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PERMANENT MISSION OF SWEDEN

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Geneva

## **Statement by Sweden**

### **General debate**

**67<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee  
of the High Commissioner's Programme**

Delivered by

H.E. Ambassador Daniel Blockert

Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden

to the

United Nations Office in Geneva

Geneva, 5 October, 2016

Mr Chairperson, Mr High Commissioner,

Sweden aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union.

I would like to start by commending the High Commissioner and UNHCR for their dedicated and hard work in a time of unprecedented mass displacement. The Summit on Refugees and Migrants and the adoption of the New York Declaration two weeks ago mark an important step towards finding innovative and sustainable solutions for the world's 65 million displaced persons.

The expression of solidarity with the world's displaced, and with the countries that so generously host them, permeated the event and the outcome document. To Sweden, this was a long awaited international affirmation of the need to better share responsibilities, increase co-ordination at the international level, and of jointly tackling the root causes of displacement.

We also hope that the summit sent a signal to UNHCR about the need for increased leadership, innovation and assistance to UN Member States, to help all of us live up to our obligations towards refugees and asylum-seekers.

Sweden continues to be one of UNHCR's top donors and our core contributions are un-earmarked. At the US Leaders' Summit on Refugees we pledged 17,5 million USD in financial support to the UNHCR-IOM *Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism*. Sweden will also increase the annual resettlement quota by 1 500 places next year. We hope others will follow.

Mr Chair,

Successful summits aside: the wave of people forced to flee their homes is not abating. Sadly, Syria is still symbolic of this dramatic global development, but other countries demand equal attention from the international community, including those that are battling with protracted and underfunded crises.

Women and girls are particularly vulnerable in humanitarian crises, where sexual and gender based violence continue to be widespread. We are pleased that UNHCR is a signatory to the *Call to Action on Protection from Gender Based Violence in Emergencies* – an initiative that Sweden is currently chairing – and we encourage more states and organizations to join. Addressing gender based violence implies awareness of the need not only to deal with the manifestations and consequences of violence, but also their root causes. We would like to see UNHCR do even more to prevent and respond to sexual and gender based violence.

Sweden received 35 000 asylum-seeking unaccompanied minors last year. Many of their stories are harrowing. This is part of a broader trend that presents particular challenges, and we very much welcome the focus on *Children on the Move* at this year's High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection in December.

We extend our thanks – to the UNHCR, its dedicated staff and partner organisations – for their tireless efforts at providing protection and solutions to some of the most vulnerable people in the world.

Mr Chair,

Effective and principled humanitarian action requires partnership and trust. By honoring the commitments we made in the Grand Bargain, Sweden will seek to increase UNHCR's level of flexible financing, streamline reporting demands, and support multi-year planning with multi-year financing. We know that UNHCR will honor its corresponding commitments and we welcome more information on how UNHCR's work of implementing the Grand Bargain is progressing. In particular, we encourage UNHCR to prioritize its contributions towards joint, comprehensive and cross-sectoral needs assessments, and thereby towards common and prioritized response plans that are inclusive of all crisis-affected populations.

Sweden also wishes to be a relevant and strategic partner to the UNHCR in other areas. At the 19 September summit, UNHCR received a clear mandate to lead the work on a *Comprehensive Refugee Response Plan* to deal with potential future large scale movements of displaced persons. UNHCR can count on Sweden's support through this.

Finally, Mr Chair,

We all know that there are no humanitarian solutions to the majority of today's crises. States – individually and collectively – bear the primary responsibility. At the same time, humanitarian actors can play a catalytic role in finding solutions. We want to thank you, High Commissioner, for taking the helm and we count on your strong leadership and vision for the future in these complex times.

Thank you!