

**69th Session of the UNHCR Executive Committee**

**Geneva, 1 - 5 October 2018**

**General Debate**

**Statement on behalf of the Republic of Poland  
delivered by H. E. Ambassador Zbigniew Czech – Permanent Representative  
of the Republic of Poland to the UN Office at Geneva**

Thank you Madam Chairperson,

Poland aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

Mr. High Commissioner, Excellences, Ladies and Gentleman,

I would like to thank High Commissioner for his comprehensive information on the current refugee situation. We support implementation of your strategic vision of the UNHCR adaptation in order to better assist and protect refugees.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentleman,

Poland is aware of the challenges concerning the various refugee situations. New crises are emerging and the gap between the needs and available resources is growing. At the same time the influx of people migrating in the need of asylum exceeded the capacities of many states.

Large flows of people in most cases being mixed migration are increasingly difficult to manage. For a growing number of states these movements are also a source of concerns about security of their citizens, and social cohesion in their countries. In this context it is necessary to effectively decouple irregular migration from asylum and to support building effective asylum systems in volatile regions. UNHCR should play a key role in supporting states in this regard in cooperation with IOM and other relevant actors.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentleman

In the context of the GCR it is crucial for Poland that, while mobilizing the political will and engagement of the states, the text allows for flexibility in terms of means in which the states contribute and that it takes into account their different realities and approaches.

We surely need efforts towards creating circumstances enabling broader availability and use of voluntary repatriation and providing more stable and predictable support to refugee populations *in situ*. The role of local women as the actors of change should also be underscored throughout the whole process of supporting the displaced populations. We hope that the GCR arrangements will serve to mobilize and not to discourage the international community, as now we need to make the next step and put the GCR to work.

Ladies and Gentleman,

In recent years Poland has significantly strengthened its efforts towards supporting refugee populations and countries hosting them in the regions of their origins. In 2017, humanitarian aid itself was six times higher than in 2015. We are consistently implement this strategy also this year. In particular Poland demonstrates solidarity and participates financially in programs aimed at solving and reducing effects of the refugee crisis in the Middle East. Poland has joined the EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis and provides funding for implementation of the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan.

We are also stepping up efforts in our bilateral development assistance, by financing different humanitarian projects of Polish NGOs and our diplomatic missions in the Middle East. We are helping Syrian refugees that reside in Jordan and Lebanon. Additionally, in the spirit of solidarity with our close neighbor, for many years Poland has been constantly delivering humanitarian and development assistance for the IDPs in Ukraine.

In this context allow me to assure you Mr. High Commissioner that UNHCR is on the Poland's list of priority multilateral organizations through which we provide humanitarian aid. I also take this opportunity and declare Polish financial and in-kind support for UNHCR's response in the Middle East and Uganda this year.

As a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council Poland has taken initiatives to promote respect for international law in order to enhance the protection of civilians in armed conflicts and to facilitate humanitarian aid access.

Poland would also like to emphasize the importance of supporting all religious minorities affected by violence and discrimination. Improving protection of civilian population in conflict situation would be an important measure allowing to reduce the number of people who are forced to flee and seek protection far from their homes.

I thank you for your attention.