

## Standing Committee, 17 June 2025

### Presentation of the Note on International Protection

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Chair, distinguished delegates,

This year's Note on International Protection presents a sobering picture. As we mark 75 years since UNHCR's establishment, the global protection landscape is under immense strain. Displacement and statelessness continue to grow in scale and complexity, while resources to support protection and solutions are diminishing. The Note outlines the work undertaken over the past year to uphold the High Commissioner's mandate-protecting and finding solutions for refugees, internally displaced, and stateless persons, in close partnership with States and others.

- At the same time, as displacement and statelessness have continued to grow in scale and complexity, the **resources available to support work on protection and solutions have been significantly reduced**. The note highlights some of the **gaps** that are already apparent in measures to provide protection and services and to facilitate solutions around the world.
- In this context, the note – which is prepared by the HC's office pursuant to its mandated responsibilities and does not necessarily represent the views of all ExCom member States – recalls the important role performed by national asylum systems worldwide. It highlights progress in asylum capacity development (a topic addressed in a separate note before this Committee), as well as regional cooperation among states on asylum; and tools developed and expanded to support Member States' asylum processes.
- The Note welcomes new and amended laws adopted in many countries around the world reflecting international protection standards, including based on advice and inputs from UNHCR. At the same time, it recalls the

need for UNHCR's engagement over the past year to prevent and address refoulement, underlining the crucial nature of the non-refoulement principle as a customary norm of international law.

- The Note highlights the importance of safeguarding protection and assisting states to manage better complex mixed movements of refugees and migrants along key routes, including over sea and land. Recognizing challenges associated with onward movement of asylum-seekers and refugees, it refers to the **route-based approach**, through which UNHCR supports States to develop comprehensive strategies, responses and policy options which offer lawful alternatives to restrictive measures and externalization.
- The Note describes important and impactful measures to protect displaced and stateless children in 2024 and 2025, including combating child marriage and supporting mental health and psychosocial support. It notes however that many programmes have had to be discontinued following funding cuts, leaving many children in vulnerable situations unassisted. Similarly, many programmes to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls have been scaled back or closed. Tens of thousands of women and girls at risk of sexual violence, including in armed conflict, will go without support unless more resources are forthcoming. The note also documents progress made in community-based protection, outlined in further detail in another Conference Room paper before this Committee.
- On **education**, the Note recalls its importance, including in and after emergencies, to enable young refugees to shape their own futures and find solutions. Vast challenges remain, with around half of **school-aged refugee children out of school**, and major barriers for many girls to accessing and staying in education in many countries.

The Note highlights progress as well as challenges to **inclusion** of forcibly displaced and stateless people in national systems, notably economic inclusion and social protection. Cooperation with

development actors and IFIs has advanced, but more is required to ensure long-term, sustainable systems to meet the needs of forcibly displaced, stateless people and host communities.

- UNHCR continues to support States in addressing internal displacement, including through legal and policy frameworks, and in line with the humanitarian reset.
- On statelessness, the launch of the Global Alliance to End Statelessness marks a new chapter. With over 140 members, it builds on the momentum of the #IBelong campaign. Recent progress in countries like Thailand, Turkmenistan, and Malaysia, and new treaty accessions, are encouraging.
- Finally, the Note welcomes the adoption of ExCom Conclusion No. 117 on durable solutions and complementary pathways. While 1.6 million refugees returned in 2024, resettlement places have sharply declined. Complementary pathways offer promise but cannot replace the need for robust resettlement commitments.
- The international protection system is under unprecedented pressure. UNHCR is committed to this work—but we cannot do it alone. I urge all Member States and partners: recommit to the principles of international protection. Invest in solutions. Uphold the rights of those forced to flee. And ensure that the promise of protection remains real and reachable, for everyone, everywhere.
- Thank you.