

UNHCR Executive Committee – 76th session (6-10 October 2025)***Agenda item 4a: International protection – Australian intervention (458 words)*****Check against delivery**

Australia thanks the Office of the High Commissioner for its note on international protection.

As UNHCR marks its 75th anniversary, Australia acknowledges the rise in those who need access to protection and its related services.

We commend UNHCR's efforts to preserve its core mandate, to protect and safeguard the rights of refugees. Australia has a proud history of humanitarian action and remains a reliable and flexible donor.

Australia is proud to be one of the largest resettlement countries – maintaining 20,000 places in the current program year, the highest in decades.

Notwithstanding Australia's generous resettlement intake, we recognise that, it is crucial to advance and expand complementary pathways for refugees.

To support these efforts, Australia, continues to advocate for refugee labour mobility and break barriers in building this pathway to scale. We continue to work with IOM and UNHCR on a joint project to develop a 'train to hire' model in the Asia-Pacific region. We are proud of our Refugee Student Settlement pilot, which will enable refugees to pursue higher education at Australian universities. Our Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot is now permanent feature of our Humanitarian Program, providing a community-supported pathway for UNHCR-referred refugees.

We support UNHCR's whole-of-route approach and urge UNHCR's ongoing collaboration with IOM and others in our region to operationalise this approach through collective action and a coordinated response; enhance protection sensitive entry; and promote safe and regular migration.

Aligned to the International Protection Note, Australia also recognises that fair and efficient asylum procedures, along with the safe and dignified return of persons not in need of international protection, are critical to the effective functioning of the international protection regime and to the preservation of public confidence in the integrity of national asylum systems. Australia is resolute in maintaining the integrity of our asylum system, and will pursue the returns of people not in genuine need of protection. Australia also appreciates our ongoing collaboration with UNHCR to strengthen asylum systems globally, and inform pragmatic, durable solutions for complex cohorts and regionally displaced populations.

Australia recognises the importance of embedding refugee perspectives and lived experience in our humanitarian policy and programs, demonstrated through our collaboration with Australia's Refugee Advisory Panel. Together, we ensure our initiatives are more inclusive, efficient, and respectful of the rights and dignity of displaced people, including those who face compounded barriers to accessing pathways, such as LGBTIQ+, people with disabilities, stateless persons, and those displaced by long-standing conflicts.

Looking ahead, the Global Refugee Forum Progress Review meeting in December presents a timely opportunity to review our existing commitments and explore collaborative opportunities to advance their effective implementation. We will continue to partner with UNHCR and others to strengthen the international protection system and advance initiatives under the Global Compact on Refugees.