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Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare

**STATEMENT BY ZIMBABWE ON THE OCCASION OF THE
GENERAL DEBATE AT THE 70TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE OF THE UNHCR'S PROGRAMME:
7-11 OCTOBER 2019**

Mr President
Hon Ministers here present
The High Commissioner
Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me, Mr President, to start by thanking you and the members of your bureau for the sound leadership that you continue to provide to the organisation and its membership since assuming office in October 2018. I also thank the High Commissioner and his staff for the documentation and the splendid arrangements for this 70th Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme.

As I make these remarks on behalf of my delegation, allow me to align them with the statement made on behalf of the African Group.

My delegation thanks the High Commissioner for his report which provides us with a basis, not only to reflect on the organisation's activities during the past year, but also to position ourselves to roll

out the Global Compact on Refugees against the backdrop of increased forced displacement.

Mr President, we note with some concern that the resources have not been able to cater for all the needs of the population of concern to UNHCR. Nevertheless, my delegation remains confident that with the High Commissioner's leadership, supported by the members of the bureau, adequate resources will be mobilised for the strengthened protection and assistance to victims of forced displacement.

At this juncture, allow me to make reference to the situation in Zimbabwe as regards the population of concern to UNHCR. In that regard, I want to start by expressing gratitude for the assistance rendered by UNHCR, not only to refugees at Tongogara Refugee camp but also to Zimbabweans who were affected by Cyclone Idai. The Cyclone was devastating and accounted for over 400 deaths in the Eastern parts of the country in March of this year.

The government with assistance from development partners repaired the damaged housing units as well as the water and sanitation facilities in the camp. In addition, over 200 new dwelling units were constructed in camp.

The Government of Zimbabwe will continue to assist the refugees affected by the Cyclone within the context of the Post Cyclone Idai Emergency Recovery and Resilience Project spelt out in the 2019 Zimbabwe Tropical Cyclone Idai International Humanitarian Assistance Appeal.

As witnessed by my Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi, in our part of the world, climate change induced natural disasters, rising sea levels and desertification, are causing massive displacements

in Africa and elsewhere. The eco-systems are collapsing, and science has it that this is likely to have a devastating impact on our world in future if we do not take active measures to compact climate change and global warming.

Climate change is real. It affects all of us, the greenhouse emitters and the non-emitters. It affects both the developed and the developing worlds. As a generation, we need act now to preserve the mother earth and prevent massive forced displacements that happen on account of climate change.

To this end, my delegation welcomes the idea of mainstreaming climate change in forced displacement discourses. We are ready to work with others given that Zimbabwe has of late experienced the devastating effects of climate change induced Cyclones and droughts.

Finally, Mr President, Zimbabwe joins others in committing to end statelessness by 2024. To this end, a number of activities under specific commitments to the Office of the High Commissioner are to take place during the second half of the campaigning including consideration of ratifying the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

I thank you