

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, guests and participants of the “75th Session of the UNHCR Executive Committee (ExCom)”,

It is my honor to greet you and to take part in this summit, at which I hope that the countries will actively participate in order to assess the achievements so far, to present the good practices and to encourage concrete commitments by other stakeholders to take actions to deal with the phenomenon of statelessness in order to put an end to this phenomenon.

My country and the Ministry of Interior have always had a proactive and open approach, have always been and will remain an active and credible partner of the United Nations, and especially of the UNHCR.

Nationality is one of the basic human rights and is the legal basis for a large number of other civil rights and freedoms; it indicates the legal relationship between the person and the state, regardless of the method of acquisition and does not indicate the ethnic origin of the national.

The international community is faced with numerous situations of statelessness and the impossibility of establishing nationality. The problem is caused by many factors **which is not the case with my country.**

The problem of statelessness and the registration of unregistered persons, particularly of children who are born and are located in the territory of a country and are not registered in the Birth Registry, should be overcome. This problem should be solved in such manner that each country should provide in the national legislation legal norms in order to reduce the number of stateless persons and to enable unregistered persons, especially minor children, to be registered in the countries where the persons reside, to abide by international documents such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948*, the *Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons of 1954* and the *Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961*.

Countries should observe international law, especially Article 15 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights from 1948*, according to which: Everyone has the right to a nationality. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality, nor denied the right to change his nationality.

We, as a country, have amended our laws to allow stateless persons to acquire a nationality and to provide birth registration for all children born in the country, whether their parents are undocumented or stateless.

The *Law on Nationality* was adopted in November 1992. The amendments and additions to it are in accordance with the *European Convention on Nationality*, which the Republic of Macedonia signed on 06.11.1997, as a significant document that sums up the previous experiences in this area all across Europe and establishes principles and guidelines for the internal legislation of the Member States. The Parliament ratified the *European Convention on Nationality* in 2002.

In October 2019, we adopted the *Law on Ratification of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961*.

In 2004, the *Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on Nationality* was adopted. These amendments provide a legal norm for acquiring nationality for stateless persons or a person with a recognized refugee status.

As a country, we have made great progress in terms of international cooperation, especially in the area of statelessness. Namely, our country has been declared a leader in the region in the efforts and manners to eradicate statelessness. What was especially noted was the

multidisciplinary way of solving the problem of statelessness and the joint approach of several institutions and non-governmental organizations in successfully overcoming the problem.

We would like to inform you that Article 7 of the *Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on Nationality of the Republic of North Macedonia* made it possible for a national of another republic of the former SFRY to acquire nationality, as well as for a national of the former SFRY who lived on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia until September 8, 1991, i.e. until the time of declaration of independence of the Republic of Macedonia. Article 7 has been applied from 30.07.2021 to 08.09.2024 and so far 1067 persons have received nationality, of which 270 persons were stateless. There are 234 cases in the procedure under Article 7 of the *Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on Nationality*, of which **28 persons are stateless**.

On 21.06.2023, the Parliament adopted the *Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on Civil Registry*. In 2023, the *Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on Identity Cards* and the *Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on Registration of Residence and Place of Residence of Nationals* were adopted, in order for this category of nationals who will acquire status of nationals to be able to obtain a personal document in an easier way.

On 04.11.2023, the UNHCR reported on its website about the progress in dealing with statelessness, stating:

Important results have been achieved worldwide this year to help resolve the devastating impact of statelessness, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, reports today as it marks the 9th anniversary of its decade-long [#IBelong campaign](#). North Macedonia amended its laws to allow stateless people to acquire nationality and ensure birth registration for all children born in the country regardless of whether their parents are undocumented or stateless.

As Ministry of Interior and as a country, we remain strong supporters of the UN, a committed and responsible partner in the global dialogue and a solid and as such a generally recognized generator and pillar of peace, stability and security in the Balkan and European regions, and beyond.

At the very end, I would like to emphasize that I personally, as well as my people, understand the fate of refugees and stateless persons. History is a great teacher. Therefore, I believe that we should jointly share the responsibility for finding permanent and sustainable solutions in the regulation of the status of nationality.

Thank you,