

Latter-day Saint Charities Statement Global Refugee Forum Informal Briefing, Dec. 14, 2020

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Ryan Koch and I represent Latter-day Saint Charities, the humanitarian organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As followers of our faith's namesake, Latter-day Saint Charities is committed to living Jesus Christ's two great commandments to love God and to love our neighbor.

Providing aid to refugees has been an important priority of our organization since long before the Global Refugee Forum. In the last few years, however, we have seen an increase in support to refugee populations and have even incorporated refugee assistance as one of the four main pillars of our work. Over the last year, we have made our formal pledge to the GRF, and have worked tirelessly with governments, nonprofits, and our many wonderful humanitarian partners to provide desperately needed supplies to refugee populations. This is especially important in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Projects in the last year to mitigate the effects of COVID among refugee populations have included the delivery of food supplies in places like Cyprus, Ecuador, Greece, Iraq, Lebanon, and Turkey; personal protective equipment and masks in Croatia, Jordan, Colombia, and Kenya; and ventilators in Uganda. Additionally, we have worked to ensure that educational opportunities are not halted because of the pandemic. Partners have included governments as well as secular and faith-based humanitarian aid organizations, thus underscoring the need for all parties to put differences aside and work together to promote the common good.

In addition to food and other resources, refugee individuals and families are in need of encouragement, hope, and welcoming integration into their new homes. We continue to encourage members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and our friends across the globe to respond appropriately and legally to help create welcoming communities for the tens of millions of people who have fled their homes seeking relief from violence, war, or religious persecution.

Finally, while the world grapples with a global pandemic, loving and caring for our neighbors is more critical than ever. Among the most vulnerable of our neighbors are the tens of millions of refugees scattered across the globe. Consequently, Latter-day Saint Charities has joined with many of our wonderful partners to provide hope and assistance to refugee families and individuals in need.

We are grateful for and encouraged by the wonderful efforts carried out by many participating in this event. Our combined efforts to love our neighbor and lift one another during this time of extraordinary challenges will strengthen the fabric of our global society and lead to an abundant life for all.

Thank you.