

Protection**U.S. Delegation Statement
70th Session of the UNHCR Executive Committee
October 7, 2019**

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Mr./Madame Chairman, as we all know, the number of people forced to flee their homes has reached record levels every year for the past five years, and shows no signs of abating. Refugees and asylum seekers, stateless persons, internally displaced persons, and other victims of conflict around the world continue to suffer horrific abuses and hardships at the hands of terrorist groups, armed forces, non-state actors, criminal smuggling and trafficking networks, detention guards, callous government officials, and, in some cases even neighbors and community members. The gravity of these challenges is daunting, but today I want to emphasize the positive with the hope that we can build on what is working and strengthen protection for millions of vulnerable people across the globe.

First, most governments continue to uphold their respective obligations and welcome refugees. The responses by the governments and people of Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan in providing asylum to refugees from Syria have been extraordinary, and we encourage these and other governments to implement appropriate procedural safeguards to avoid the risk of *refoulement* for any deportees. In Bangladesh, we commend the government and Cox's Bazaar community's generosity in responding to the needs of Rohingya refugees, and

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appreciate their continued commitment to voluntariness and dignity as conditions for returns. In Latin America, we recognize that 16 countries across the region continue generously hosting the more than four million Venezuelans forced to flee the Maduro regime. Countries like Costa Rica are hosting large numbers of Nicaraguans fleeing that country's violence and repression. We urge other donors to demonstrate solidarity to help sustain regional support for Venezuelan and Nicaraguan refugees' significant protection and assistance needs. In Africa, many countries have a history of generosity in providing asylum space, protection and local integration opportunities to refugees. In East Africa, Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Kenya host over 3.6 million refugees combined. Continuing a tradition in West Africa over many years, Guinea-Bissau is currently offering legal solutions through naturalization and land-tenure rights for all refugees by the end of this year. Rwanda is taking the extraordinary step of facilitating resettlement of refugees from detention centers in Libya. The United States applauds these durable solutions, and appreciates the critical role UNHCR plays in building asylum capacity, facilitating access to asylum and durable solutions, and monitoring conditions of return.

Second, it is fitting that UNHCR's new policy on engagement in situations of internal displacement coincides with the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally

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Displaced Persons in Africa (also known as the Kampala Convention). We appreciate UNHCR's intent to be as deliberate, consistent and predictable in its IDP response as it has been in its refugee responses. We also welcome UNHCR's focus on services, solutions, and supporting community-based protection networks. We are particularly pleased to note UNHCR's focus on area-based approaches and integrated programming, and the positive impact these will have in enhancing local protection systems and solutions. To implement the range of commitments and objectives of the IDP policy, we encourage UNHCR to substantially increase its pool of protection specialists, prioritize the deployment of technical expertise in protection from the earliest stages of crisis, and ensure the presence of dedicated protection coordinators in the field. We also look forward to UNHCR's work in support of the High-Level Panel on IDPs, and continue to strongly support its leadership of the Global Protection Cluster.

Third, the United States maintains a strong focus on addressing violence against women and girls as an integral part of every humanitarian response. Though much has been done to protect and empower displaced and conflict-affected women and girls, more progress is needed. The United States recognizes that the international community still has more to accomplish, and we continue to aim to change the way in which international organizations and non-governmental organizations respond through our Safe from the Start initiative. We must ensure

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the prevention of, and response to, gender-based violence and sexual abuse and exploitation are recognized as a priority and life-saving, and prioritize and promote survivor-centered approaches, which must remain at the core of our collective responses. Consequently, data protection is a key component of ensuring survivor confidentiality and consent and we strongly encourage UNHCR to ensure that global guidance on data protection is in line with existing standards around GBV case management and information sharing.

Finally, I want to reflect on the High-Level Segment on Statelessness. The energy and momentum to address statelessness was palpable. Member States must sustain and increase this energy to deliver on commitments to resolve existing situations of statelessness, and to prevent new ones from arising. UNHCR assists governments with these efforts, and we commend UNHCR's work with individual Member States and in regional consultations to prepare for the High-Level Segment. We were pleased to see the Government of Colombia act quickly this year to prevent statelessness among the children of Venezuelan refugees and migrants. We also celebrate recent reforms by Madagascar, Sierra Leone, and [placeholder depending on HLS pledges] to eliminate discrimination against women in their nationality laws. At the beginning of 2019, UNHCR counted 25 countries that did not allow women to transmit citizenship to their children on an equal basis with men, often resulting in statelessness. We believe we can get to

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zero, and we urge other Member States, UN agencies and NGO partners to support this goal. Countries can also continue to do more to prevent children of foreign fighters participating in conflicts around the world from being rendered stateless. States have the ability to make best interest determinations for these children and determine citizenship in cases of uncertain and undocumented parentage. We collectively need to find the political will to do the right thing by children.

In a world of unprecedented displacement and growing humanitarian needs, let us emphasize the many accomplishments and good practices that Member States and UNHCR can build on and strengthen to protect the individuals and families forced to flee conflict and persecution. Protection and solutions are achievable. Ending statelessness is achievable. The United States remains focused on these goals.

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