

---

**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**  
**73<sup>rd</sup> Session Executive Committee**

**Item 3- General Debate**

Delivered by Amb. Meirav Eilon Shahar  
Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations in Geneva

---

Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the High Commissioner for the extension of his mandate until 2025. We are pleased to know that you will continue to lead UNHCR in these crucial times.

Furthermore, I would like to extend our gratitude to the High Commissioner, the Deputy High Commissioner, and all UNHCR's staff for their strong commitment to protecting refugees and persons of concern and all their hard work during this challenging year.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Executive Committee's annual meeting provides us with a good opportunity to improve dialogue and consider solutions for the millions of people who are currently on the move.

I would like to thank High Commissioner Grandi for his opening remarks. We welcome the emphasis given to partnerships to better serve persons of concern.

In his remarks, the High Commissioner focused on the consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

In this regard, Israel has welcomed dozens of thousands of persons displaced from both Ukraine and the Russian Federation, and has fully integrated them on our societies.

Moreover, the High Commissioner has referred to the innovative response given through the Blue Dot protection hubs. Israel is proud to have engaged in their work.

At the beginning of August, a delegation of experts from the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs of Israel was deployed in Poland, to work on the analysis of the needs of the Blue Dots in terms of MHPSS, with the aim of assisting asylum seekers and refugees displaced from Ukraine. This project was developed as a cooperation among UNHCR, UNICEF and Israel. The idea is to design procedures, recommendations and trainings for all those partners working in the Blue Dots, to be better prepared to work with persons of concern, in short and longer interventions.

Mr. Chairperson,

We agree with the High Commissioner when he affirms that while in many countries the COVID-19 pandemic is gradually being addressed, its longer term consequences continue to impact those in most vulnerable situations, including refugees and displaced people.

The challenges that displaced populations typically suffer have deepened in the face of the COVID- 19 pandemic. This population will

often not seek medical care, due to fear of the authorities, unfamiliarity with the rules and lack of money or health insurance.

Many of the States present in this room have taken measures during the peak of the pandemic, but it is important that their specific needs and vulnerabilities are included when designing post Covid-19 plans, so we can truly build back better.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel welcomes the High Commissioner's renewal of UNHCR's commitment to work to eradicate sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, as a priority of its senior management.

In this vein, we would like to thank both the High Commissioner and the Deputy High Commissioner for their strong commitment to fight them. We also would like to take the opportunity to commend Ms. Clements for her work as Chair of the CEB's Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the UN System.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel welcomes the inclusive approach of UNHCR, including its focus to address the needs of persons of concern without any kind of discrimination, and on the contrary, promoting a strong age, gender and diversity approach. We renew our support to the programmes, plans and policies that refer to women, children, persons with

disabilities and LGBTI+ population. Only by ensuring an inclusive and non-discriminatory approach, we could affirm that we are working on leaving no one behind.

Mr. Chairperson,

To conclude, we would like to reiterate our gratitude to UNHCR for its work, and therefore, we would like to call other Member States to avoid politicization concerning it. We have recently faced political discussions regarding the guidance that UNHCR has asked Member States with respect to promoting international protection. As UN Member States, our task should be to guide and support UNHCR's work, not to put obstacles to it by inserting political agendas within its mandate.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.