

Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme - Seventy-Fifth Session 2024

Australia's statement for agenda item 4(a) International Protection

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Thank you Madam Chair. Australia thanks UNHCR for its update on international protection.

Further we would like to thank UNCHR for delivering crucial protection and humanitarian assistance with dedication across the globe – including for populations impacted by the escalation in the Middle East and protracted conflicts in Myanmar, Sudan and Ukraine. Australia remains concerned by the impact conflict has on the safety of civilians as well as the safety of dedicated humanitarian workers that support them. Protection must be afforded to all civilians.

High Commissioner, as you rightly mentioned in your opening address, we must create more legal pathways. While addressing the root causes of displacement is essential, Australia remains committed to contributing to, and advocating for, durable solutions for those displaced by conflict.

Australia recognises the need to look beyond traditional responses and is a global advocate for the expansion of refugee labour mobility pathways in our role as Chair of the Global Taskforce on Refugee Labour Mobility and as chair of the Consultations on Resettlement and Complementary pathways this year. Australia's priority is that each person affected by conflict or persecution can lean into these solutions and programs with hope.

Further, Australia made 25 pledges at the Global Refugee Forum, affirming our support for refugees and host countries. Australia seeks to contribute our efforts to respond consistently to key issues leading to displacement and persecution, and to address how displacement can exacerbate gender-based violence, discrimination against the LGBTIQ+ community, women, children and others. Encompassing all of this, is our commitment to meaningful refugee participation. To deliver effectively on our pledges we will continue to collaborate with those with lived experience through Australia's Refugee Advisory Panel and strongly encourage others to do the same.

Australia is deeply concerned by the escalating conflict and worsening humanitarian situation in Myanmar. We commend countries in the region for hosting refugees fleeing Myanmar – especially Bangladesh. We continue to support Bangladesh to realise the safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable repatriation of the Rohingya population, once conditions in Myanmar allow. We believe enhanced support for Rohingya in Bangladesh to include access to livelihoods, education and skills training can increase their self-reliance and leadership as well open opportunities for complementary pathways.

In closing, despite the serious challenges we currently face, we urge all member states to continue working together in solidarity on the global challenge of displacement, to share responsibility for the protection of those who need it in a non-discriminatory manner. Australia reaffirms our commitment to the principles that underpin our international protection system.