

Statement by the Delegation of Nepal during the General Debate at the 67th Session of the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 3-7 October 2016, Geneva

Mr. Chairperson,

My delegation thanks the High Commissioner, H.E. Mr. Filippo Grandi, for his comprehensive statement at the beginning of the current Executive Committee session. As the High Commissioner highlighted, there is an immense challenge in dealing with the problems of refugees and displaced persons in the world at present. This calls for increased understanding on the grassroots causes of conflicts, violence and disasters, and a mechanism of concerted efforts to manage the situation based on respective capacities of the nations. We commend the crucial role played by UNHCR in responding to multiple emergencies and humanitarian situations, and in ensuring protection, care and maintenance of millions of refugees and displaced population around the globe.

Mr. Chairperson,

There is an urgent need to address forced displacements by fostering greater political will and international collaboration. We share concern over increasing shortfall of humanitarian budgets to meet escalating global humanitarian needs in the recent years. The problems of the refugee hosting developing countries should be taken into consideration in light of their capacity to do so. Expecting more commitments from the poor host countries such as the LDCs will be just adding to their burden, and not the burden sharing. Similarly, although there is no doubt that the scale of resources required for addressing the problems facing large movements of refugees and migrants is huge, we must be careful that these required resources are not mobilized at the cost of development aid to LDCs and other countries in special situation. Any such

move may unwittingly increase the risk of producing more migrants and refugees due to the direct effects on the economies and related political issues in these countries.

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the recent adoption of New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. We think that the innovative approach to a comprehensive refugee response framework, a global compact on refugees as well as a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration can make a difference in the way we deal with these burning issues. We look forward to judicious implementation of the declaration.

Mr. Chairperson,

Nepal has been a generous host to refugees for a long time on humanitarian grounds even though it is a country with very limited resources and not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol. Thousands of Bhutanese refugees have been hosted in Nepal for more than two decades. Nepal is grateful to the international community for their understanding and support in managing the refugees within its borders. International burden sharing has greatly contributed to lessen our own burden for the management and upkeep of refugees.

For the man-made cause of refugees and migrants, it should be the responsibility of the country causing it and not the country where they are residing. In case of the Bhutanese refugees, we have adopted a pragmatic approach with utmost sincerity, good faith and genuine expectation for finding a lasting solution to the problem, which remains one of the most protracted refugee problems in the world. The efforts made by Nepal to resolve this issue through bilateral process, however, remain stalled due to the continued rigidity and non-implementation of the agreed decisions by Bhutan. While remaining committed to bringing this humanitarian problem to an early end through bilateral process, Nepal wants to see the resumption of the stalled process, repatriation of the refugees to Bhutan and the closure of the refugee

camps at the earliest. We believe that the refugees' right to return to their homeland with safety and dignity must always be upheld in all circumstances.

While appreciating the substantive achievements made by the Core Group of developed countries in third country resettlement of the Bhutanese refugees sheltered in Nepal, we view that their right to go back to their homeland should be respected. Safe, secure and dignified repatriation of the refugees to their homeland on a voluntary basis provides the only durable solution to the problem. Nepal considers resettlement as a temporary solution and believes that the refugees have inalienable rights to return to their homes in dignity and honour. At the same time, the remaining Bhutanese refugees in refugee camps in Nepal are eagerly waiting to go back to their homeland. In this context, we need to recall the UNGA resolution 194 of 1948 that emphasizes on the prime responsibility of countries of origin for establishing conditions that allow voluntary repatriation of refugees in safety and with dignity. We ever remain committed to engage ourselves with the international community to resolve this problem, and call for more active role of all the partners in this regard.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairperson, while recalling the close and constructive engagements between Nepal and UNHCR, we commend the support and care it has provided to the refugees in Nepal. We are also thankful to the World Food Programme, donor community and other entities for their continued support in the protection and care of the refugee population.

I thank you.