficking gangs that exploit refugees and migrants.

We also need to fight xenophobia, racism and, inter-ethnic tensions that lead to hostilities and senseless expulsions of people. Kazakhstan has lessons to share based on its experience of holding three annual conferences of traditional and religious leaders of all religions, and establishing an assembly of Kazakh people that includes all ethnic and religious denominations, particularly youth, in order to foster unity and social harmony.

Kazakhstan, together with its neighbours, is making every effort to develop and implement policies that ensure basic human rights throughout Central Asia. My country has a long record of excellent collaboration with the relevant United Nations agencies, such as UNHCR and IOM, as well as with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and others. To coordinate regional and international efforts to deal with the influx to, from and within Central Asia, Kazakhstan, in cooperation with UNHCR and IOM, initiated in 2011 the regional consultative Almaty process in order to create mechanisms to monitor irregular migration and devise new, coherent, comprehensive and differentiated policies. That regional initiative presently includes seven member States and two observers from our part of the world. It will expand in geographic scope with the increasing flow of populations across the region.

Finally, Kazakhstan is strongly committed to reaching concrete outcomes on the issue of refugees with the United Nations and other Member States, based on fundamental principles of human dignity, justice and freedom.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, Bolivia expresses its congratulations to the French delegation

for the conduct and conclusion of a successful and productive month in the presidency of the Security Council. Similarly, we express our best wishes to the Italian delegation in the month of November and we appreciate its initiative to hold today's briefing about a very important topic that has not been discussed in the Council since 2009. We hope that henceforth the issue of refugees will be addressed more frequently, since it is a topic intrinsically linked to international peace and security. We also appreciate the briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi.

According to data from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and as Mr. Grandi mentioned, at the end of 2016, as a result of war, persecution, armed conflicts and violence, there were close to 65 million people forcibly displaced throughout the world, of more than 22 million are refugees, 17 million of whom are under the mandate of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and more than 5 million of whom were registered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Former Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien has said that we are facing the biggest humanitarian crisis in the world since the Second World War.

The scourge of war and armed conflicts forces thousands of people to leave their countries of origin and their homes in the hope of finding more favourable security conditions. They have to abandon everything that they know — their families, friends, homes and everything they have built with their work throughout their lives. However, their martyrdom does not end there. Once they leave their homes, the situation they experience, if they survive, is precarious, since they are often categorized as a problem or a burden and questioned about their motivations. Sometimes they are even placed in camps and forced to stay there.

Currently, as the High Commissioner mentioned, one of the most complicated situations involves the more than half a million Rohingya people who had to leave to their homes and seek refuge in Bangladesh. We commend and highlight the willingness shown by the Government of Bangladesh, which has taken in thousands of refugees. In that context, we also commend all those countries that receive with open arms all the people who are fleeing the scourge of war, violence and armed conflict.

Likewise, many of the refugees are from Syria. After years of war and conflict, many have lost hope and do not believe they will return to their country. Many of them choose the European continent to start from scratch. They are forced to do so in precarious conditions, moving with what they can carry in a state of poverty. Many of them have difficulties in getting a decent job, both because of their refugee status and because of cultural or linguistic barriers, so that even children have had to leave school to work and help their families.

In order to put an end to this and other crises, it is necessary to address the root causes of war, armed conflicts, terrorism and the threat of violence, which in many cases are the result of interventionist and regime-change policies. They are changes that mostly do not translate into peaceful or democratic transitions. In that connection, the responsibility of all of the States Members of the United Nations is first to recognize the historical debt owed to those countries and people who suffer because of actions often perpetrated through conflicts initiated, encouraged and led by certain military and economic Powers. That is why we believe that, by closing their borders, building walls, criminalizing migration and denying access to refugees, some countries promote xenophobia, discrimination and racism. Additionally, such policies serve to fuel the rhetoric of terrorist groups, which we are all trying to fight, including, of course, intolerance of different religious beliefs.

In that connection, during the World Peoples' Conference, held in June under the theme "For a world without walls, towards universal citizenship", Bolivia proposed that we work together on the concept of universal citizenship, with the aim of decreasing, in addition to human trafficking, the barriers that prevent refugees from escaping war and armed conflicts.

We call on countries to reflect and to comply with the joint obligation of solidarity to receive refugees and offer them protection, as well as to help them look for ways to improve their self-sufficiency, expand their resettlement to third countries and create favourable conditions for their voluntary return. Initiatives such as the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, a document that expresses the political will of world leaders to save lives, protect rights and share that responsibility worldwide, establish the basis for a global compact that has the potential to generate

tangible change with respect to how we address forced displacement.

We also emphasize that the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol remain the fundamental pillars of the international refugee protection system. Although since 1951 the regime for the protection of refugees has been reinforced by the adoption of regional instruments across various continents, the protection regime is weakened by the lack implementation. As a result, the chances for establishing a system of mutual understanding and collaboration diminish.

In many cases, aid is scarce, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. For example, the levels of funding needed for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for its work in the Central African Republic and Burundi are funded at only 9 per cent and 11 per cent, respectively. For South Sudan, and the neighbouring countries that host 2 million refugees from that country, the funding level is at only 31 per cent. Similarly, the resources available for Syria and neighbouring host countries have decreased with respect to last year's levels.

Global social and economic trends point to displacement continuing to increase over the next decade, while taking on new and different forms. The patterns of displacement will be affected by the increase in the world's population, which will increase from its current number of 7 billion inhabitants to more than 10 billion in 2100 — an increase that will occur mostly in Africa and Asia. In that regard, the needs of refugees will increase to an even greater level, thereby leading to complex situations in providing refugee camps with resources. Accordingly, the international community must therefore concretely deliver on its pledges to provide sustainable support for the countries receiving large flows of refugees.

Lastly, in order to achieve concrete solutions, States must work to ensure the voluntary and timely return of refugees, as well as their integration into societies undergoing long-term conflict situations. Likewise, solutions for refugees must be incorporated into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by increasing commitments to provide resettlement, settlement locations and mobility for refugees, and actively involve them in seeking solutions. All that requires solidarity, cooperation and the sharing of

international responsibility. We must all shoulder the responsibility that we share with regard to this crisis.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I congratulate the delegation of France on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. I wish you, Sir, and your delegation every success during your term of office, during which you can count on the support of the delegation of Uruguay.

I thank Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for his comprehensive briefing, in which he laid out a very timely and detailed account of the most urgent and difficult to manage situations. It is crucial that we be aware of the views of the High Commissioner when addressing many of the conflicts on the agenda of the Council. I agree with him that briefings such as this must take place at least once a year.

Unfortunately, the world is witnessing record numbers of refugees. The majority of the 65.6 million people who have been forcibly displaced throughout the world, including refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons, fled their homes as a result of various conflicts. The statistic of 65.6 million people represents nearly 19 times the population of my country, and that number is only a point of reference. Beyond the statistics, which seem overwhelming, we should try to grasp the actual lives that lie behind those numbers. It is no coincidence that the countries that generate the highest number of refugees are on the agenda of the Security Council: Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan, the Central African Republic, Burundi and Myanmar.

Accordingly, the direct relationship between conflicts and the number of refugees worldwide is indisputable. It is the responsibility of the entire international community, and especially that of the Security Council, to focus on preventing conflicts so as to avoid a continued increase in the number of refugees and internally displaced persons. Preventing conflicts and adopting policies aimed at achieving long-term stability will make possible halting the increasing number of refugees and internally displaced persons.

At the Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, held during the seventy-first session of the General Assembly in New York last year, States Members of the United Nations unanimously adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and

Migrants. That historic political Declaration is aimed at improving the way in which the international community addresses large movements of refugees and migrants, including protracted situations involving refugees. We commend the work of the international community and, at the same time, we would like to highlight aspects of Uruguayan policy pertaining to refugees.

Uruguay recognized the right to asylum and the rights of refugees through the adoption of its law 18-76, of 19 December 2006. All persons in Uruguay have the right to seek refuge on our national territory to preserve their life, physical, moral and intellectual well-being, freedom and security. Likewise, Uruguay espouses two fundamental principles with regard to refugees, namely, the principle of non-refoulement at the border and confidentiality. The first principle assures that during any immigration control entry into Uruguay shall not be denied to any individual expressing their intention to seek refuge. That provision applies even to cases in which the applicant lacks the documentation required under migratory law or produces obviously fraudulent or falsified documentation. Concerning confidentiality, no information regarding asylum seekers or refugees shall be made publicly available.

Pending the completion of the petition process, every asylum seeker in Uruguay is entitled to the issuance of a temporary identity document that bears similar features as those issued to legal residents, thereby facilitating their access to basic health services, education and legal employment. Once legal refugee status has been granted, that document is subsequently replaced by the same form of identification issued to residents.

Rather than continuing to detail out national refugee policies, we believe that a positive approach in the area of refugees would set the international community upon the right path to facing that global challenge. As set forth in the New York Declaration, protecting those who are forced to flee and the obligation to support countries and communities that host them are shared international responsibilities that must be assumed in a more equitable and predictable manner. We must address the root causes of forced displacement, support host communities and actively promote sustainable solutions for refugees, particularly when refugee status becomes protracted. For the short- and medium-term, High Commissioner Grandi can count on Uruguay's commitment to participating actively and constructively in developing the global compact on refugees.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): First of all, I would like to join others in congratulating Italy on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. It has our full support.

I would also like to express my sympathies to the victims of the attack in lower Manhattan. It is a stark reminder that terrorist attacks can happen anywhere and against anybody.

I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for his comprehensive briefing.

The role of the Security Council is to work to achieve peace and security in the world, but we are continually reminded that humanitarian issues, including the refugee issue, need to occupy a large portion of the Council's attention. As Mr. Grandi's briefing illustrated, we are currently seeing an increase in the severity of the humanitarian crisis. There is a greater need for a strengthened response to refugees. As of October, Japan has contributed approximately \$150 million to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which includes emergency-grant aid to Myanmar and Bangladesh, as well as to the Middle East and Africa.

As for the humanitarian crisis in Syria, although the Security Council has been tackling the situation in that country for six years, there has been no substantial improvement. Considering the critical situation of refugees from Syria, Japan has delivered assistance to host communities through the United Nations. Japan has also accepted Syrian students, helping them to continue their studies in Japan. We believe such educational opportunities will not only serve as a complementary pathway for the vulnerable populations, but will also contribute to building the capacity of today's youth, who will be rebuilding Syria tomorrow. Japan places importance on activities to ease the pain suffered by the Syrian people due to the long-lasting conflict and to build resilience in their communities.

The situation of refugees and displaced people in Myanmar and Bangladesh is a serious concern for the international community. To address the situation, Japan increased its emergency grant aid to \$4 million in September, in addition to the \$12 million contribution already made earlier this year through international organizations, including UNHCR, which has been assisting those affected by the current situation.

Japan places importance on UNHCR's efforts to apply the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. The Framework will be an important element of the global compact on refugees, which will be adopted next year. We see the Framework as an initiative that in line with the humanitarian-development nexus, which Japan firmly supports. Based on that idea, Japan carried out projects in the areas of humanitarian assistance and development cooperation in collaboration with various actors, including UNHCR, in places such as Uganda, Iraq and Turkey. At the same time, we also pay further attention to the Framework from the view point of adding another important element to the humanitarian-development nexus: peace, something on which Japan places increasing importance. The role of the Security Council, together with the Peacebuilding Commission, is crucial to supporting the political process for peace and to complete this nexus.

Lasting solutions for the refugee issue cannot be achieved solely through emergency humanitarian assistance. Supporting the self-reliance of refugees is necessary for the day when, through the political process, the time comes for them to repatriate or resettle. When a humanitarian crisis ends and refugees return to their home countries, providing seamless assistance — such as peacebuilding for reconstruction and stabilization, poverty reduction and economic development for stabilization and prevention of the recurrence of conflict — is essential.

Japan will continue to work within and outside the Security Council to secure peace and prevent the recurrence of conflict, which is a major cause of refugees. At the same time, Japan intends to continue its assistance in the areas of humanitarian assistance and development cooperation to ensure effective collaboration in those areas. Japan will learn from its experience and hopes to work with the international community, especially through closer cooperation with UNHCR, for the delivery of effective assistance.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Italy on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I wish Italy every success.

I would also like to thank Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for his comprehensive briefing to the Council. I also like take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation

for the tireless efforts that he is exerting to improve the lives of millions of refugees around the world.

Forced displacement has become a global phenomenon. Millions of people move every year, fleeing armed conflict, oppression, violence, terrorism, extreme poverty, food insecurity or the negative impact of climate change, natural disasters or other factors. Anyone following this situation today, in particular as it relates to the Middle East and Africa — to which Egypt belongs — can easily deduce that armed conflicts, oppression and violence, including terrorism, are among the main reasons that have led to increased flows of refugees throughout the world during the past few years. In the current year alone, more than 2 million refugees left their homes because of protracted crises.

The severe humanitarian crisis in Myanmar has led to the displacement of more than 600,000 Muslims, who are fleeing the systemic violence practiced against them. The Syrian crisis also remains the largest humanitarian crisis in terms of the resulting displacement of civilians. In the same vein, we cannot forget the protracted, decades-long suffering of millions of Palestinians who are still waiting for a just settlement that fulfils their legitimate aspirations for a better life.

Egypt believes it is necessary to adopt a comprehensive approach in addressing the root causes of displacement. That would include measures in the economic, political, cultural, humanitarian and other spheres. We must emphasize the development dimension and must open up new channels for accepting refugees. Security solutions and the closing of borders will not serve any interest, and they violate the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

The greatest positive contribution from the United Nations is in the area of the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflict prevention, and in seeking lasting political solutions through preventative diplomacy. In that connection, the Security Council must work to prevent renewed conflicts and to fulfil its duties in the area of civilian protection and armed conflicts. Attention should be given to vulnerable segments of the population, such as women and children. The Council must adopt long-term strategies to build peace in affected countries. One of the main duties of the High Commissioner for Refugees in post-conflict situations is to contribute to efforts aimed at the safe, voluntary and dignified return of refugees, in coordination with the relevant States.

In conclusion, we would like to point out that, based on its firm belief in the importance of joint work and international cooperation to address the root causes of crises, Egypt is shouldering the burdens of hosting large numbers of refugees of various nationalities. Many of them enjoy equal status with Egyptians and are enjoying access to education, health, housing, commodities and subsidies. We welcome all ongoing efforts to develop the global compact on refugees in a manner that contributes to sharing the responsibilities and developing a unified vision and a strong position to provide a dignified life to refugees and to respect their rights and their human dignity.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The Senegalese delegation would like to begin, Mr. President, by associating itself with the condolences you expressed, Sir, in connection with the victims of the terrorist attack that befell the American people, as well as the Argentine and Belgian people.

On the occasion of this first public meeting of the month, my delegation would like to congratulate the Italian delegation on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, as well as to commend you, Under-Secretary Amendola, for personally presiding today. I also commend the French delegation for its outstanding conduct of our work during the month of October.

My delegation welcomes the initiative of the Italian presidency of devoting this meeting to the critical problem of refugees and internally displaced persons, particularly in situations of conflict — an issue that requires the urgent, decisive and coordinated action of the international community for a lasting settlement.

Additionally, I would like to thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, for his comprehensive briefing on the situation of refugees worldwide, which shed light on our discussions, by forging a clear link and indicating the desired complementarity between the role of the High Commissioner and that of the Security Council. That is why the Senegalese delegation echoes the call made by the initial speakers to increasing the dialogue between them.

The unacceptably high number of 65.6 million uprooted people in the world in 2016 is of particular concern, especially since almost all of those cases are due to conflict. The Council has the primary responsibility to resolve this situation if it cannot prevent it. Considering

that every minute 20 people — primarily women and children — are internally displaced or become refugees, how many thousands of lives, especially of women and children, will plunge into uncertainty by the time this morning's briefing ends?

That is why, in our view, at a time when humankind has more resources and capacities than ever before for every individual to live in dignity, it is regrettable that the international community is still searching for solutions and financing to resolve primarily man-made crises that could have been avoided. That is why Senegal keeps affirming that in situations of conflict, it is the responsibility of all parties to scrupulously respect international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law by providing protection and assistance to civilians first. The existing normative framework obligates the parties to a conflict and other stakeholders not to displace civilian populations and to take measures to prevent and manage possible movements.

And when national Governments cannot or will not assume responsibility for protecting internally displaced persons and refugees, international actors must act, using a two-pronged approach of encouraging States and other entities to respect their obligation to protect those populations under international law while, at the same time, supporting the development of local and national capacities to fulfil those responsibilities.

My delegation believes that the Security Council can, and must, make better use of all the means at its disposal to help the parties involved to assume their obligations to refugees and internally displaced persons. For example, the Council's aide-mémoire for the consideration of issues pertaining to the protection of civilians in armed conflict suggests that members of the Council adopt certain initiatives with regard to forced displacement.

Similarly, international action must be strengthened to better support those populations and their host countries and communities. Indeed, the burden is increasingly heavy for host and transit countries, which, for the most part, are developing or low-income countries.

I would also like to stress the importance of partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, if we are to improve our care as it relates to reception, integration, provision of basic services, as well as management of statelessness. On that point, I would like to highlight one of the firm

recommendations of the Ministerial Conference on Statelessness in West Africa, held in February 2015. It suggests that nationality that is determined at the time of the refugees' arrival is a valid presumption that can be challenged only by the State of origin on the basis of hard evidence that the State itself would need to furnish. The 10 million stateless persons reported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 2016 attest to the vulnerability of refugees to losing their identity, especially when their exile is protracted and the administration of their country of origin is hobbled by serious dysfunction.

Addressing the problem of refugees and displaced persons also requires strong regional partnerships. In that regard, my delegation would like to recall the contribution of Africa in managing that phenomenon — particularly as evidenced by the adoption of the African Union Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa and the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. We must note that the African continent itself hosts 30 per cent of the 65 million refugees and displaced persons.

To ensure better protection for internally displaced persons and refugees and, above all, in order to mitigate that phenomenon as much as possible, Senegal would like to renew its call for better conflict prevention based on reliable and rigorous warning systems, as well as on the need for open cooperation with all the relevant stakeholders, including regional and subregional organizations.

It is in this spirit that, in referring to the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, we wish to reaffirm Senegal's commitment to achieving the goals set by the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. Accordingly, we call on the international community to redouble efforts to ensure the adoption of the global compact on refugees in 2018, as it is clear that conflict resolution and prevention requires genuine political will if we are to bring about a lasting settlement to the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons, including voluntary return in conditions of safety, dignity and respect for their rights.

Bearing in mind the importance of the post-conflict phase in the resurgence of crises, it seems appropriate to take into account the systematic promotion and protection of the human rights of refugees and

internally displaced persons in efforts to consolidate and sustain peace.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the importance of a comprehensive approach that duly takes into account the political, economic, social, environmental and legal dimensions of the protection of civilians and stresses a preventive and proactive approach.

In addition to bolstering efforts to find political solutions to conflicts, it is also necessary to support countries in conflict in their implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially those linked to the problem of forced displacement, as well as to foster a culture of justice and peace by boosting women's participation in the resolution of conflicts and promoting peaceful and prosperous societies.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy.

First of all, I would like to thank High Commissioner Filippo Grandi for his comprehensive and outstanding remarks and for the work carried out on the ground by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to assist all those in need of international protection, including the victims of trafficking.

Allow me also to thank all of the members of the Security Council for their insightful contributions on an issue that deserves an urgent, coherent and collective response, as well as preventive action whenever possible. We cannot close our eyes in the face of human suffering. We cannot hide its tragic consequences for future generations. Therefore, today we make a call for action.

I think that regular briefings on this matter are more than welcome. Of course, Italy will continue to play its part, and the refugee agency can count on Italy's full support. From Myanmar to Libya, and from Somalia to Jordan and Yemen, Italy will work side by side with the agency to ensure protection and assistance for civilian populations, in particular the most vulnerable segments and those who deserve special protection.

We are aware of the increasing need for financial resources in order to operate in multiple crisis scenarios, which is why we have decided to further increase our financial support and plan to remain one of the agency's main donors. In addition to our annual voluntary contribution to the regular budget so

far, we have already approved additional emergency humanitarian projects. Further initiatives will be implemented by the end of the year. The dramatic figures provided by the High Commissioner and the many critical situations he addressed in his briefing clearly show that we are facing one of the most serious challenges to international stability, and especially to respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms, as well as international humanitarian law.

We must shift the focus on human mobility from an emergency approach to an encompassing and long-term one. We need to enhance our capacity to tackle the root causes of crises and give hope and dignity to the most vulnerable segments of the civilian population, especially youth. Indeed, the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants has improved the way in which the international community has begun to look at and respond to such a large and disorderly movement of refugees and migrants. We need a joint response and strengthened cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination.

In our opinion, the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and the global compact on refugees, to be adopted next year, should represent a step forward in preventing and eradicating the root causes of forced migration and refugees flows. We have shared our proposals, which are based on three main actions, namely, investing, protecting and valuing — investing in supporting countries of origin and transit, protecting refugees and the most vulnerable migrants and valuing the many positive aspects of migration flows.

Italy's priority is to promote two key principles. The first one is partnership among countries of origin, transit and destination of flows. There is growing evidence of the need to collaborate on migration, not just to fight trafficking in human beings and criminal networks associated with migratory movements, but also to deal with the root causes of migration. The second key principle, which I already mentioned, is shared responsibility, both in managing the migratory flows and in protecting migrants and refugees, especially the most vulnerable ones, such as women, children and people with disabilities.

With particular reference to the global compact on refugees, increasing resettlement and complementary pathways for admission are essential to cope with the current large-scale influx of refugees from crisis

areas such as Syria, Libya, South Sudan, Somalia, Afghanistan and Myanmar.

In Libya, it is critical to improve access to protection and support for asylum-seekers, refugees and internally displaced people and vulnerable migrants, in the light of the recent drastic decrease in sea arrivals in Italy from Libya, on one hand, and the potential increase in the number of those remaining in Libya in unsafe and precarious conditions, on the other. Scaling up the presence of the refugee agency in Libya is important, as the High Commissioner mentioned, for the protection of human rights in refugee camps.

The Security Council can play an important role in preventing and halting the refugee crisis by promoting and encouraging the prevention and resolution of conflicts, which are the main causes of large-scale movements of displaced people. In that context, I would like to express once again Italy's support for the Secretary-General's peace continuum approach — from prevention to peacekeeping, from post-conflict recovery to inclusive national reconciliation and sustainable development processes. The Security Council can play its role, including when renewing or drafting peacekeeping missions' mandates. Indeed, as the High Commissioner highlighted, peacekeeping can be a fundamental and extraordinary tool to protect refugees and migrants and to facilitate their relocation.

Most important, the Council needs to act with resolve and unity in order to put an end to the protracted crises and conflicts that force people to flee. I have mentioned all such crises and protracted conflicts. We, as members of the Security Council, have the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. We must therefore meet the expectations of the millions of people who are counting on us to restore and build peace.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Zagaynov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): As I noted during my statement, there are more than 1 million Ukrainians in Russia who fled the area of conflict, as well as an equal number of labour migrants from that country. Therefore, in spite of the unrestrained anti-Russian propaganda from Kyiv, those citizens have taken refuge in Russia to flee war or to

resolve their socioeconomic issues. In our view, that is the real cost of the mantras of Russian aggression that we, unfortunately, heard voiced today.

The President: I now give the floor to High Commissioner Grandi to respond to the comments made.

Mr. Grandi: I will be very brief, Mr. President, as you have already effectively summarized many of the themes that emerged from the discussion today.

I would like to thank all delegations, which unanimously expressed support for refugees and for the work of my organization, including, in some cases, with very specific examples of support. I would also like to thank the Security Council for once again recognizing that refugee problems and problems of forced displacement can be resolved only through political action. I would like to encourage all of the members of the Council to remain focused on such action so that, when I meet the Council again, there will perhaps be a smaller number than the 66 million I reported today.

I would like to reassure all members, many of whom have encouraged me and asked me to continue to improve the effectiveness of the work of my organization through internal reforms and participation in broader United Nations reforms led by the Secretary-General, that I can guarantee that that commitment to reform is very real and is already being enacted in practice.

As many said here today, the process leading to the establishment — hopefully next year — of a global compact of refugees, parallel to a global compact on orderly and safe migration, will be a further opportunity to improve the type of work that we do and the responses to the refugee crisis through what the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants last year termed the comprehensive refugee response framework.

As I reported yesterday to the General Assembly, which is more the forum for this type of discussion, we are conducting important applications of this framework in many countries hosting large numbers of refugees, such as Ethiopia, Uganda and many countries in Central America. What we learn from that application and what we are learning through informal consultations with Member States will be brought back to Members through a zero draft of a global compact early next year, for more formal consultations throughout the year in Geneva and eventually here in New York.

I will therefore ask the Council once again — and members have expressed that sentiment themselves — for

support for this important process, through which we really have an opportunity to expand the range of actors involved in refugee responses, especially development actors and the private sector, and to improve the effectiveness of those responses and give impetus to the drive to find solutions to the refugee problem.

I should like to stress that many Council members have raised, and rightly so, the gravity of the refugee crisis presently affecting Bangladesh, with the refugee flow from Myanmar. I also should like to join those who have thanked Bangladesh for keeping its borders open to receive more than 600,000 refugees in the space of a very short period of time — two months. We should not forget that Bangladesh is already hosting 200,000 to 300,000 refugees from previous influxes, so it will soon be hosting almost a million people in a very overcrowded part of the country, which I have recently visited.

We are, of course, engaged with other humanitarian and development actors in responding to the crisis in Bangladesh. I would like to reiterate that with respect to my request for support for our offer to Bangladesh and

Myanmar to have a role in the discussion — leading, hopefully, to the voluntary and dignified return of refugees to Myanmar — that offer is put forward in a completely non-political spirit, as is always the case with our actions, in the spirit of being constructive, as mentioned by some delegations, so as to improve effectiveness when the return happens and to ensure that it is conducted on a voluntary basis and according to principle, and that it has international legitimacy. That is the role that my agency can play in that important development if and whenever it happens.

I would like to conclude once again by thanking Italy and the Council for having invited me to this meeting and thanking you in particular, Mr. Under-Secretary, for presiding over this meeting. I am very grateful for the fact that several members have invited me to return and brief the Council regularly. I remain available to do so any time the Council deems it necessary.

The President: I thank Mr. Grandi for the clarifications he has provided.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.