



**Statement of the Permanent Delegation of the Organization of the Islamic
Cooperation to the United Nations in Geneva, at the occasion 67th Executive
Committee of the UNHCR**

5 October 2016

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. High Commissioner,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

All over the world, millions are forced to leave their homes through perils and dangers. They leave everything behind and embark on journeys with the disastrous consequences that we all have witnessed in the Mediterranean, in European coasts and in the South East Asia seas.

Throughout the Muslim world, people have been forced to leave their homes as a result of civil wars, conflicts, natural disasters and of economic deprivation as well. Millions crossed national borders and are mainly living in neighboring countries as refugees, and many others remain internally displaced within the borders of their own countries.

According to UNHCR's most recent Global Trends Report, the OIC Member States have to grapple with around 37.7 million refugees and IDPs, representing two-thirds of the global figure. If we take into account the 5.2 million Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA, more than 70% of the world's forcible displacement is within the OIC Member States.

The OIC Member States have been extremely generous in hosting refugees. In fact, seven out of the largest ten countries hosting refugees in the world today are OIC Member States and are bearing more than their share of the global burden of refugees. Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Pakistan, Iran, Chad and Uganda, as well as other OIC developing countries are all hosting large numbers of refugees.

The solidarity and generous hospitality provided to those who are in need is an Islamic longstanding tradition. However, hosting refugees in present times is also accompanied by many challenges, which have to be addressed collectively. Therefore, the responsibility and the burden from hosting refugees should be more equitably shared by members of the international community, and adequate support must be provided for countries that bear the brunt of today's refugee crises.

The collective efforts should then be exerted in the quest to address the root causes and achieve durable and lasting solutions to protracted refugee situations globally in order to end the suffering of millions of refugees.

Ways and means should be found in inclusive and comprehensive manner to allow refugees and local hosting communities to be economically empowered in view to reinforce social cohesion and forward looking approach in respect of the interest of both refugees and the host countries.

Moreover, durable and sustainable solutions have to be defined, including through voluntary return, hopefully in a context of peace and within a community development perspective. In this regard, the OIC commands all the efforts exerted in the framework of UNHCR Solutions Strategy for Afghan refugees and the collaborative paths developed between UNHCR and the three OIC Member States, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran to enable voluntary repatriation of millions of Afghans in safety and within decent conditions of return. In the same vein, we support High Commissioner's Global Initiative on Somali Refugees, with the hope that their voluntary return will conduct with respect of the international Refugee Convention and humanitarian principles.

Mr. Chairperson,

The OIC will continue to work closely with UNHCR to achieve our common objectives in facing this important humanitarian challenges. We are thankful to UNHCR's efforts in serving our Member States. The preparatory briefing that was held in July 2016 in Geneva, ahead of the High-level plenary summit of the United Nations General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants has provided concrete measures on how to advance and mainstream this collaboration.

The OIC welcomes the outcomes of this Summit, the New York Declaration and looks forward for the implementation of a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework.

The OIC also welcomes the UN SG's new campaign "Together – Respect, Safety and Dignity for All" to tackle the issue of growing negative stereotyping and xenophobia, in particular against Muslim refugees.

Furthermore, the OIC congratulates as well its Member States, Mali and Sierra Leone that gain access to both 1954 Statelessness Convention and 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, in May 2016.

Finally, the OIC will continue to strengthen its partnership with the UN system, in particular with UNHCR and IOM and with other partners to achieve our common goal to assist the vulnerable people facing the multiple humanitarian crisis that the world is confronted in these challenging times.

Thank you.