

**GOVERNMENT OF CANADA INTERVENTION TO THE 67th SESSION OF THE
UNHCR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

GENERAL STATEMENT

Mr. Chair,

On behalf of the Canadian delegation I would like to thank the High Commissioner for his opening remarks, and to welcome him to his first Session of the UNHCR Executive Committee. We would also like to welcome our new ExCom members.

First please allow me to convey to the UNHCR Canada's wholehearted condolences for the casualties among staff members over the past year. The UNHCR is experiencing an increasingly difficult operational environment, with significant challenges to the safety and security of its personnel. Canada condemns all violations of international humanitarian law, and urge all parties to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian workers. We commend UNHCR staff for their professionalism and dedication in contributing to carry out their important work around the world in this difficult context.

In his first year as High Commissioner, Mr. Grandi has led the UNHCR in the extraordinary challenge of protecting an unprecedented 63.9 million forcibly displaced persons, among them 16.1 million refugees, half of whom are children. Among the most vulnerable, the number of unaccompanied and separated children claiming asylum has exceeded 98,000, its highest level ever.

With a sharp increase in the number of forcibly displaced persons, the gap between the needs and available resources continues to widen, and obstacles to providing protection to those who need it seem never-ending. In the face of such challenges, it is disappointing that UNHCR has received only a fraction of its \$7.3 billion global appeal for 2016. In September, UNHCR also identified funding gaps totalling more than \$59 million for support to education for refugees in 16 countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, collectively hosting 2.1 million refugee children of school-age.

UNHCR is one of Canada's most trusted and long-standing humanitarian partners and we look forward to our continued collaboration in this time of urgent and growing global needs. So far in 2016, Canada's support to UNHCR totals \$157.1 million, an 84% increase over 2015. At last month's UN High Level Meeting on Refugees and Migrants, Canada also announced multi-year institutional funding of \$37.8 million to support UNHCR's global response. We hope that this funding will help provide increased predictability and help support the agency to deliver on its strategic plan.

Mr. Chair,

We welcome the heightened global attention to refugee and displacement issues. From UNHCR's High Level Meeting on pathways for admission of Syrian refugees, to the inaugural World Humanitarian Summit, and to the UN High Level Meeting on Refugees and Migrants and the Leaders' Summit on Refugees that took place in New York only a few weeks ago, it has been an exceptional year of focus on the plight of the forcibly displaced worldwide.

The September 19th UN High Level Meeting on Refugees and Migrants was a milestone event, with world leaders reaffirming the human rights of refugees as well as agreeing to the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework.

Significant pledges in support of refugee protection and assistance were also made at US President Obama's Leaders' Summit on Refugees, co-hosted by seven countries, including Canada.

As our Prime Minister announced in New York last month, in addition to new multi-year funding to UNHCR, including in support of UNHCR's response to the crises in Iraq and Syria, Canada will increase its overall humanitarian assistance by 10 percent over the last fiscal year levels. Canada will also provide substantial support to educational initiatives, including \$20 million over the next two years to the Education Cannot Wait Fund.

Moreover, through its refugee resettlement programs, and with the assistance of the UNHCR, the Government of Canada has almost tripled the number of resettled refugees Canada will welcome in 2016 to 44,800. Our history and national identity have been shaped by generations of newcomers who have greatly contributed to Canada's development.

Canada recognizes the significant contributions refugees can make to sustainable economic growth and to building dynamic, inclusive societies. In Canada, refugees fill skills gaps and labour market shortages, address some of the challenges associated with an aging population, and draw investment from around the world, all of which strengthens the economic, social, and cultural fabric of our country.

Canada is also very pleased that ExCom has been able to reach conclusions on the themes of international cooperation and youth. We are very pleased with this development, and hope that this trend continues in coming years.

Mr. Chair,

Much has been accomplished this year, but 2016 should serve as a new launching point for stronger, coordinated international action to better the lives of the world's displaced.

Canada looks forward to working with UNHCR, ExCom members and the broader UN community to develop a strong Global Compact on Refugees that will embody the principles of international solidarity and responsibility-sharing, with a view to safeguarding the rights and dignity of refugees. It will be vital that we develop and advance an inclusive process that ensures meaningful consultations – particularly to support greater synergies between humanitarian and development actors. We also look forward to working collaboratively to implement the Grand Bargain to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian financing, and to advance the process to develop joint, coordinated and comprehensive needs assessments.

The empowerment of women and girls is not just the right thing to do, it is essential to ensure effective programming that reaches the most vulnerable. We intend to be particularly active in supporting UNHCR and amplifying its efforts in promoting inclusive education for refugees, particularly women and girls, in national education systems. Education and technical training are central to the self-sufficiency, integration, and resilience of refugee communities.

We will further engage with UNHCR to promote stronger implementation of its existing strategies on gender equality and gender-based violence, including more consistent use of sex and age disaggregated data, and mainstreaming of prevention and response to gender-based violence into UNHCR's operations.

We will also promote a “whole of society” approach to welcoming refugees. This approach has always been a critical component of Canada's resettlement program, including through our recent special initiative to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees.

Furthermore, Canada will support UNHCR in maintaining a strong focus on solutions programming, using innovative and practical approaches, and promoting the strategic use of refugee resettlement.

In closing, Mr. Chair, let me assure you of Canada's continuing and steadfast support for UNHCR as an essential agency providing protection, assistance and solutions for the world's refugees.

We are pleased to be able to work closely with partners like UNHCR to reach the world's most vulnerable people with life-saving assistance.

Thank you.