

**68<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme**

**Statement by Lt Gen (R) Abdul Quadir Baloch, Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Pakistan**  
(2 October 2017)

**Madam Chairperson,  
High Commissioner Grandi,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,**

The world today is faced with unprecedented forced displacement that has become a colossal humanitarian challenge. As I speak, over 65 million people stand forcibly displaced from the comfort of their homes. The recent exodus of half a million Rohingya Muslims within a month due to violent persecution in Myanmar is a cause of serious concern, and requires our immediate attention.

**Madam Chairperson,**

It remains a fact that 86% of refugees are hosted in developing countries, including Pakistan. Emerging and protracted forced displacements at such a large scale create political, socio-economic, security and environmental challenges and difficulties for host countries. Greater emphasis on international cooperation and responsibility sharing is the call of the day.

**Distinguished Excellencies/Delegates**

In order to deal with this enormous challenge, we need to consider strong solutions component with thrust primarily on the countries of origin. A wholesome solutions approach must entail resolution of conflicts, political settlements, and humanitarian and development interventions. More importantly, root causes of displacement need to be addressed on priority basis.

**Madam Chairperson,**

Solutions are central to the refugee protection regime. Future burden sharing arrangements must aim at finding solutions from the very outset of emergencies as well as resolving protracted situations. Until now, we have witnessed inadequate equitability, predictability and flexibility in burden sharing. This trend should be addressed.

Therefore, there is an urgent need for UNHCR, in collaboration with other relevant UN agencies, to carry out a quantitative burden-mapping at the earliest. This shall result in more equitable and predictable responsibility-sharing and its effective and continuous monitoring. Such an exercise, as well as devising a

comprehensive burden sharing mechanism must be important pillars of the Global Compact.

### **Distinguished Excellencies/Delegates**

Pakistan has demonstrated unparalleled generosity and hospitality in hosting Afghan refugees for over 38 years, the largest and the longest refugee situation since the Second World War. We have provided unhindered access to education, healthcare and livelihood opportunities. Successive Governments in Pakistan have remained committed to the norms of International Law and international protection. Though, we have not received due recognition for this immense public good.

The Government of Pakistan is committed to voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees in safety and with dignity. Currently, the Government stakeholders are effectively carrying out the implementation of the Afghan Management and Repatriation Strategy, approved by the Government earlier this year.

### **High Commissioner**

Allow me to acknowledge UNHCR's support to Pakistan in dealing with the Afghan refugee situation. May I also express deep appreciation for your personal support and proactive approach towards its resolution. The enhancement of voluntary repatriation grant from US \$ 200 to 400 during 2016 helped returnees anchor in Afghanistan. Subsequently through re-integration efforts of the Government of Afghanistan and the international community, they were able to make their returns sustainable. The study conducted by UNHCR clearly shows the added benefits of the enhanced voluntary repatriation grant.

The proposed cut in UNHCR's budget for operations in Pakistan for next two years, and the reversion of voluntary repatriation grant to US \$ 200 is of great concern to us. **High Commissioner**, we acknowledge your support on the matter and would urge you to continue your efforts with the donor community for redress of our concerns.

### **Madam Chairperson,**

Pakistan remains committed to working within the framework of the Solution Strategy for Afghan Refugees. SSAR framework ends in December 2017. As such Pakistan foresees evolving from SSAR to Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework through a regional approach from 2018, due to similarities between the two frameworks. Our emphasis and focus will remain on the three pillars that are voluntary repatriation, sustainable reintegration in Afghanistan and support to the host countries. However, local integration is not considered or supported by Pakistan.

**Madam Chairperson,**

We call for a reinvigorated engagement of the international community in supporting the “Afghan led and Afghan owned” peace process and supporting the Government of Afghanistan to create conditions conducive to sustainable return and reintegration. Pakistan has always supported and shall continue to support all efforts to ensure peace and prosperity in Afghanistan. A stable and prosperous Afghanistan is in our own national interest.

We have undertaken unprecedented actions and operations to curb the menace of terrorism. In doing so, we have rendered tremendous sacrifices in life and property. The world must acknowledge our efforts, successes and sacrifices, and complement these with robust contributions towards peace. While challenges continue to confront us, I would conclude my statement with the hope that the international community, United Nations and particularly UNHCR would live up to the expectations commensurate with their global obligations.

I thank you Madam Chairperson.

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