



Permanent Mission of Sweden
to the United Nations, Geneva

Statement by Sweden

H.E. Ambassador Ms Veronika Bard
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The United Nations Office in Geneva

General Debate

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Mme. Chairperson, Mr. High Commissioner, Excellences, Colleagues and Friends,

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

In a world with almost 66 million forcibly displaced, where neighbouring countries are disproportionately affected by large movements of refugees, we must seek and employ a combination of solutions. The situation is serious and the gap between available humanitarian funding and actual need is not closing. Apart from the crises that have been at the centre of attention for years, we are currently witnessing very disturbing developments in Myanmar and Bangladesh. UNHCR has an important role in Northern Rakhine with their protection mandate, as well as in response to the refugee crisis in Bangladesh together with IOM.

But there is also hope. You, Mr High Commissioner, and the dedicated staff at UNHCR, deserve our wholehearted support and praise for putting your lives at risk to deliver protection and solutions to refugees and persons of concern across the globe. We also continue seeing good examples of generosity towards refugees, solidarity and responsibility sharing and financial commitments to refugee protection and solutions.

With combined efforts, we will in a year's time have an ambitious, concrete and operationally focused Global Compact on Refugees to guide us through comprehensive responses to large scale and protracted displacement. Refugee self-reliance; livelihood opportunities; host society development; sustainable solutions to protracted situations; empowerment of women and girls; participation of displaced populations in decisions that affect their lives and an increased focus on children and education – all of this is possible if we work together.

And Sweden is contributing. We look forward to the upcoming thematic discussions and further dialogue on how responsibility-sharing can be strengthened through the CRRF. Resettlement continues to be an important way of showing solidarity with host states and contributing to solutions for persons in need.

Mr. Chair,

We are concerned about the insufficient financing provided to the UNHCR. Therefore, with the aim of further enhancing predictability and flexibility of Sweden's core contribution, the government, pending parliamentary decision on the budget bill for 2018, intends to sign a multi-year agreement with UNHCR for the coming four-year period. A multiannual core contribution agreement would confirm our commitment to the partnership with you and we expect that it would enhance ability for improved strategic work, normative consistency, highest standard of operations and efficient delivery.

For the fiscal year of 2018, the Swedish government, pending parliamentary approval in December, intends to increase the un-earmarked core support to UNHCR to 870 M SEK, or approximately 105 M USD.

This support is genuine and long-term, but comes with expectations on higher visibility for countries that provide un-earmarked funding, and demands on quality reporting and evaluation. Sweden will closely follow how UNHCR delivers based on its own mandate. We expect UNHCR to work towards a culture of transparency, risk awareness and aversion to corruption. And to keep contributing to the humanitarian response system as a whole - through the IASC, Humanitarian Country Teams, its cluster responsibilities and Grand Bargain commitments.

We also expect that the different needs and vulnerabilities of women, men, boys and girls are properly assessed and responded to. Gender disaggregated data is crucial to achieve both this and the capacity to respond to needs of different groups. Sexual and gender based violence continues to be widespread posing protection threats to those already vulnerable. While much has been achieved during the last years, we still have a long way to go to ensure that we do our outmost to prevent and respond to SGBV from the earliest stage of a crisis. Sweden welcomes the process of updating the Minimum Initial Service Package and the Inter-agency Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings. This is an important step forward in our continuous efforts to stand up for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

Finally, Mr. Chair,

Our partnership has lasted since 1954 when Sweden signed the Refugee convention. Sweden was one of the countries that initiated the conclusions on international protection. We have been in the core-group for the annual UNHCR Omnibus-resolution for decades. We strongly advocate for durable solutions for refugees and encourage States to contribute to resettlement in cooperation with UNHCR, as a safe and legal way to protection and an act of solidarity and responsibility sharing. We will continue to support UNHCR as we – together - face the challenges ahead.

Thank you!