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Republic of North Macedonia

Ministry of Interior

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Statement by

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Mr. Chairperson,  
High Commissioner,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by expressing my appreciation to the High Commissioner for his comprehensive introductory statement about the state of play with respect to refugees, the challenges caused by numerous conflicts resulting in large-scale displacement and forced movement of the population and protracted and emerging humanitarian crises. We highly appreciate the commitments and efforts of the UNHCR and its staff in fulfilling their everyday duties, most often in extremely difficult conditions, working to help persons in need of international assistance.

The fact that there are about 70.9 million people forcibly displaced worldwide, the highest number ever, is an alarm that should mobilize the entire international community. The latest statistics show that half of the 25.9 million refugees are people below the age of 18, who are particularly vulnerable and exposed to various risks, including human trafficking and various other forms of exploitation.

We believe that the adopted Global Compact on Refugees, as part of the international protection regime is of particular importance for the provision of relevant international assistance to refugees. The attainment of the key objectives set out in the Compact is the obligation of the entire international community. In this respect, it is necessary to reinforce the joint efforts with a view to sharing the burden and responsibilities with the countries receiving the refugees, with the aim of enabling refugees to live in

dignity and to integrate within society, as well as with the aim of creating conditions for their safe voluntary return to their countries of origin.

In this context, let me reiterate the commitment of the Republic of North Macedonia to actively working on the implementation of the Compact.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Speaking in the context of the High-Level Segment of the UNHCR Executive Committee on Statelessness, I would like to inform that the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia has recently adopted the Law on the ratification of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and sent it to the Parliament for their approval. In addition to being an issue high at the agenda of the UNHCR and the current UN Secretary General, it is as well a priority of the Government of North Macedonia as part of the Action Plan on the implementation of the SDGs and meeting the fundamental "leave no one behind" principle under Agenda 2030. We expect the Parliament to ratify the Statelessness Convention shortly.

Allow me at this point to underline the continuous support of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of North Macedonia to the process of registering persons not in possession of documents, stateless persons and persons with recognized refugee status, as well as the fact that we act accordingly upon each individual request submitted within this procedure. In cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the Ministry of Justice, the UNCHR and several NGOs, in April this year we opened a public call for all unregistered individuals to approach a Registry office and fill in a questionnaire providing basic information on themselves and their

whereabouts. Mobile teams worked on the streets to register individuals with no documents, which are now part of a separate Registry of the Citizen Registration office with an individual identification number.

The concept of "One society for everyone will not live up to its name if a single person within our country remains outside institutional care and without civil identity. Living in an era when you can find every single street on google maps it is not allowed to have people lacking a single document separating him/her from all others, providing him/her access to fundamental care and exercising fundamental rights.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the UNHCR Office in North Macedonia for the continued support to the national efforts regarding refugees and asylum seekers, and especially to the expert assistance and support provided to the Ministry of Interior.

Let me conclude by underlining the importance of international cooperation and maximizing the efforts and resources for addressing the plight of refugees all around the globe, including the most vulnerable among the people on the move - women and children, victims of human trafficking and gender based violence and people with disabilities.

Thank you.