



72nd Session of UNHCR Executive Committee

General Debate: Statement by H.E. Mr. Md. Mustafizur Rahman, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh (06 October 2021)

**Mr. Vice Chair,
High Commissioner Mr. Grandi
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,**

We thank the High Commissioner for his insightful opening remarks.

We are concerned that the refugee situation continues to deteriorate around the world. The developing countries continue to bear the major share of the global refugee burden. The protracted refugee situation is seriously undermining the host countries' efforts towards development and prosperity. Their precarity has further compounded by the unprecedented onslaught of COVID-19 pandemic. In such a situation, enhanced international cooperation and assistance to refugees, forcibly displaced persons and their host communities is an absolute necessity. This can only be possible through collective efforts, in full respect to the spirit of international solidarity and the principle of burden- and responsibility- sharing.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of refugees, forcibly displaced people and their host communities more than ever before. Necessity of creating appropriate pathways for durable solutions is more acutely felt in the current context. We underline a solution-oriented comprehensive approach within the mandate of UNHCR, including through strengthened efforts

towards addressing root causes and creating conducive environment in countries of origin for sustainable and voluntary return.

Regrettably, it appears to be that the durable solution continues to remain the least attentive issue in UNHCR's programme of work. We take note of the High Commissioner's announcement to renew five strategic directions for another five years. We underline that UNHCR's work must contribute to the greater interest of the persons of its concern. It is essential that the organization plays an effective role for finding durable solutions, in particular through voluntary repatriation.

Mr. Vice Chair,

Bangladesh has been hosting over a million forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals- the Rohingyas. Despite many challenges and constraints of our own, we are providing Rohingyas with necessary humanitarian assistance. Our efforts have remained uninterrupted even at a time when we are struggling challenges of COVID-19 pandemic. Not to mention, we have included Rohingyas in our national vaccination programme. It is a matter of concern as we have seen continued funding gap in the UN's humanitarian response - the Joint Response Plan. Obviously, this puts additional burden on shoulder on top of what we are already undertaking.

Mr. Vice Chair,

Prolonged stay of the Rohingya in Cox's Bazar has already endangered the social, environmental and security situation in the region. Let me reiterate that Rohingya crisis is created by Myanmar and its solution lies in Myanmar. Bangladesh has done everything possible on its part. However, during the last four years, at our sheer frustration, I have to inform that not a single Rohingya

could return because of Myanmar's non-compliance to bilateral agreement and its international commitment.

Sadly, the Rohingya issue became a victim of ongoing political turmoil in Myanmar. It appears that the international community has shifted its attention from the Rohingya crisis to the current political crisis in Myanmar. This approach of pushing the Rohingya crisis at the back burner will embolden the perpetrators and belittle the effort to ensure justice to this community. We call on the international community to play a proactive role and take meaningful action for safe, voluntary and dignified return of the Rohingya from Bangladesh to Myanmar. We specifically urge UNHCR to step up its engagements and activities in Rakhine State in order to create a conducive environment for repatriation there.

To conclude, Mr. Vice Chair, we would like to register our concern at the chronic imbalances in equitable geographical representation at different professional levels in UNHCR. We request the High Commissioner to take effective step to improve the situation through recruiting more international staff from the underrepresented countries.

I thank you.
