



**STATEMENT BY MR. RASHID ALVI, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND  
MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION, ON AGENDA 100: REPORT OF  
THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSONER FOR REFUGEES,  
QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND DISPLACED  
PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS IN THE THIRD  
COMMITTEE OF THE 59<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON  
NOVEMBER 10, 2004**

Mr. Chairman,

We thank the Secretary-General for his reports under this agenda item. We also thank the High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Ruud Lubbers, for his introductory statement and his report to the Third Committee.

The High Commissioner reports that since the beginning of 2001 to the end of 2003, the number of 'people of concern' to the UNHCR fell by 5 million - from 21.8 million to 17 million. My delegation is indeed pleased to note this significant development, as well as the fact that voluntary repatriation and resettlement have been an integral part of this process.

Mr. Chairman,

The High Commissioner has remarked that the "UNHCR 2004" process has encouraged UNHCR to look further ahead. Developing countries are host to the largest number of refugee movements. Their problems deserve particular attention. They call for a strategic adjustment in the approaches and programmes of the UNHCR. The concerns of developing countries have to be addressed in proportion to the magnitude of the burden they carry. The link between poverty and refugee flows is well-recognised. The search for durable solutions will remain elusive as long as the fundamental factors that give rise to refugee movements remain unaddressed by the international community. A development-based approach limited in scope and application only to refugees will not only remain a quick fix and an incomplete solution; it may even exacerbate inequalities at the local level.

We reiterate, in this context, the imperative of addressing the global development agenda, including achievement of the goals of Millennium Declaration. The development agenda, therefore, has to underpin international efforts to ensure prevention, and address the needs of relief and rehabilitation of refugees. We agree that the UNHCR's mission must be based on the principles of solidarity, responsibility and burden-sharing.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation recognises the inherent potential of the 'Convention Plus' initiative. The Multilateral Framework of Understandings on Resettlement can make an important contribution to international responsibility and burden-sharing. We look forward to its operationalisation. The finalisation of the Framework needs to be welcomed, especially as it comes at a time when the international refugee law framework is under challenge by growing xenophobic tendencies, violations of the principle of *non-refoulement*, and erection of new walls and barriers in the traditional countries of resettlement. Caution must be exercised against the trend towards trying to 'regionalise' solutions to refugee situations. Such an approach could be interpreted as a new form of containment of refugee movements, and hence a derogation from the principle of international responsibility to which the UNHCR and States have committed themselves.

Mr. Chairman,

The success of UNHCR in achieving the goals of the Agenda for Protection and solutions depends on its ability to work in close cooperation with and the consent of the States concerned. UNHCR should be alive to the specificities of individual situations, and the consequences of its intervention in a given situation. Given that the bulk of refugee flows occurs in developing countries, voluntary repatriation suggests itself as the most viable durable solution. It is mandatory for the international community to provide the requisite sustained, multi-dimensional support to ensure the durable re-integration of those who have returned to their countries of origin, as the High Commissioner's report points out.

Mr. Chairman,

Prioritisation of UNHCR's activities is an inescapable reality. In our view, the UNHCR should maintain its focus on those persons of concern who have the first charge on its mandate – the refugees.

My delegation feels obliged to reiterate its views on the issue of internally displaced persons, who are first and foremost the responsibility of Member States. UNHCR's role in situations involving internally displaced persons should be on the basis of explicit requests by the Member State concerned. It is also necessary to ensure that there is no duplication in the responsibilities in this area between the different humanitarian pillars of the UN, which should function within their existing mandates.

Mr. Chairman,

We wish to reiterate the unique and important role of the UNHCR which has a global mandate given to it by the General Assembly. UNHCR's critical reliance on voluntary cash contributions makes it indispensable for it to always maintain the highest standards of impartiality, transparency, and accountability in its international management and programmes.

New refugee crises have emerged over the past one year with large-scale suffering, and the cycle of hopelessness, despair and deprivation has continued for many. India is committed to working with the international community to address the new and emerging challenges in a spirit of compassion, solidarity and burden-sharing.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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