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*Statement by*

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**G e n e r a l   D e b a t e**

Thank you, Chair.

Austria aligns itself with the statement delivered by Denmark on behalf of likeminded European States.

At the outset, let me thank all UNHCR staff in the field and at headquarters for their dedication and hard work in difficult and dangerous operating environments. I equally want to thank High Commissioner Filippo Grandi for his excellent leadership during the past ten years and particularly challenging times, and wish him all the best for his future endeavours.

Chair,

We are deeply concerned about the **continuously rising number of forcibly displaced and stateless persons**, which threatens to climb up to 136 million in 2026. **War, civil conflict and human rights violations** continue to uproot millions of people, forcing them to leave behind the lives they have built, and stripping them of all means of livelihood.

We condemn in the strongest terms the continued unprovoked and unjustified **war of aggression committed by Russia against Ukraine**, which is in its fourth year and has displaced more than 3.7 million people within Ukraine and over 6.7 million beyond Ukraine's borders – predominantly in Europe.

We are deeply concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian situation in **Gaza and Sudan** which has resulted in millions of persons being forced to flee their homes.

Within this context, we call upon all parties to armed conflict globally to strictly abide by their obligation to respect and ensure respect for **international humanitarian law** in all circumstances. This includes the obligation to grant full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and guarantee the safety of humanitarian workers and corridors.

Chair,

Amidst the current funding situation, we appreciate UNHCR's commitment to maximising impact where it matters most. We welcome UNHCR's work within **the UN80 and Humanitarian Reset** processes to become a leaner and more focused organisation.

Rest assured that Austria remains committed to **multilateralism, the rule of law and a rules-based world order**, and will stay a **predictable and reliable partner** for UNHCR. We are proud to be among UNHCR's top donors. For many years, the Office has been one of our largest partners in the implementation of our humanitarian assistance.

Austria appreciates that, despite budget reductions, UNHCR's operations continue to focus on **youth engagement, women-led initiatives** and support to host communities. We value that UNHCR invests in meaningful participation of displaced persons, including by partnering with community-led organisations – particularly those run by women.

Austria will continue to support the Office's precious work in line with our **Strategy on Humanitarian Assistance**. As the Strategy sets out, Austria, in responding to humanitarian crises, commits to enhance its focus on vulnerable groups, including LGBTIQ+ persons.

Chair,

The **new Federal Government of Austria**, which took office at the beginning of March this year, in its **government programme**, envisages ambitious steps on the international level to address forced displacement globally and important reforms of the Austrian asylum system in full accordance with the provisions of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum.

Austria is committed to contribute towards the **reduction of the causes of forced displacement globally** and the **provision of assistance on the ground**. In order to tackle global crises and reduce the causes of forced displacement, Austria is continuing its support for UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations in crisis regions, especially in 75 refugee camps.

Furthermore, Austria will work towards the **strengthening of measures against migrant smuggling** and on the **protection of victims of human trafficking**. Migrant smugglers and human traffickers exploit the vulnerability of refugees, leading to violence, abuse and often fatal consequences. Austria's efforts strive towards safe living conditions, access to legal and social support and the delivery of targeted assistance for traumatised victims of violence and torture.

Austria hosts a **diverse population with a continuously high number of asylum seekers** and migrants and is one of the key refugee-hosting countries in Europe: In 2025, asylum has been granted to more than 5,870 persons – **this is the fifth highest number within the EU** – subsidiary protection to more than 5,360 persons and humanitarian stay to 8,490 persons. **In addition, more than 87,000 displaced persons from Ukraine are currently living in Austria.**

Chair,

Austria welcomes the **route-based approach**, jointly advanced by UNHCR and IOM, that offers a strategic framework designed to address the complex challenges faced by refugees along key routes and across countries of origin, asylum, transit, and destination.

We value the support of particularly affected host countries and communities as well as the strengthening of burden- and responsibility-sharing as enshrined in the **Global Compact on Refugees**.

Being a party to both UN statelessness conventions, Austria welcomes UNHCR's and the international community's efforts to **end statelessness**. In particular, we commend South Sudan for its accession to both UN statelessness conventions, Slovenia for its accession to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, and Malaysia for establishing gender-equal nationality rights.

Austria looks forward to the upcoming **Global Refugee Forum Progress Review** this December as a welcomed opportunity for Member States to reaffirm their support to refugees and host countries.

Let me conclude by reiterating the full support of Austria to the High Commissioner and the dedicated staff of UNHCR in being the lifeline and voice of refugees and forcibly displaced persons wherever they are.

Thank you very much.