

**Statement by H.E. Mr. M Shameem Ahsan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh, at the General debate of the 68<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee Meeting of the UNHCR, Geneva, 3 October 2017.**

(Time slot: five minutes, total words: 884)

Thank you Mme Chair.

Let me begin by congratulating you, for your proactive leadership at the Executive Committee over the last one-year. We also thank the High Commissioner for his opening statement and the UNHCR for yesterday's special segment on CRRF. Indeed, it helped further understanding on essential components of a "Programme of Action" that would be an integral part of the GCR. One of the key objectives of the CRRF has been to ease the pressure through burden sharing on host countries, particularly, the developing countries which continue to host the absolute majority of the global refugee population. And it is important that the CRRF effectively stipulate ways and means of translating burden-sharing principles into concrete deliverables. We also believe that protracted refugee situations need to be given due consideration in the process of taking more countries under the CRRF umbrella.

Mme Chair,

The UNHCR and other relevant international organizations should work to ensure international protection for vulnerable population in large scale mixed flows. This can be achieved only through greater synergy in delivering an adequate response to support host countries, strengthened international solidarity and responsibility-sharing. States need to work together to address the humanitarian and protection dimensions of large movements as well as to address the root causes and drivers of displacement, to improve protection conditions and to create safer and more orderly ways of securing long-term solutions. In case of climate change and natural disaster induced displacements, the Nansen Protection Agenda can be a good basis of provisions to be included in the Global Compacts. A human rights based approach is vitally important to ensure addressing all existing protection gaps for migrants, refugees and all other displaced persons in vulnerable situation. We also underscore that enhancing emergency response capacity and empowerment of refugees and displaced population as well as ensuring socio-economic development of the host societies are important undertakings that we collectively must work on.

Mme Chair,

As we speak, an unparalleled humanitarian tragedy continues to unfold in our region - an enormous exodus of forcibly displaced Rohingya population. In fact half a million of them entered Bangladesh from Myanmar in five weeks since 25 August 2017. This has raised the total number of displaced Rohingya population in Bangladesh to more than 900 thousand. To international media, this forced migration is "the quickest exodus from a single country since the Rwandan genocide in 1994". For a resource constrained and populous LDC like Bangladesh, this huge influx has created enormous socio-economic and demographic pressure. Despite this, and not being a signatory to the 1951 Convention, we have given shelter to these helpless, stateless population, solely on humanitarian consideration. A

humanitarian appeal for US dollar 200 million has already been announced by the UN for these newly displaced population's subsistence for next six months.

Mme Chair,

We take this occasion to call upon everyone to come forward to provide much needed support for these persecuted, destitute, forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals. For them, the Government of Bangladesh, in close coordination with UNHCR, IOM, WFP, ICRC and other international organizations, is conducting a massive humanitarian relief operation. Sufficient land has also been allocated for building new shelters and biometric registration of all entrants has also started.

Mr. Chair,

While we do our bit, a sustainable solution must be achieved so that they voluntarily return to their ancestral homes in Myanmar with safety and dignity. The 1982 citizenship Law created statelessness stripping the Rohingyas off their Myanmar citizenship despite the fact that they have been living there for hundreds of years. Rightly identified, the Kofi Annan Commission has recommended that this law should be reviewed so that the Rohingya population can be given back their citizenship. For this, the UN and international community must remain focused on the problem in the Rakhine State in Myanmar. They should exert pressure so that this root cause, along with other discrimination towards the Rohingya population including lack of access to health, education and other basic services as well as lack of mobility are effectively addressed. In her address to the 72<sup>nd</sup> UNGA, Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh, outlined a five-point solution to the crisis. This includes i) unconditional, immediate and permanent cessation of violence and ethnic cleansing by Myanmar, ii) sending a fact finding mission to Myanmar by UN Secretary General, iii) protection of all civilians, irrespective of religion and ethnicity, in Myanmar including through the creation of United Nations-supervised safe zones, iv) sustainable return of all forcibly displaced Rohingyas in Bangladesh to their homes in Myanmar and v) immediate, unconditional and full implementation of the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. We believe that this five-point formula can be an achievable roadmap for the solution of the crisis.

In conclusion, Mme Chair, we are keen to engage in the ongoing global discourse on ways and means of ensuring all necessary protection and support to refugees and other displaced population across the globe. We believe that "Leaving no one behind", the imperative of inclusive development envisaged in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, can not succeed if we fail to ensure a better future for refugees, migrants and displaced persons. We remain hopeful that the two Global Compacts would be important positive steps forward and that UNHCR will continue playing its key role in this endeavour.

Thank you.