



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Third session

Summary record of the first part (public)* of the 10th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 26 February 2010, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. McCallum

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Other matters (*continued*)

* The summary record of the second part (closed) of the meeting appears as document CRPD/C/SR.10/Add.1.

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Other matters (agenda item 8) (*continued*)

1. **The Chairperson** invited the representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to take a place at the Committee table.
2. **Mr. Andrysek** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) said that the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had reached agreement in principle, after two years of unsuccessful efforts, on the adoption of a conclusion on persons with disabilities. The recently prepared draft text could be changed in the light of contributions by members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
3. He pointed out that the proportion of persons with some form of disability, including mental disability, among those receiving UNHCR assistance, was clearly underestimated (3 per cent of the population of UNHCR camps, whereas the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that 10 per cent of any population would be likely to suffer from some form of disability). The statistics should be improved so that better account could be taken of the needs of those people in vulnerable situations.
4. There were many possibilities for cooperation between UNHCR and the Committee (for example, exchanges of confidential information on States parties' reports), and he invited the Chairperson of the Committee to establish contact with UNHCR officials. He also suggested that the Committee should designate one of its members to attend and speak at the UNHCR Standing Committee meeting on the protection of persons with disabilities to be held on 3 March 2010. He was prepared to speak further at a later session of the Committee and remained open to all offers to contribute to the Committee's work.
5. **Mr. Al-Tarawneh** said that he would participate in the meeting on 3 March 2010. Based on his experience of the issue of displaced persons and refugee camps in his region of origin, he confirmed that the number of persons with disabilities was probably double the figure given in UNHCR statistics.
6. **Mr. Ben Lallahom** asked for clarification on the ethnicities and populations that made up the largest number of refugees.
7. **Mr. Andrysek** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) said that, globally, there were 12 million refugees and 15 million displaced persons; it was harder for him to give a figure for the number of stateless persons. The countries worst affected were Afghanistan, followed by Iraq, the Russian Federation and several African countries.
8. **Ms. Maina** asked what UNHCR was doing to provide for the medicine requirements of persons with mental or intellectual disabilities.
9. **Mr. Andrysek** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) said that the main problem facing UNHCR was the lack of financial resources and, in that connection, he regretted that persons with disabilities were the ones most seriously affected by that situation. UNHCR had experienced difficulties in obtaining the necessary supplies for refugee populations and had found itself unable to take care of even a fraction of the people with mental disabilities. That issue, absent from human rights instruments, yet fully present in the daily operations of UNHCR, should figure prominently in the Executive Committee's conclusion on persons with disabilities.
10. **Ms. Cisternas Reyes** asked whether UNHCR was dealing with the situation of persons with disabilities among displaced Haitians suffering hardship in neighbouring countries.

11. **Mr. Andrysek** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)), referring to the UNHCR emergency appeal to countries to suspend forced returns to Haiti, emphasized that the situation in Haiti was more closely related to post-disaster relief activities than to the UNHCR mandate.

The public part of the meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.