

**MIKTA Joint Statement**

*for General Debate, Plenary Session of the 71<sup>st</sup> UNHCR Executive Committee*

**11:00-11:07, 5 October 2020 (provisional)**

765 words (about 7 minutes)

Mr. Chair,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the MIKTA countries—Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Turkey, and Australia. MIKTA countries are strongly committed to sharing responsibility for refugee responses - as most of us are party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its protocol.

Before I begin, let me express our sincere appreciation to the Chair and UNHCR for organizing this first-ever hybrid meeting of the 71<sup>st</sup> ExCom plenary session. We also thank the High Commissioner for his insightful remarks.

Mr. Chair,

In the past years, we have talked about “the worst-scale, protracted humanitarian crises.” Forced displacement has become a major driver of human suffering. At this rate, we would not be able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) unless we can better address forced displacement and its consequences.

This year marks many meaningful milestones: the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN, the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UNHCR, and the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the SDGs. Unfortunately, however, the COVID-19 pandemic is taking a heavy toll on humanity, disrupting many lives across the globe. It is a chilling reminder that “nobody is safe until everyone is safe.”

In this regard, Mr. Chair, allow me to highlight some points that are particularly important to this group.

- First, all humanitarian assistance should be delivered under the principles of humanity, neutrality, and impartiality. Priority should be placed on supporting those in the most vulnerable situations, including refugees, IDPs, stateless people, migrants, persons with disabilities, and women and girls.
- Second, we acknowledge the importance of local and national responders in delivering timely relief to people in need, especially in this COVID-19 situation. We strongly encourage UNHCR to continue to grow and deepen quality partnerships with them.
- Third, it is imperative to secure access to humanitarian assistance for affected communities. All states should make efforts to ensure sufficient humanitarian space for aid workers.

- Fourth, we are concerned about the increasing risks to security and safety of humanitarian workers. We strongly condemn any attacks on them and call for all relevant actors to fully respect their obligations under International Humanitarian Law (IHL).
- Fifth, we take special note of protection challenges faced by both those seeking protection and member states as a consequence of COVID-19, such as suspension or denial of the right to seek asylum. We expect this year's High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection to be a valuable forum to discuss these issues.
- Sixth, despite challenges due to COVID-19, we must take measures at the national and international level to ensure that it does not prevent us from fulfilling our responsibilities under international human rights law. We should acknowledge that protecting the human rights of migrants and refugees is not an option, but a legal obligation.
- Seventh, we should ensure equitable and affordable access to diagnostics, medicines, vaccines, and medical equipment for all people in need, including persons of concern (PoCs), during the pandemic. We commend UNHCR's advocacy for the inclusion of PoCs into the health and social protection frameworks of national governments.
- Eighth, while we are endeavoring to ensure that “no one is left behind” in our fight against the pandemic and get on track in achieving SDGs, we should also make efforts to ensure that there are “no crises left behind.” Therefore, we thank UNHCR for raising the profile of the most under-funded crises.
- Ninth, we also must keep on track in our collective efforts to find durable solutions for forced displacement. The momentum achieved by the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the 1<sup>st</sup> Global Refugee Forum (GRF) should be maintained, including the commitments to support host countries and communities in the spirit of “equitable burden-sharing,” and help create conditions for sustainable returns. We acknowledge regional approaches to implement the GCR, including MIRPS and SSAR, and also note the value of the Support Platforms as concrete arrangements for a more predictable burden and responsibly-sharing.
- Lastly, in the face of ever-growing humanitarian needs and funding gaps of UNHCR, greater collaboration with development actors and international financial institutions (IFI) is essential to resolve the root causes and strengthening the resilience of the affected people and their host communities.

Mr. Chair,

Let me conclude by reiterating MIKTA countries’ full support for UNHCR. We also support UNHCR’s reform process to strengthen institutional and budgetary structures, to improve how UNHCR fulfills its mandate. We are, as always, standing ready to actively engage with you to fulfill our collective responsibilities.

I thank you, Mr. Chair. /END/