

69th session of the UNHCR Executive Committee, October 1-5, 2018, Geneva
Statement by the Government of Finland – FINAL DRAFT

1. Madam Chair, High Commissioner, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. Finland fully aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

2. Today the role and expertise of the UNHCR is more crucial than ever. Let me express the appreciation of the Government of Finland for the work of the Office and its staff worldwide. We would also like to commend host countries that have shown solidarity even in the most challenging circumstances.

3. Together with the UNHCR, the international community must find better ways to ensure the protection of refugees. We welcome the progress of the **Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework** and its application in more than 15 states. We hope to see other positive developments after the enactment of the **Global Compact on Refugees** and look forward to its robust implementation in line with the goals of Agenda 2030.

4. A key component of the Global Compact is to widen our **partnerships**. We commend the UNHCR for its cooperation with actors such as the World Bank. The role of the **private sector**, especially at local level, needs to be further enhanced as a source of income, employment and skills development. Innovative methods are needed to support the sector in terms of both capacity and equity. To do this, diaspora business organizations can play an important role. Similarly, **civil society** has a crucial role in supporting refugees and their host communities. The participation of refugees themselves in decision-making has to be encouraged.

5. In crises, we must not forget the most **vulnerable**, who often face multiple barriers in accessing protection. We appreciate the application of the UNHCR's **Global Strategic Priorities**, especially the increase of **female** leadership in 24 situations of displacement. Another important step is that more than 56,000 **stateless** people acquired a nationality last year. The inclusion of **persons with disabilities** in all humanitarian action is also paramount. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee's guidelines on Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Action will be finalized soon. We must all be committed to their implementation.

6. One of the Strategic Priorities is to maintain or increase the percentage of people submitted for **resettlement**. While the number of resettlement places is declining globally, we welcome the expansion of the pool of resettlement countries. In Finland, we have a decades-long tradition of resettling refugees within our quota system, including emergency and urgent cases. We emphasize the resettlement of persons in vulnerable situations, such as families with children and single women.

7. An important part of providing protection to refugees is to maintain **asylum systems** and the universal right to seek asylum. Immediate access to health services and social activities for asylum-seeking children is important and granted in Finland. Within the EU, Finland contributes to the reform of the Common European Asylum System.

8. As for **integration**, Finland works towards a faster employment process by connecting individuals with companies looking for employees. In addition to benefiting refugees and other immigrants, the programme brings innovations and international experience to the Finnish marketplace. To improve **integration training**, new legislation ensures better access to training courses also for those currently unemployed. This includes parents – often women – caring for their children at home. Overall, a multi-stakeholder and comprehensive approach, including community volunteers, is key for successful integration.

Mr. High Commissioner,

9. As humanitarian needs continue to grow, we need to expand our donor base. We welcome new donors and commend those that have increased their contributions.

10. Finland will continue to support the UNHCR financially through multiyear agreements. In line with our joint **Grand Bargain** commitments, a third of our contribution is unearmarked. As the percentage of unearmarked contributions has recently decreased, we encourage all donors to provide more flexible funding. This would help the UNHCR to fulfill its vital role in assisting and protecting those most in need.

Thank you.