

Statement

Mr. Vera Urairat, Deputy Secretary-General,

Office of the National Security Council

General Debate, 67th UNHCR Executive Committee

Tuesday 4 October 2016, approximately at 11.00 hrs. (5 minutes)

**Thank you Mr. Chairman,
High Commissioner,
Distinguished Delegates,**

1. On behalf of the Thai Delegation, allow me first to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your skillful chairmanship of the Executive Committee over the past year. With your many achievements thus far, we are confident that you will lead this meeting to fruitful results.
2. The Thai delegation would also like to congratulate His Excellency Filippo Grandi for assuming the High Commissioner position of UNHCR. Your Excellency's experience and leadership is ever crucial in time of unprecedented migration crisis today.
3. Migration and forced displacement crisis has reached its peak since World War II. This ExCom meeting can never be timelier as it follows the UN Summit on Refugees and Migrants and President Obama's Leaders' Summit on Refugees in New York. The two Summits highlighted the global political will and commitment to join collective efforts in addressing this issue and serve as the bases to build our efforts on in the future.
4. Thailand was honoured to participate in these meetings, and resonated key messages of these Summits.
5. **Firstly**, today's crisis is global in nature, and requires a **global response**, on the principle of **equitable international burden sharing**. We need to ensure that host countries, 85 per cent of which are low-middle income countries, receive additional funding and assistance, to enable them to provide appropriate and adequate protection to those in need.
6. Besides humanitarian, development assistance should be provided to host countries and countries of origin, to ensure that the displaced can contribute to the communities of the host countries as well as when they return home.
7. Besides development, it is also essential to end violence and discrimination, which are the major root causes that push people to flee.
8. To address all this, Thailand calls the international community, especially the country of destination, to do more. Other actors, including but not limited to the private sector, civil society, should plug in their assistance and fill the gap that some time states have certain limitation.

9. **Secondly**, there is the need for **global governance** and **better coordinated approach** amongst countries of origin, transit and destination in order to improve predictability of migration and be able to better respond to the emergency situation so that no one's life will be lost.
10. Thailand's experiences in hosting two Special Meetings on Irregular Migration as responses to the crisis in the Indian Ocean last year taught us that immediate response is certainly necessary, but it has to be organised and systematic, and not ad-hoc in nature.
11. The global governance will enhance the global ability to allocate our limited resources more efficiently in providing protection to those who genuinely need it.
12. And **thirdly**, the UN Summit significantly tasked UNHCR to work on the **Global Compact for comprehensive refugee response framework**, which entails organised responses in the immediate, short, and long-terms. Thailand is looking forward to working closely with UNHCR on this matter.
13. At present, Thailand is still hosting over 103,000 **displaced persons from Myanmar** in the 9 temporary shelters along the borders. Thailand appreciates UNHCR, NGOs, donor countries, and other relevant partners for joining our efforts in looking after these groups for over 3 decades. Thailand would like these important actors to continue on this approach.
14. While the opportunities to return home for refugees around the world are waning, Thailand is pleased to share that we have been working very closely with Myanmar to prepare for the **voluntary return** of these displaced persons. The first pilot group is already scheduled to return in the very near future. Both sides agreed to ensure that the return will be carried out under the principles of safety, voluntariness, dignity and sustainability.
15. We look forward to UNHCR's **strong support** for this **bilateral initiative**. At the same time, we still count on UNHCR and resettlement partners to continue keeping resettlement as another long-term solution for these people.
16. Thailand also continues to promote **development** alongside humanitarian assistance. Thailand continues to work with Myanmar to enhance social-economic development especially in areas of return, to ensure the returnees' basic human rights and enable them to live sustainably and contribute to their motherland in the long run.
17. In closing, Thailand reaffirms our commitment to cooperate with UNHCR and other relevant partners on enhancing prevention, providing humanitarian assistance, and sorting out solutions for those who have been forced to flee.
18. Thank you.

* * * *

- Draft -
Intervention
67th UNHCR Executive Committee, Agenda 4(a) International Protection
Wednesday 5 October 2016, 15.00-18.00 hours OR
Thursday 6 October 2016, 10.00-13.00 hours

**Mr. Chairperson,
High Commissioner,
Distinguished Delegates,**

1. Thailand thanks the UNHCR for the Note on International Protection. We wish to address two issues.
2. **Firstly**, it is the utmost priority to save lives. There is a need for a global coordinated approach amongst countries of origin, transit and destination in order to improve predictability of migration and allocation of resources to better save lives and aid those in need.
3. The mixed nature of movements also creates a challenge for receiving countries to accord protection to those who genuinely need it. Thailand acknowledges the importance of a fair and efficient asylum system to cope with such challenge.
4. Thailand is committed to studying the possibility of developing **screening mechanism** in accordance with international standards to distinguish those in need of protection from those who migrate for other reasons. We are also drafting a **new law** to enact the principle of **non-refoulement** more effectively.
5. **Secondly**, people on the move are at risk of falling prey to transnational criminal networks. Thailand is committed to providing prompt protection to these vulnerable people, with particular attention to women and children, who are victims of trafficking and smuggling networks.
6. We are also determined to strengthen law enforcement cooperation at the regional level and beyond to crack down these criminal networks. Thailand's past experience shows that stricter law enforcement and regional law enforcement cooperation has led to 95 percent reduction of movement of irregular migrants in the Indian Ocean.
7. **Finally**, Thailand is committed to preventing and ending statelessness. Thailand fully supports UNHCR's 'IBelong'

Campaign, and is pleased to have an active role as one of the Friends to this Campaign.

8. Thailand recognises that statelessness is one of the root causes and possible consequences of forced displacement. Thailand has consistently implemented various measures to provide stateless population access to citizenship application process. We are also working hand in hand with UNHCR in issuing birth certificates to all children of displaced persons currently residing in temporary shelters along the western borders. This is to prevent these children from becoming stateless once returned to their homeland.
9. Thank you.

* * * *