

**70<sup>th</sup> annual plenary session of the Executive Committee of  
the High Commissioner's Programme**

**High-Level Segment on Statelessness**

**General Debate**

**7 - 10 October 2019**

**Statement by Latvia**

Thank you Mr Chairman,

High Commissioner, Excellences, distinguished delegates,

Latvia aligns with the statement delivered by the European Union and would like to make additional remarks in national capacity.

My delegation would like to commend you, High Commissioner, for your leadership in internal reform process strengthening further Organisations agility and effectiveness. We particularly acknowledge continued work on improving and streamlining systems and processes, as well as creating space for innovation. Those efforts are crucial at the time when the organisation faces growing gap between its needs and available resources.

High Commissioner,

Latvia, as a strong supporter of the UNHCR's #I belong campaign to End Statelessness, welcomes holding of the High-Level Segment on Statelessness. The mid-way point of the campaign, we mark this week, is an important milestone both to reflect on achievements, and to re-vitalize the efforts in achieving the goals of the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness by 2024.

The principal international statelessness instruments - 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness – are cornerstones for the prevention and resolution of statelessness, as well as for the protection of stateless people. Latvia is a State party to both conventions and rigorously implements its obligations.

Latvia is one of the few European countries that has a special Law on Stateless Persons that provides for a precisely defined procedure for acknowledging the status of a

stateless person. The competent state authorities take an active part in the statelessness recognition proceedings. For example, the authorities play an important role in helping the stateless person to receive all the necessary documents from abroad when the person does not have the opportunity to acquire them.

Today Latvia hosts comparatively low number of stateless person - 171. The country does its utmost to facilitate the needs of these persons in effective manner: they are being registered with their applications examined free of charge, and ultimately offered avenues for acquiring Latvian citizenship in due time. Children of stateless parents are granted Latvian citizenship simultaneously with their birth registration.

In conclusion, Mister Chairman, I would like to reiterate unwavering support of the Government of Latvia to the humanitarian cause and the valuable work of the UNHCR, including its efforts to terminate statelessness globally.

I thank you.