



Statement by Sweden

General Debate

Executive Committee

of the High Commissioner's Programme

Seventieth session

H.E. Ms Veronika BARD, Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of Sweden to the UN and other International
Organisations in Geneva

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Mr Chair, Mr High Commissioner, Excellencies, Colleagues and Friends,

Sweden aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union and we offer the following statement in national capacity:

Mr High Commissioner,

Thank you for ^{→ the important and enlightening high level segment Monday and for} listing Sweden during your Treaty Event yesterday. Sweden has ratified both the 1954 and the 1961 Conventions on statelessness. In 2011, in this very hall, we pledged to review and withdraw reservations regarding these conventions. Today, we have come to honour those pledges and to announce new contributions, in support of the global fight against statelessness and in solidarity with refugees and their host countries and communities worldwide.

Mr Chair,

I am pleased to announce that Sweden will **withdraw two reservations concerning the 1954 Convention, as well as the corresponding reservations in the 1951 Refugee Convention.**

Sweden also commends UNHCR on its mapping of statelessness in Sweden. In order to make improvements in this regard, we have initiated measures to ensure that challenges identified in the mapping will be addressed. For example, the Swedish government has initiated a dialogue with the responsible national agencies to discuss how to limit inconsistencies in the registration of stateless persons.

In fact, to prevent and resolve statelessness is a hallmark of Swedish nationality policy. Over the past five years, **more than 22 000 stateless persons have been granted Swedish nationality.** Several measures have been taken to facilitate and simplify the acquisition of Swedish nationality for stateless persons. For example, a shorter residence requirement has been introduced for stateless children. Moreover, stateless adults already benefit from a shortened residence requirement of four years,

compared to the normal five years. And in order to avoid a situation of statelessness arising, the law permits multiple nationalities and prohibits the revocation of Swedish nationality.

I would also like to take this opportunity to announce the **establishment of a government led *Inquiry on Nationality***, pending government decision. The inquiry will among other issues look at further measures to limit statelessness, including if certain children born stateless in Sweden could acquire nationality automatically at birth, instead of through our simplified notification process.

Mr Chair,

Sweden strongly supports the #Ibelong campaign to end statelessness. As the Deputy Secretary General said yesterday – identity is a human right, and we applaud Kyrgyzstan for becoming the first country in the world to eradicate statelessness. More needs to be done on global and national levels, not least to ensure that we leave no one behind. For this reason, it is important that statelessness is included in the Global Compact on Refugees.

Sweden is also an unwavering supporter of the GCR and we look forward to the upcoming Global Refugee Forum, where we can affirm our commitment to the implementation of the compact. Let me take this opportunity to thank UNHCR along with Ethiopia, Turkey, Germany, Costa Rica and Pakistan for taking on the task of co-convening this important meeting.

The principle of international burden and responsibility sharing lies at the heart of the GCR. Supporting resettlement as an important solution and protection tool for refugees, ahead of and at the Global Refugee Forum, will be one way for Sweden to translate this principle into concrete action. We look forward to seeing our co-sponsorship, our work in the UNHCR Priority Situations Core Group and our investment into the Three-year strategy for increased resettlement, come together at GRF, aiming to increase and broaden the base for resettlement.

Sweden is also a co-sponsor of the GRF workstream on education, with a focus on equity and inclusion. Education is one of the most pressing issues, both for refugees and for stateless persons. Consequently, we need to see greater international support for education for UNHCR's persons of concern.

This requires funding that is predictable, flexible, and allows for earlier responses to new demands for education. It also requires a well functioning, effective and collaborative UNHCR, and we support the ongoing transformation of the organisation.

The Strategic Partnership Agreement between Sweden and UNHCR displays this support, our mutual trust, as well as Sweden's commitment to predictable and unearmarked funding. For UNHCR, we guarantee around 400 million USD over four years in unearmarked funding. In addition, Sweden has so far this year contributed approximately 25 million USD to specific appeals, most often loosely earmarked.

With this, I would like to assure you Mr High Commissioner that we will do our utmost to keep supporting you and your dedicated staff and we look forward to continuing our close cooperation with UNHCR.

I thank you!