

UNHCR ExCom 2018

Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands at the 69th session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme (1-5 October 2018)

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you, [Madam Chair/Mr Chairman]. And thank you, High Commissioner Grandi.

[Introduction – importance of the Global Compact]

The finalisation of the consultations on the Global Compact on Refugees earlier this year demonstrates the joint commitment of the entire international community to step up our efforts on burden-sharing. We have taken good note of – and fully support – the High Commissioner's clear recommendation to welcome and strongly endorse the Compact. We would like to express gratitude to the outstanding work done by Assistant High Commissioner Türk and his team.

[Madam Chair/Mr Chairman], We have already heard many examples of the enormous task that has fallen to countries hosting large numbers of refugees. We wholeheartedly commend these countries – including in the framework of the CRRF - and will continue to support them. Let me underline a few concrete examples of such support.

[New resources]

Strengthening reception and protection in support of host countries is a key component of our foreign policy. The

government has dedicated €128 million annually – in addition to existing humanitarian and development funding – for this goal in the years ahead. We intend to step up support for greater access to education, greater access to services, protection for the most vulnerable, and the creation of employment opportunities for both refugees and their host communities.

[Partnership]

In line with the Compact's comprehensive approach, we recently initiated a partnership with UNHCR, IFC, ILO, UNICEF and the World Bank – with a total value of €100 million annually – to support a development-based approach to forced displacement.

[Resettlement]

[Madam Chair/Mr Chairman],

The Netherlands remains committed to helping meet global resettlement needs. As of this year, we increased our annual quota from 500 to 750, in addition to resettlement commitments in the framework of EU agreements. We reiterate our call to other states to start programmes of their own, or to expand existing programmes.

[UNHCR – institutional matters]

[Madam Chair/Mr Chairman], let me now turn to a few institutional matters.

[Unearmarked contributions]

We note that the funding gap between demand on the ground and available funds continues to grow. We also note that, last year, only 17 per cent of contributions to UNHCR were unrestricted. We urge states to support UNHCR with unearmarked contributions, thereby providing much-needed flexibility.

[OIOS internal audit]

We note that the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) has highlighted recurring control weakness related to the monitoring of projects implemented by partners. We stress the need for UNHCR management to address the root causes of these weaknesses.

[Transparency / IATI]

We welcome UNHCR's decision to publish data in accordance with the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standard – an important commitment in the context of the Grand Bargain. We are convinced of IATI's value and look forward to continued discussions with UNHCR on this matter.

[PSEA/SH]

The Netherlands greatly appreciates UNHCR's proactive stance on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (PSEA/SH). We support UNHCR's zero tolerance policy and the senior management's strong commitment. We will closely follow the implementation of the strategy and action plan, and we urge

that sufficient capacity be made available in the Inspector General's Office to address such matters.

[Mental health in humanitarian settings]

[Madam Chair/Mr Chairman],

A holistic refugee response should include mental health and psychosocial support. We encourage UNHCR to play an active role in the integration of mental health and psychosocial support into all sectors.

[Coordination with IOM]

[Madam Chair/Mr Chairman],

The start of Mr Vitorino as new DG of IOM is a good opportunity for UNHCR and IOM to comprehensively address coordination arrangements, especially in the context of mixed migration.

[Country situations: Myanmar/Bangladesh, Libya, Syria, Venezuela]

[Madam Chair/Mr Chairman], before closing, allow me to highlight our views on a number of specific refugee situations.

We are deeply grateful to the people and government of Bangladesh for hosting almost a million **Rohingya refugees**. We continue to call on Myanmar to grant full access to all parts of the country, and urge that further improvements be made to the coordination and cooperation among agencies in Bangladesh. We

call for a special focus on the challenges faced by Rohingya women and girls, many of whom have experienced sexual violence. Any return should take place in a safe, voluntary, and sustainable manner.

The humanitarian crisis in **Syria** remains extremely alarming, with ever-increasing pressure on Syria's neighbours. With the situation on the ground still extremely volatile, we do not yet see a viable scenario for return, which must always be safe, voluntary and dignified. We stand firmly behind UNHCR's protection thresholds, and call for their independent assessment and monitoring. For such monitoring efforts to be possible, access within Syria needs to improve significantly.

We appreciate the important role UNHCR fulfils in **Libya**, under very difficult circumstances. Conditions at the detention centres are still alarming. In that light we are pleased that the gathering and departure centre in Tripoli is now ready for use. We collectively need to step up efforts in the context of humanitarian evacuation and resettlement from Libya.

Venezuela's deepening economic and humanitarian crisis puts neighbouring countries, including the Caribbean parts of our Kingdom, under enormous strain. We appreciate UNHCR's support for the whole region, as well as initiatives that seek to build a regional approach.

Thank you, [Madam Chair/Mr Chairman].