

**Statement of Ambassador Nassima Baghli,
Permanent Observer of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation
at the 71st session of the UNHCR Executive Committee
5-9 October 2020- Geneva**

*Mister President,
Mister High Commissioner for Refugees*

The Corona virus pandemic has exacerbated the plight of forcibly displaced persons and posed new challenges for their protection.

UNHCR is to be commended for its swift mobilization to respond to those challenges.

Donor countries are also to be hailed for their generous support.

This whole situation underlined the need to give full effect to the Global Compact on Refugees, which is based on the principle of burden and responsibility sharing and to implement the pledges made at the first Global Refugee Forum.

Against this backdrop, the search for Solutions is very important.

We note with appreciation the Voluntary return operations that UNHCR has undertaken in coordination with some States.

We hope that the **Rohingya community** and other minorities will soon be able to return to their home country. To that end, we call on the authorities of Myanmar to put in place conditions for their safe, dignified and voluntary return.

Mister President,

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation has mobilized itself to help its Member States face the pandemic. A series of meetings were organized in that respect.

The Islamic Solidarity Fund was tasked with providing an urgent humanitarian assistance to the OIC Member States, especially the least developed ones.

The Islamic Bank of Development launched a Strategic program for Preparedness and Response to Covid-19 of 2.3 billion USD.

The OIC Executive Committee convened at the level of Foreign Ministers affirmed that contributing to efforts to address the pandemic and its intertwined health, humanitarian, social, and economic impact is an absolute priority for the organization.

Parties in conflict areas were called on to declare a ceasefire, end the violence, and allow medical and food assistance to reach the affected people. It appealed to the humanitarian actors and donors to provide food aid and identify safe pathways for helping the countries concerned.

On the occasion of the World Refugee Day, the OIC Secretary General, Dr. Yousef Al Othaimen, commended the OIC Countries' contribution to hosting refugees and called on the international community to grant them the necessary assistance.

OIC countries, often developing countries, are indeed hosting a large number of refugees.

The OIC Secretary General also emphasized the importance of identifying and coordinating effective efforts to cushion the adverse effects of the Covid-19 crisis on refugees.

He stressed the need to address the root causes of displacement, drawing attention to its adverse impact on Women and Children.

Precisely on the issue of Women, the OIC General Secretariat participated in a virtual conference on the "Role of Muslim Women in societies in times of crises" in July 2020, where it affirmed that the role of Women during the Covid-19 pandemic both in front lines in the health sector, at home or at work, under these difficult circumstances, is a

conclusive evidence of the importance of supporting and empowering women to undertake their role at all times, specially, in times of crises.

During that same meeting, reference was made to the Decision adopted by the 7th session of the OIC Ministerial Conference held in Burkina Faso in December 2018.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that since the beginning of the pandemic, OIC has underlined the need to accelerate the global response to mitigate its repercussions including on refugees and the need to provide unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance and help efforts to end violence and resolve conflicts.

I thank you.