

**General debate – check against delivery**

Mr Chair, we align ourselves with the statement delivered by the EU.

Mr Chair,

We would like to voice our appreciation for the way High Commissioner Grandi has led UNHCR in his first nine months. In particular, we thank him for the close cooperation during our presidency of the Council of the EU earlier this year.

Mr Chair,

An unprecedented number of people in the world is on the move. We are getting used to the huge numbers, to the length of displacement, to the protracted crises. It seems to be the 'new normal'. But this situation is not normal. It is unacceptable. We set ambitious social development goals for 2030, but what about the refugees? Therefore, Mr Chair, let me repeat the message delivered by my Minister at the UN summit two

weeks ago: let's set for ourselves a target, let's bring down the number of 65 million displaced persons by two thirds to less than 20 million by 2030.

Mr Chair,

We thank the High Commissioner for his strategic outline and presentation of five priority areas for UNHCR. We thank him for the emphasis on solutions, innovation and for his practical, hands-on, approach. Summits are important, but the work needs to be done in the field.

Mr Chair,

UNHCR plays a crucial role in addressing the consequences of one of the major crises of our time, the continuing conflict in Syria, which causes large scale displacement both in- and outside Syria. But there are many more crises in the world - most of them protracted or forgotten - where UNHCR plays a crucial role. Because of this multitude of crises, flexibility remains key, and UNHCR should be able to count on sufficient unearmarked funding. We have increased our unearmarked contribution to UNHCR, and call on all

donors to do the same. In return, UNHCR can do better in explaining where these funds were spent.

Mr Chair,

The New York Declaration and the acknowledgement of shared responsibility is a milestone. President Obama reinforced that concept in his summit, by asking for concrete commitments on funding and education. Let's continue this good work and make sure we reach consensus in 2018 on a global compact for refugees under the leadership of UNHCR.

Mr Chair,

We must implement commitments made on humanitarian financing and aid delivery. We encourage all signatories to the Grand Bargain to develop a concrete work plan, and ask UNHCR to report to ExCom about its own implementation. UNHCR can play an important role, particularly with regard to joint needs assessment and joint planning, the reduction of management costs and duplication. We welcome the UNHCR/UNICEF/WFP joint initiative in advancing harmonised partnership agreements.

Mr Chair,

The UN is committed to Deliver as One. It remains a valid agenda, combining strengthened coordination and integration of development and humanitarian assistance.

We welcome the High Commissioner's commitment in this respect and his comments on cooperation with OCHA and IOM. We encourage UNHCR to take further steps in this regard.

Mr Chair,

The EU continues its reforms of the common European Asylum system, which are part of an integrated approach towards refugee response and migration. Addressing the root causes of migration is a crucial element of that approach, and the Netherlands is committed to that goal.

Mr Chair,

Resettlement remains an important tool of sharing solidarity with countries receiving large numbers of refugees. During our chairmanship of the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement we have

promoted the worldwide increase of available places and we remain committed to this cause. We therefore welcome the new EU resettlement proposal, and will do what we can to ensure that UNHCR will play a major role in its functioning.

Finally, Mr Chair,

The High Commissioner has spoken about mobile telephones and cash payments. We live in a world of unlimited technological innovation, and humanitarian work can benefit from it. But we also live in a medieval world where 65 million refugees are on the run for the most primitive forms of violence and war crimes, day after day, night after night. We call these conflicts “protracted”, we mean that they just go on forever. So many people ask for our help and attention. Let me finish by naming just one group, the thousands of displaced who are stuck in the Berm at Syria’s border. How many of them are innocent children? We respect security concerns, but they need our help.

Thank you.