



**Statement by Nepal during the General Debate, 72nd Session of the
Executive Committee of the UNHCR**

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Mr. Vice President

Mr. High Commissioner,

Nepal appreciates the High Commissioner for his comprehensive statement highlighting multiple crisis facing the world due to the COVID-19 pandemic, climate emergency and conflicts, among others. These compounding challenges have intensified the global poverty, induced forced displacement, and created humanitarian and refugee crisis in the world.

We appreciate the able leadership of the High Commissioner to the organization in addressing the humanitarian challenges during these trying times. We commend UNHCR's continued hard work and commitment to protecting and assisting refugees over the past 70 years.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have deepened the poverty, widened inequalities, and reversed our hard-earned achievements. The uneven access to vaccination has exposed the inequality gaps among countries.

The vulnerable groups including the refugees and displaced persons have faced additional challenges in the wake of the pandemic. We commend the initiatives of UNHCR for their protection and inclusion in the response plans including the access to vaccination.

We call for enhanced international cooperation and solidarity to address the plight of refugees and other vulnerable groups during these challenging times. As we know that no one is safe until everybody is safe, the refugees, displaced and other

vulnerable groups should be effectively included in the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts including the timely and equitable access to vaccination.

We also take encouraging note of the UNHCR's initiative of Strategic Framework on Climate Action in response to the global climate emergency.

Mr. Vice President,

As the pandemic hit Nepal, the Government implemented COVID-19 preparedness and response plan that also covered the refugee population in a spirit of leaving no one behind. Nepal is the first country in the Asia-pacific region to inoculate COVID-19 vaccines to the refugees in its national vaccination campaign. The first jabs were administered to the Bhutanese refugees in the camps in eastern Nepal.

We would also like to underscore that Nepal as a mountainous and agricultural country has been facing the disproportionate impacts of Climate change such as, loss of biodiversity, food scarcity due to loss in agricultural productivity, draughts, landslides, and other natural disasters. In this respect, we call on the international community for the genuine efforts towards addressing the vulnerabilities of countries in special situation, in particular the LDCs, through climate resilient actions. Nepal looks forward to engaging constructively with the international community during the upcoming CoP26 in Glasgow.

Mr. Vice President

Nepal has been providing shelter for thousands of Bhutanese refugees for decades on humanitarian grounds despite our limited resources, difficult domestic situation and pressing national challenges.

Our sincere efforts to finding the durable solution to the problem of Bhutanese refugees have produced no outcome due to the continued rigidity and non-implementation of the agreed decisions by the Bhutanese side. This refugee problem has become one of the most protracted ones. Nepal has made, in every relevant forum, its repeated call for the resumption of the stalled process and the repatriation of all remaining refugees to Bhutan in safety and with dignity on a voluntary basis, which we regard as the only durable solution.

Nepal commends the generosity of the Core Group of Countries in the third-country resettlement of the Bhutanese refugees. Since most of the Bhutanese refugees have resettled in third countries, a small number, most of them the

elderly, who have preferred only the option of repatriation, are desperately waiting for return to their homeland.

We would also like to underscore that the burdens to refugee-hosting developing countries, particularly LDCs, go beyond their very limited capacity. Their situation has further exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We call upon the international community to act timely and comprehensively for protecting refugees' right to return to their homeland and ensuring their effective rehabilitation under all circumstances.

To conclude, Nepal commends UNHCR's support and care to the refugees in Nepal. We are also thankful to the donor community and other agencies for their continued support in the protection and care of the refugee population.

Thank you.