



## **76<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNHCR Executive Committee (ExCom)**

### **Agenda Item: General Debate**

Chair,

High Commissioner,

Distinguished Delegates

Malta aligns itself with the statement delivered by Denmark on behalf of likeminded European states and would like to make these additional remarks in its national capacity.

At the outset I wish to first thank the High Commissioner for his statement and for his leadership to steer UNHCR in these unprecedented and challenging times.

It is indeed unprecedented to have so many conflict situations which are causing high numbers of people displaced and are putting immense pressure on UNHCR and humanitarian organisations.

I wish to highlight that Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine, which as the High Commissioner outlined in his statement caused the fastest large-scale displacement since World War Two, has now entered its fourth year. The catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza is leading to forced displacement and suffering to many civilians.

The role of UNHCR in addressing humanitarian needs in these unfolding crises remains as crucial as ever for the millions of vulnerable persons.



In this context, Malta advocates the importance of upholding the values and principles enshrined in International Humanitarian Law that protects civilians, aid workers and allows for humanitarian access.

The Mediterranean continued to witness an increase of arrivals across different routes for another year as a result of instability in the region. This is presenting significant challenges to the receiving countries such as Malta and other host countries in our region.

I welcome the High Commissioner's efforts to adjust operations to ensure sustainability and sound management due to financial constraints, which required difficult decisions. To reiterate its support to UNHCR, Malta has for the current year increased its financial contributions compared to previous years. This reflects our conviction that the present moment calls for greater, rather than lesser investment, in humanitarian action.

Malta supported the UN Global Compact on Refugees since its inception. We therefore welcome the upcoming holding of the high-level officials' meeting of the Global Refugee Forum Progress Review in December and we look forward to the constructive engagement from all parties.

Malta also expresses its support for the non-discriminatory and human rights-based approach of the UNHCR in its operations in the field, including the principles of age, gender and diversity.

UNHCR continues to be an indispensable partner and we highly appreciate UNHCR's continued assistance and cooperation particularly through its offices in Malta.

To conclude I wish to pay tribute to UNHCR staff for their commitment in working under very difficult circumstances.

Thank you.