

PLENARY

**U.S. Delegation Statement
69th Session of the UNHCR Executive Committee
Delivered by Mark Cassayre, Chargé d’Affaires, a.i., U.S. Mission to the
United Nations and Other International Organizations
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Madame Chair,

I am very pleased to be here today. I would like to focus my remarks on three issues that drive our current engagement in the international humanitarian response to refugees.

First, our National Security Strategy states that the United States will continue to lead the world in humanitarian assistance and that we will provide this generous assistance as close to refugees’ homes as possible in order to meet their needs until they can return home safely, voluntarily, and with dignity. To this commitment, the United States remains the largest single donor of humanitarian assistance worldwide. As of last week, in Fiscal Year 2018, we have provided nearly \$1.2 billion in humanitarian assistance for the Syria crisis, nearly \$545 million for the South Sudan regional humanitarian response, and nearly \$420 million in humanitarian assistance in the Lake Chad Basin region. The United States has also provided more than \$95 million since 2017 in life-saving assistance to Venezuelans who have fled their homes and nearly \$389 million for those

impacted by violence in Rakhine State. To UNHCR alone, we provided more than \$1.5 billion in Fiscal Year 2018.

Second, our National Security Strategy also states that “no nation can unilaterally alleviate all human suffering.” As Secretary of State Pompeo recently stated, “The best way to help most people is to promote burden sharing with partners and allies.” To this end, we are grateful of the efforts of other countries to take on additional responsibilities for those in need of protection. Examples of countries stepping up to the challenge are evident on almost every continent. In the Western Hemisphere, the Government of Costa Rica recently developed a two-year framework for protection and solutions for the refugees they host that includes access to government-run social welfare programs, entrepreneurship opportunities, and support. We applaud the many countries throughout Latin America who have generously opened their doors to the unprecedented outflow of more than two million Venezuelans – many of whom have applied for asylum or other legal status that provides them access to invaluable services. In Africa, Ethiopia is finalizing a legally-binding proclamation to expand refugees’ access to work, education, and other basic services, and recently allowed refugees to receive vital documents including birth, marriage, death, and divorce certificates. In the Middle East, the Government of Jordan has committed to allowing all children access to public education and, since 2016, has issued more than 87,000 formal work permits to

Syrian refugees. In Turkey, nearly four million refugees have access to free healthcare, legal work, and education, with more than 600,000 Syrian refugee children enrolled in school. In Asia, Thailand has granted nationality to more than 30,000 stateless persons, which has allowed these individuals access to formal education and work. And in Pakistan, we commend the Government of Pakistan for beginning a national discussion on offering citizenship to refugees born there. To these governments and others who are applying the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, we commend your efforts to improve the lives of refugees and the communities that are hosting them.

To further bolster the efforts of refugee-hosting governments that are shouldering a significant burden, the United States is supporting concessional financing schemes to build schools and hospitals, expand and upgrade water and sewer systems, and create job opportunities. We continue to support the World Bank's two new facilities in its Global Crisis Response Platform to make investments for long-term solutions that benefit refugees and host communities.

Third, to maximize the impact of our collective humanitarian efforts, we support the humanitarian reform commitments made by donors and humanitarian agencies alike under the Grand Bargain to increase efficiency, transparency, accountability and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. However, we seek more tangible, measurable progress and prioritization from our partners, and we

remain committed to doing the same in our own ranks. We recognize UNHCR's progress in building local partner capacity and creating efficiencies in partnership-management alongside UN sister agencies. Moreover, we recognize UNHCR's solid reporting on its work to improve accountability to affected populations.

However, efforts to improve the transparency of reporting and measurement of progress on the Grand Bargain, especially those regarding joint needs assessments that underpin prioritized response plans and appeals and reduced duplication and management costs, are urgently needed. UNHCR Country Representatives should be held accountable for improving the quality of needs assessments, openly sharing data and information, and actively engaging in joint, inter-sectoral needs analyses.

In closing, we thank the staff of UNHCR for their contributions to the cause we all serve: the protection of refugees and the displaced – and the promotion of the solutions that allow them to lead their lives in freedom and with dignity.

Thank you, Madame Chair.