



**Statement by H.E. Mr. M. Shameem Ahsan  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh  
at the 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNHCR Executive Committee Meeting**

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*Assembly Hall, Palais des Nations, Geneva*

**Thank you Mr. Chairman.**

1. We congratulate you on your skillful leadership of the Executive Committee over the last one-year.

**Mr. Chairman,**

2. We heard, with great deal of attention, the statements made by the Secretary General and by the High Commissioner. We commend the Secretary General for successfully convening the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants. The New York Declaration, adopted by our Heads of State and Government, is an expression of our collective political will to protect the rights, to save the lives and to share responsibility of refugees and migrants on a global scale. It has provided us with a clear and agreed road map and we must seize this historic opportunity by immediately deliberating on a fair, equitable, robust and action-oriented Global Compact on Responsibility-Sharing for Refugees.

3. We agree with the High Commissioner that the number of forced displaced are too great for any country to tackle it alone. We acknowledge that the uniqueness and specificity of the countries requires careful tailoring of responses to meet specific needs. However, we believe these needs to be done within a broader development context. We must all rise above an identity-based discourse and promote tolerance and understanding, which are fundamental values of our societies.

**Mr. Chairman,**

4. The realities of forced displacement underscore the need for strengthened international cooperation. As noted by the High Commissioner, 86% of global refugees are being hosted and sheltered by developing countries. These countries, mostly stretched beyond their capacities, are often forced to sacrifice own development gains to keep open their borders for the refugees. This reality demands for striking a balance between UNHCR's work on protection and that on finding durable solutions. While we are committed in our efforts to forge new partnerships and address protection needs by pursuing approaches such as, self-reliance, we must remain seized on finding durable solution. Voluntary repatriation must be pursued as the preferred solution. Let me underline here that efforts should be made to create conditions conducive for return with dignity in countries of origin by all available means including addressing the root causes.

**Mr. Chair,**

5. For more than three decades, Bangladesh has been hosting a large number of refugees and displaced person from Myanmar. Despite many social, economic, environmental and political challenges, we continue to bear our responsibilities for these people with our limited resources. For more than 32,000 Myanmar refugees residing in two camps, we shall keep investing in their security, health, education and skill development. Despite being an LDC and the most densely populated country in the world, our local communities have given space for their protection and assistance. The government is also planning to provide more attention towards their improved shelter and self-reliance.

6. Acting on one of the major recommendations of the National Strategy Paper, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) has recently carried out a census to know the number as well as condition of undocumented Myanmar Nationals living in

Bangladesh. The government is planning to give them an identity document titled, 'Information Card'. This will help them to access justice, health care, education and other services.

**7.** The government all through remained engaged and looks forward to working with the new Myanmar leadership in finding a lasting solution to this issue. We hope that our international partners shall also remain engaged to help create conditions conducive for the refugees and other displaced people to reclaim their lives in safety and dignity in Myanmar.

**Mr. Chairman,**

**8.** In 1971, during our war of liberation, ten million of our people took refuge in neighbouring India. The protection and assistance that we received from UNHCR during that trying time have always been an inspiration to make our mark as a responsible and contributing UN Member State during last four decades.

**9.** Let me conclude by paying tribute to the hard work and commitment to all UNHCR staff, who, often at great personal risk, are serving humanity in various parts of the world.

**10. I thank you.**