



**Statement by the Government of Brazil**

to the

70th Session of the Executive Committee of UNHCR

Agenda item 4 – International Protection

4(a)  
Mr. Chair,

At the outset, allow us to congratulate Ms. Gillian Triggs for her nomination as Assistant High Commissioner for Protection. We extend our sincere support and wish you the best of luck in your assignment.

Mr. Chair,

In our statement in the General Debate, we have presented the efforts undertaken by the Brazilian Government to respond to one of the largest situations of displacement in the world. In respect for the purely humanitarian character of this forum, we refrained from making political considerations. Unfortunately, however, another delegation did not show the same respect and chose to politicize the debate by directly attacking my Government. We have talked extensively about the effects of the Venezuelan crisis, but such attack now gives us the opportunity to shed light on its root causes.

A few days ago, a Brazilian TV show interviewed an UNHCR officer who told the story of a 70 year-old man who arrived by foot, from Venezuela, at the Brazilian border. He was shaking, he was sick, he was underfed and he was holding two pairs of pants very tight, close to his chest. He kept repeating that he had worked his entire life and that all he had left was those very pairs of pants. That is the best depiction one can make about what is happening in Venezuela. An illegitimate and oppressive regime is starving, killing and driving its own people away, in the biggest exodus of Latin America's history. It is time for the Maduro regime to stop making excuses for their own failures and to assume

responsibility for the misery they brought upon their nation. There will be no solution until free, fair and transparent elections are held, in order to restore the democratic order in our neighboring country. Until then, Brazil will continue to receive the people of Venezuela with open arms.

We take this opportunity to recall that President Bolsonaro was elected with more than 57 million votes, in a transparent and competitive electoral process, observed by national and international institutions. Elections in Brazil benefit from a vibrant civil society, open political debate, strong and independent judicial institutions and free press.

Mr. Chair,

We very much welcome the approach chosen by UNHCR in this year's "Note on international protection". The report affords a comprehensive overview of the pressing subjects addressed by the Global Compact on Refugees, without neglecting issues pertaining to the very core of the traditional mandate of the organization, built on the cornerstone principle of "non-refoulement".

The centrality of protection is the glue that holds together the entirety of UNHCR's work. Protection considerations are also part and parcel of the Brazilian response to the movements of Venezuelans. Our National Refugee Committee has recently decided to apply to Venezuelan asylum-seekers the legal definition inspired by the 1984 Cartagena Declaration, which will allow for a more expedite process of status determination. The recognition of the refugee status will grant Venezuelans all the safeguards enshrined in international and national law, beyond all the rights and protection they already enjoy as asylum-seekers on Brazil.

In our reception efforts, moreover, we have been paying special attention to the needs of the most vulnerable, including children and persons with disabilities. Culture-sensitive assistance, including specific shelters, is provided to indigenous people. With the support of IOM, the Brazilian Government has launched a Human Rights Guide, in Spanish, to familiarize Venezuelans with their rights under the Brazilian legislation and refer them to the relevant services.

We appreciate UNHCR's support to the strengthening of national asylum systems. The growing flows of asylum seekers, all around the world, require additional dedicated capacity and innovative

approaches. It is important, nonetheless, that measures to adapt asylum systems to large movements of refugees are tailored to each particular situation.

In Brazil, refugees enjoy free access to education, health and social assistance services. UNHCR's report show progress, in many host countries, in the inclusion of refugees in national systems. This represents, however, only one side of the equation. The capacity of some countries to provide quality services to both refugees and their own population is severely overstretched. Further progress hinges decisively on strengthened international cooperation.

The promotion of durable solutions is also crucial, not only as a means for responsibility-sharing, but also in terms of protection and self-reliance. We would like to strongly encourage UNHCR and its partners to ensure the continuation of the Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Mechanism (ERCM), as a key instrument to accomplish the 3-Year Resettlement Strategy. For the first time ever, Brazil has allocated public funds for resettlement, which has already led to the resettlement of vulnerable families from Central America. But the structuring of sustainable resettlement programmes is a long-term process that can greatly benefit from the continued support of UNHCR and IOM.

Thank you.