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Independent Human Rights Commission

**Excellency's, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to thank UNHCR for hosting such a high level meeting to cast light on Afghan Refugees situation based on a very important document SSAR. I am honored to speak in this very important meeting. Allow me to also thank our neighboring countries for their support and hosting Afghan refugees. I also thank the international community for their support to Afghan people in our country or by providing support outside of our country. I am going to focus on Human Rights of Afghan Refugees and how their rights could be protected through implementation of Solution Strategy for Afghan Refugees SSAR, Special attention should be paid to women and children.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Afghanistan is suffering from war and conflict that has been the first and prime reason of Afghan refugees. Unfortunately the war is still on going and it inflicts heavy losses on Afghans and causes further crises that push people out of their home turning them to internally displaced or refugees.

According to new data, around a million IDP are living in the country and this year alone 80000 left the country. Afghanistan with having over 6 million refugees in over 70 countries come second After Syria.

While the flow of refugee seems unstoppable, success in providing a solution to this situation is of high importance. Policies and program to protect support and enable refugees to enjoy their human rights, freedom and dignity are the requirement, I would like to emphasize on joint and effective cooperation to end conflict in Afghanistan. Absent of joint cooperation and support, the conflict will be continued with implications directly affecting neighboring and international community.

We all know that every individual have the right to flee from a dangerous and threatening environment and take refuge in safer places, even to apply for refuge outside a national boundary. Article 13 of UDHR and Covenant on Refugee are legal and customary law provision that recognize and guarantee this right and a good example to cite. Living a refugee life, I would like to remind myself and the distinguished fellow participants of

the right to live free from fear and from want and live with dignity is an essential and fundamental human rights. Every refugee and each immigrant has right to protection, dignity and safety that are stipulated in the international human rights instruments.

While Afghanistan needs to provide a safe, protected and enabling environment to refugees to return, it is essential that we all work for protection and promotion of human rights and the rights and freedom of returnees. In Afghanistan, we still need to address issue of insecurity and Taliban, weak rule of law and order, injustice, presence of warlords and illegal militia, lack of economic opportunities, and weak or lack of public service delivery. In addition, we need to address issues of inequality, discrimination, prejudice against returnees and issues like violence against women and children, health care and education for children.

An enabling environment requires that returnees could easily not only to be integrated to the society, but also be able to exercise their rights and freedom and become an active member of society. Therefore, it is

essential to look into the issue of property rights, fighting corruption, enforcing law and order and implementation of deeds and contracts.

Similarly, six million refugees living abroad- most of them in Iran and Pakistan- need to be protected. Often, refugees fleeing Afghanistan are not recognized by the Iranian or Pakistani government as refugees. There are over 2.4 million refugees that possess legal status in Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan and an additional 2 million refugees living in these two neighboring countries do not have legal status of refugees. It's essential that our neighboring countries work on this regard to grant all refugees recognition and through the official recognition protect and promote their human rights. SSAR could be a step forward to realization and enjoyment of human rights of all refugees with support of Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Iran.

I should stress my concern over refugee's problem in Iran and Pakistan that often face brutality, ill-treatment and harassment by police. They do not have access to education, they are barred from having economic



opportunities and they face uncertainty and insecurity in terms of deportation. As a former refugee, I would like to stress that a refugee fleeing his/her country already have suffered enough, please do not let rogue elements or harmful policies add to the suffering of refugees. A refugee returning home will remember both good and bad memories of his/her time in exile.

Further, there are also problem with proper and due process when it comes to deportation or charges on different crimes. I would like to express my concern over the plight of refugees facing charges without a due process or affordable defense before courts.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

In the last six month, over 120000 Afghans were registered in Greece, 40000 coming from Iran and Pakistan and 80000 left Afghanistan. The lengthy journey to Europe is always dangerous and put many lives at risk. Unfortunately almost every week we hear and witness reports of asylum seekers being drawn, beaten up, killed of suffocation, and abused by

smugglers and so on. When an individual put his or her destiny to the hand of smugglers or human traffickers, there is no guarantee for safety and protection of those individuals. I urge to stand together to address these issue and put policies and program that protects refugees and punish smugglers and traffickers.

### **Distinguished Participants,**

Since 2001, Afghanistan welcomed over 5, 8 million returnees, a huge success. However, last year marked the low return ever of the returnees by 25229 people returning to Afghanistan. This indicates that situation in Afghanistan is not ready for more returnees. I urge the world community to pay attention and assist the Afghan government for providing a safe, enabling environment for returnees and support the SSAR. I also would like to urge the international community to support other host countries who housed Afghan refugees to make sure their return is in a way that could be aligned with

I would like to emphasize that protection and promotion of human rights is shared responsibility and obligation of Afghanistan and the international community being normal citizens, IDP's or refugees as human being, protection of their dignity is a protection of humanity.

The Afghan Government needs support to implement SSAR, I would like to urge you this support must be provided.

I wish UNHCR for supporting the implementation of SSAR success and urge our Government to endorse and implement the strategy.

Once again I would like to call on the international community to help Afghanistan to end the conflict and proxy war, to stop more human suffering, and the Afghan people deserve to live with peace and dignity.

Thank you,

