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UNHCR ExCom October 2020. General Debate. Norway. Delivered by Deputy Foreign Minister Marianne Hagen.

Chair,

It is a top priority for Norway to promote a comprehensive approach to the protection of refugees and other displaced people.

Norway is a strong supporter of the Global Compact on Refugees. In the face of the extraordinary challenges posed by COVID-19, it is even more important that we remain committed to the Compact and work to promote inclusive refugee policies and improve international burden and responsibility sharing.

The first Global Refugee Forum was a milestone for the international community in this area. If we are to make an impact on the ground, we all need to deliver on the commitments we made in December last year. Norway is working with host states, UNHCR and other partners to fulfil the pledges made relating to energy, under UNHCR's Clean Energy Challenge. We are also working with partners on implementing pledges in support of education and the search for lasting solutions.

Many refugee situations are protracted, and it is important to work to both improve protection and find durable solutions. Norway supports UNHCR's three-year strategy on resettlement and encourages more member states to offer resettlement places for refugees.

There is currently a record number of internally displaced people worldwide. The High-level Panel on Internal Displacement provides a unique opportunity to galvanise international support for the efforts to find solutions to situations of internal displacement.

We are grateful to all of the states that have joined us in supporting the Panel. And we commend UNHCR for the increased efforts to address situations of internal displacement.

Norway also supports UNHCR's Global Action Plan to End Statelessness. We commend the member states that have taken steps to prevent and resolve this problem. We also urge states that have not yet done so to take action to end statelessness by 2024.

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Norway commends UNHCR for its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially its commitment to 'stay and deliver'. We are aware of the operational challenges you are facing, as a result of the crisis. Safeguarding the health and welfare of personnel must be a key priority. And we expect you to keep up the important work to prevent and react to integrity violations and misconduct.

Norway is concerned about the humanitarian and the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic. The increased prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence is alarming. We urge UNHCR to spare no efforts in preventing SGBV and in supporting survivors. In particular, we must ensure the protection of children. Girls are especially at risk of being forced into marriage and dropping out of school.

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Refugees can be a resource for their new home countries if they are given the chance to create a new future for themselves and their families. Norway supports initiatives that seek to improve refugees' access to jobs and livelihoods, such as the development of a global UNESCO Qualifications Passport for Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants.

At the national level, we have strengthened our integration-related efforts, implementing measures in response to COVID-19 that target the refugee and immigrant populations.

To safeguard these inclusive policies and a credible, well-functioning asylum system, we also need a good framework in place for the return of those who are not in need of international protection.

I want to reiterate that Norway will continue to be a strong supporter of UNHCR and its mandate. Protection of civilians, including refugees and internally displaced persons will be given a high priority in our work as a member of the UN Security Council.

We remain committed to providing un-earmarked and flexible funding to facilitate the provision of well-coordinated, rapid and effective assistance to persons of concern to UNHCR, in line with our commitment to the Grand Bargain.

In conclusion, I want to extend my congratulations to Ms. Mayerlin Vergara Perez, this year's winner of the Nansen Refugee Award, for her work helping young survivors of sexual violence, many of them refugee. I

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encourage all to join the virtual screening of the award ceremony tonight.

Thank you.