Statement by the Chinese Delegation at the Third Committee of the 68th Session of the General Assembly on Refugees (Agenda Item 62) (6 November 2013, New York)

Mr. Chairman,

The Chinese delegation wishes to thank the High Commissioner for Refugees for his presentation and commends him and the UNHCR for their tremendous efforts over the past year to promote the international cooperation for the protection of refugees.

Thanks to the common effort of the whole international community, recent years have witnessed progress in refugee protection world wide, including progress in responding to urgent refugee problems in the Middle East and Africa and in addressing long lasting refugee problems in places like Afghanistan. Meanwhile, problems like armed conflict, financial crisis, food security, poverty, natural disasters and humanitarian crises are seriously threatening international peace and development. The international refugee situation is still grim with increasing numbers of refugees and IDPs and rising xenophobia against refugees, all of which put the international refugee
protection system under severe strains. In order to tackle these challenges, the international community should focus its efforts on the following aspects:

First, adhere to peaceful settlement of disputes. Countries should strictly abide by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and always settle regional and international disputes through peaceful negotiations. The UN and regional organizations should strengthen mediation and reconciliation efforts, improve conflict prevention and settlement mechanisms, and mitigate the problem of refugees and IDPs caused by armed conflicts.

Second, uphold the principles of “international solidarity” and “burden sharing”. The international community should take effective measures to help the developing countries realize sustainable development and increase their resilience in the face of natural disasters. The important contribution of the developing countries to refugee settlement must be acknowledged and we should commit ourselves to seeking a durable solution to the refugee problem while responding to emergency humanitarian crises.

Third, further improve international refugee protection mechanisms. It is necessary to strengthen coordination among countries of origin, asylum and settlement of refugees as well as donor countries and relevant international institutions including the UNHCR in order to enhance international refugee protection. International refugee protection mechanisms should adhere to the principle of “objectivity, impartiality and independence” and avoid being politicized or abused. China supports the
UNHCR in pushing ahead with its internal reform to enhance its capacity for emergency response, assist the developing countries with capacity building, and keep improving the equitable geographical representation of its staff.

China takes an active part in international protection of refugees and keeps improving its domestic legislation related to refugees. The Exit and Entry Administration Law of the People’s Republic of China that has recently come into effect contains specific provisions on refugees. We congratulate the High Commissioner on his recent successful visit to China and look forward to deepening cooperation with the UNHCR. China is deeply concerned at the humanitarian situation in Syria. We believe that the fundamental way out lies in a political settlement of the Syria situation. To ease the humanitarian plight of the Syrian people, China has up till now provided over 17 million USD in humanitarian assistance to Syria and its neighboring countries, including emergency assistance channeled through UNHCR to Syrian refugees in Turkey. In the future, China is ready to continue to work together with all parties to improve international protection for refugees, strive to eliminate the root causes of the refugee problem and dedicate itself to building a world of lasting peace and common prosperity.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.