Swedish Statement on International Protection, ExCom 5 October 2017

Mme Chair, Honourable members of the panel, Excellencies, Colleagues,

I would first of all like to thank Assistant High Commissioner for the presentation and UNHCR for the note on international protection. The note reflects the immensely important work undertaken by UNHCR and its partners and speaks to the challenges ahead.

UNHCR plays a crucial role in coordination of refugee responses worldwide. Furthermore, Sweden is a strong supporter of the protection cluster and UNHCR's role as cluster lead, and we encourage UNHCR to continue to allocate resources to ensure effective coordination. Sweden commits to continued funding of protection activities.

As we know, it is the major host countries neighboring conflict that continue to bear the brunt of large-scale and protracted refugee situations. Being a host country ourselves, we have had a sense of the challenges linked to large numbers of displaced persons arriving to our territory. A relatively small country like Sweden received more than 160 000 asylum seekers in 2015. Our response has involved action at both national and international levels. In 2016, 71 500 asylum seekers were granted residence permits in Sweden, of a total of 112 000 asylum decisions. In 2016 approximately 40 000 residence permits were issued to family members of residents in Sweden.

Based on our experiences, and on our commitment to the principle of international solidarity, we join large host countries and other stakeholders in calling for increased responsibility sharing.

We are also staying true to our promises. In connection with the Leaders' Summit on Refugees on 20 September last year, we pledged to expand our national resettlement program from 3400 quota places this year to 5000 places before the end of 2018. We continue to take an active role in the Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism (ERCM), EU-FRANK and in Core Groups for increased resettlement.

Mme Chair,

You can count on Sweden to lead by good example. But perhaps more now than ever before, we need to be able to count on the global community to assume a collective responsibility for refugees, because the challenges are daunting.

Sexual and Gender Based Violence in situations of displacement is one such challenge related to protection. Sweden has specifically supported UNHCR's work to prevent and respond to SGBV and we would like to thank UNHCR for its commitment in this area. We would like to encourage UNHCR to make the best possible use of the conclusions from the forthcoming evaluation of the *Strategy on SGBV prevention and response* for continued programming.

Another protection challenge – unfortunately very topical – is statelessness. Avoiding statelessness is a fundamental principle of Swedish citizenship legislation and Sweden has ratified both the 1954 UN Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Several amendments to the Swedish Citizenship Act that entered into force on 1 April 2015, aim to further strengthen the protection

against statelessness, among other things by making it easier for stateless children and young people to acquire Swedish citizenship.

A third protection challenge, a truly daunting one, is the protection of children – unaccompanied, separated, traumatized. Sweden has special insights in this area and is pleased to share our experiences.

Mme Chair,

Together we need to be ambitious in strengthening protection and combining traditional and innovative solutions to the current challenges, but also in focusing harder on root causes and drivers of displacement. It is time to think strategically around the concept of global solidarity and equitable burden- and responsibility sharing. We are convinced of the potential of the CRRF and the Global Compact for Refugees to help us tackle necessary challenges and respond to the call for increased responsibility sharing for refugees. We look forward to continuing to contribute to the process.

Thank you.