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Chair: Ms. Stasch (Germany)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 3: High-level segment on statelessness and general debate (continued)

1. **Mr. Al-Mohannadi** (Observer for Qatar) said that the continued aggression, attacks and heinous crimes committed by the Israeli occupation forces against the Palestinian and Lebanese people, their deliberate targeting of camps, schools run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and civilian facilities, had caused the displacement of more than 3 million persons, mostly women, children and persons with disabilities. His delegation called on the international community to continue to provide adequate support to humanitarian response plans and operations for Palestinian and Lebanese refugees and displaced persons and to assume its responsibilities by taking urgent measures to oblige the Israeli occupation authorities to stop their brutal aggression in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Lebanon, which was in flagrant violation of the rules of international law and international humanitarian law and contrary to all human and moral values. The only way to achieve stability and lasting peace in the region was to end the Israeli occupation of Arab territories, reach a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question within the framework of the Arab initiative and ensure the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the return of Palestinian refugees to their regions. A just solution must be found to the plight of the more than 5.9 million Palestinian refugees registered under the UNRWA mandate; the Agency must be given more support and any attempts aimed at ending or reducing its role, stripping Palestinians of their refugee status or liquidating their cause must be prevented.

2. As a proud partner of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in its Refugee Education 2030 strategy, Qatar and its Education Above All foundation, through the Educate a Child programme, helped provide quality primary education for over 1.5 million young refugees and marginalized children in Africa, Asia and the Middle East and educational programmes for 17.2 million children through 100 global partners in more than 65 countries.

3. While continued support for humanitarian responses was essential to alleviate the suffering of refugees and displaced persons, the international community must also address the main causes of displacement, especially conflicts, wars, violence, natural disasters and climate change. Qatar hosted the UNHCR Office in Doha and had provided more than US\$246 million in governmental and non-governmental assistance over five years for UNHCR operations. It ensured neutrality, impartiality and diversity in its actions responding to disasters, combating poverty and unemployment, providing educational opportunities in conflict areas and job opportunities for young people, supporting conflict resolution by peaceful means and acting as mediator to help establish stability, just peace and sustainable development.

4. The Constitution, with the 2005 Nationality Act, provided that Qatari nationality would be granted to persons who did not have citizenship if the required conditions were met. Other legislation provided for the issuance of temporary residence permits to stateless persons, political asylum and regularization of stay towards permanent residence. The right to temporary and permanent residence gave access to education, healthcare treatment, work, ownership and investment, and the issuance of travel documents to allow travel abroad for treatment, study or tourism, with the right to return to the country.

5. **Ms. Schweitzer** (Austria) said that her delegation aligned itself with the statements made on behalf of the European Union and the Friends of the I Belong Campaign to End Statelessness. Her Government was gravely concerned about the continuously rising numbers of forcibly displaced persons, of whom there were currently more than 120 million in the world, representing 1 in every 70 persons. It condemned the ongoing persecution, severe human rights violations, political oppression, conflicts and wars that forced millions to flee their homes and already displaced persons into further displacement, and called on all parties to end conflicts and abide by the obligation to ensure respect for international humanitarian law in all circumstances, including by granting safe and unhindered humanitarian access and guaranteeing the safety of humanitarian workers and corridors.

6. The Austrian Government welcomed the focus put by UNHCR on the protection of vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, women and girls, notably those impacted by sexual and gender-based violence, including through the provision of access to sexual and reproductive healthcare and rights, as well as the continued priority placed on age, gender and diversity. It supported the cross-regional route-based approach being developed by UNHCR in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and recognized the need to adequately address mixed regulatory movements, taking the characteristics of routes into account and developing tailor-made measures for them. In the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees and the principle of burden- and responsibility-sharing, support must be provided to host countries in the regions of origin.

7. Austria was still faced with large numbers of asylum applications: over 16,900 had been registered thus far in 2024, with asylum granted to more than 12,650 persons, subsidiary protection to more than 5,400 and humanitarian stay to nearly 1,000. Over 118,300 displaced persons from Ukraine had been registered since the beginning of the Russian war of aggression against that country. Austria had been the first European Union member State to organize transfers of Ukrainian nationals from the Republic of Moldova, with 580 displaced persons transferred to the country.

8. Welcoming the recent adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Specific Aspects of the Right to a Nationality and the Eradication of Statelessness in Africa, her Government also commended the Governments of the Republic of the Congo and Sao Tome and Principe on their accession to the two conventions on statelessness. It also welcomed the adoption by the Executive Committee of its conclusions on durable solutions and complementary pathways.

9. **Mr. Saranga** (Mozambique) said that, with support from UNHCR, his country was currently hosting around 26,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, who were given shelter, documentation, protection and access to healthcare, education and income-generating activities. In view of the extra demand placed on the country's scarce resources, the Government joined UNHCR in calling on countries, donors and other stakeholders to increase the funding they provided. The country had also registered 550,000 internally displaced persons, who had fled terrorist attacks in the Northern Province of Cabo Delgado; 632,000 others had already returned to their homes. The Government had been pleased to welcome the High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, and the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Solutions to Internal Displacement, Mr. Robert Piper, to the country in March 2024.

10. In coordination with UNHCR, the authorities had conducted a study on statelessness in the country to identify the related risks and threats and explore ways of addressing the situation, in line with the 10 actions proposed in the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness. Welcoming the launch of the Global Alliance to End Statelessness, he emphasized the importance of finding solutions to the displacement crisis, both by addressing its root causes and by intervening after displacement had occurred.

11. **Mr. Tatarkin** (Belarus), recognizing that the situation related to mass displacement had become critical, said it must not be forgotten that each of the 120 million refugees and displaced persons in the world was an individual who had the right to a dignified life and security, regardless of status or reason for displacement. It was difficult to clearly identify the status of persons on the move, since crisis situations caused by natural disasters or economic problems often posed no less a threat to human life than armed conflict. His Government therefore welcomed the further strengthening of coordination between UNHCR and IOM, which would allow for a comprehensive approach to the implementation of international standards and humanitarian obligations, including at national level.

12. He agreed with the High Commissioner that, without peace, there would never be a future without refugees. De-escalation and diplomatic solutions were key to preventing mass displacement crises from worsening. In the search for effective ways of resolving existing conflicts and stimulating dialogue, the Government of Belarus was convening the second Minsk International Conference on Eurasian Security on 31 October and 1 November 2024.

13. Unilateral coercive measures imposed by Western States were also a destabilizing factor that had a significant impact on the mass movement of individuals. In addition to

undermining the economies of both the States affected and the sanctioning countries themselves, they affected cooperation in areas critical to the safe movement of people and the fulfilment of international asylum obligations. The introduction by the European Union in 2021 of illegal sanctions against Belarus, accompanied by the cessation of dialogue and cooperation on border regulation had led to the emergence of crisis situations affecting internally displaced persons, migrants and refugees. The Belarusian authorities had documented ill-treatment of asylum-seekers on the basis of race and nationality, with more than 58 deaths over the previous 3 years caused by cruel treatment by Polish, Lithuanian and Latvian border guards. Fifteen victims of the European Union migration policy had been recorded just in 2024. His Government called on UNHCR to respond appropriately to such cases of loss of life on the country's borders with European Union member States and help put an end to human rights violations and abuses against internally displaced persons.

14. The accusations made against Belarus by some Western countries of "instrumentalizing" migration were unfounded: like most developing countries along the perimeter of that group of States, Belarus was a transit country through which migrants and refugees travelled to the European Union. Furthermore, only a small proportion of the total flow of migrants and refugees into the European Union arrived through Belarus. The protection of refugees was a shared responsibility, without boundaries and based on respect for human dignity and human rights. His Government called on its Western neighbours to resume pragmatic cooperation and dialogue to find a solution to prevent such deaths; it had organized an international conference for that purpose, to be held in Minsk on 15 November 2024, and looked forward to the participation of the leadership of UNHCR and other relevant agencies, as well as all interested States, including countries of transit and destination in the European Union.

15. More than 107,000 citizens of Ukraine had arrived in Belarus in 2024, making a total since the beginning of the conflict of over 253,000, most of whom had come for safety from the European Union to Belarus. In accordance with a decision of the President of Belarus, in order to integrate Ukrainian citizens into society and promptly address issues related to employment and social support, they were given access to healthcare, education, child benefits and pensions on an equal basis with citizens of Belarus. The Government was grateful for the constructive support of UNHCR in that respect and the humanitarian, legal and other assistance provided to persons displaced from Ukraine into Belarus.

16. Rates of statelessness had always been relatively low in Belarus, the number had fallen by almost 5,000 over the previous decade and the problem of stateless children had been resolved. All children born on the territory of Belarus to stateless parents living in Belarus became Belarusian citizens by birth. The Government noted with satisfaction the achievements of the I Belong campaign and welcomed the launch of the Global Alliance to End Statelessness. It continued to work on improving national legislation, including towards future accession to the conventions on statelessness.

17. **Mr. Staniulis** (Lithuania) said that his delegation aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. In the context of the new and recurring armed conflicts and natural disasters, his Government shared the High Commissioner's concern regarding the increased need for humanitarian assistance to refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons and supported the Office's work in responding to the many complex challenges, including the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Since the beginning of that war, almost 85,000 Ukrainians, 35 percent of them children, had been given shelter in Lithuania. Over 55,000 temporary resident permits had been issued to Ukrainian refugees, who had access to accommodation or the means to obtain it, healthcare, education and the labour market. The aftermath of the war would have long-term consequences on people, security and the natural environment in Ukraine and elsewhere. The international community must unite to take all measures to end the human suffering, by stopping the brutal war. UNHCR and other mandated international bodies must be given immediate and unimpeded access to all Ukrainian refugees. His Government remained extremely concerned about the reports of children from Ukraine being forcibly deported to Russia and Belarus and supported initiatives aimed at seeking to clarify their fate.

18. The actions of the authorities of Belarus, and more recently those of Russia, in their continued attempts to instrumentalize migrant and refugee flows from third countries into the

European Union for political purposes, were also of great concern, as they led to serious human rights violations and posed grave challenges to State security. He urged UNHCR to condemn any attempts to instrumentalize migration by orchestrating the movement of third country nationals across State borders.

19. The Government of Lithuania welcomed the results of the second Global Refugee Forum; it had made a number of new pledges and reconfirmed its commitment to the proper implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees. Recognizing the increased protection challenges faced by refugees, particularly, women, children, persons with disabilities and other forcibly displaced persons in vulnerable situations, it stressed the importance of the UNHCR gender-sensitive approach in addressing their specific needs and reaffirmed its commitment to combating sexual and gender-based violence and sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in all its forms.

20. **Ms. Gorely** (Australia), acknowledging the tireless efforts of UNHCR staff and the risks they faced working in dangerous environments, said that her Government offered its sincere condolences on the deaths of UNHCR staff recently killed in Lebanon. 2023 had been the deadliest year on record for humanitarian workers, but 2024 looked likely to be worse. The undermining of international humanitarian law would bring severe consequences for current and future conflicts; calls for compliance must be heard. Her Government had convened a group of Ministers to develop a new Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel, which would drive action to increase safety and security for the courageous staff working to assist and protect civilians. The Australian Government also planned to increase the flexibility of its funding and encouraged others to do the same. In addition to predictable core funding, it had respected its Global Refugee Forum pledges to support the UNHCR responses for Sudan, Afghanistan and the Rohingya crisis. It had also pledged global leadership in expanding access to resettlement and complementary pathway opportunities, exploring solutions to provide refugees with sought-after skills and supporting third-country solutions, notably in its role as Chair of the Global Task Force on Refugee Labour Mobility. Its Skilled Refugee Labour Agreement Pilot would be expanded to deliver up to 500 primary visas by June 2025.

21. **Ms. Biar** (Australia) said that, as the first refugee advisor to join the Australian delegation, she embodied the pledge made by the Australian Government at the first Global Refugee Forum in 2019. In the search for durable solutions, refugees, with their own lived experience, must be involved in all decision-making mechanisms and discussions that affected them. Women, children and other marginalized groups, like persons with disabilities and LGBTIQ+ persons, were increasingly impacted by the tragedies of war, displacement, and sexual and gender-based violence, as in the current crises in the Sudan, Ukraine, Lebanon and Gaza. The importance of addressing their needs was recognized in the “women at risk” visa, of which 32,200 had been granted since 1989 to enable women and children in vulnerable situations to safely resettle in the country. UNHCR supported refugee-led organizations, but should also put greater focus in policy and programming, with associated funding, on refugees, particularly women, and refugee-led organizations.

22. **Ms. Fuentes Julio** (Chile) said that the Chilean Government wished to pay tribute to all UNHCR staff members killed in 2024 and to remind all parties to conflicts of their obligation to protect civilians. In efforts to prevent and respond to statelessness, action had been taken in Latin America and the Caribbean generally to make the right to nationality effective; her country had acceded to both conventions on statelessness, was part of the I Belong campaign and was introducing administrative amendments to guarantee the right to nationality; it also hoped to become a member of the Global Alliance to End Statelessness. Chile currently held the presidency of the Latin American and Caribbean Council of Civil Registry, Identity and Vital Statistics (CLARCIEV), which had recently joined the Alliance. Her Government welcomed the UNHCR Institutional Plan on Solutions to Internal Displacement and the support provided for States in preventing, responding to and seeking solutions to internal displacement. The triple nexus approach, linking humanitarian action, development and peace, was fully relevant in seeking durable solutions from the beginning of displacement, through collaboration with authorities and communities. The Government recognized the need to work differently, to be efficient and to avoid duplication in order to ensure that financial resources and technical assistance were used effectively.

23. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the commitment made in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to leave no one behind and to improve the lives and opportunities of all were central to the implementation of durable solutions for internally displaced persons and for asylum-seekers, refugees and stateless persons. UNHCR must continue to take a gender-based, intersectional and intercultural perspective, to ensure support for those who needed it most, such as women victims of gender-based violence, children and adolescents, LGBTIQ+ persons and communities.

24. Chile was leading consultations under the Cartagena+40 Process on a proposed declaration and plan of action for the period 2024–2034 structured around three pillars: protection and assistance for persons affected by human mobility and statelessness; inclusion and integration through lasting and sustainable solutions; and protection from forced displacement in the context of disasters and adverse effects of climate change. They would be crucial to guiding collective efforts over the coming decade and articulating the commitments made by the States of the region, reflecting the aspirations and commitments to improve protection and assistance for persons affected by human mobility or statelessness, through enhanced cooperation and regional integration, and coordinated and more efficient responses. Interest in joining the Process had come from the private sector, as well as civil society organizations, refugees and academics. It was also hoped that observer countries would subscribe to the Cartagena+40 Multi-Stakeholder Pledge.

25. **Ms. Pipan** (Slovenia) said that her country aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. In response to the unprecedented global scale of displacement, UNHCR continued to provide critical, life-saving assistance to millions of refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless individuals. She expressed her condolences to the families and friends of those who had made the ultimate sacrifice while delivering humanitarian aid, as well as to the entire UNHCR community. It was troubling that the Security Council, of which Slovenia was currently an elected member, had needed to remind States, in its resolution 2730 (2024), of their obligation under international law to respect and protect humanitarian personnel.

26. The Middle East and North Africa region continued to face humanitarian and displacement crises driven by natural disasters and ongoing conflicts. In the Sudan, war and natural hazards had transformed the lives of the Sudanese people over the previous 18 months, with healthcare facilities destroyed and many people dying of starvation. She called for an immediate ceasefire and unfettered access to humanitarian aid. The war in the Gaza Strip, which had caused immense human suffering, had serious regional repercussions, including the spread of conflict to Lebanon, which saw those who had taken refuge there now seeking to return to the country they had previously fled. In response, Slovenia was providing financial and political support while advocating for a political solution, full adherence to international law and a sustainable ceasefire. She commended the entire United Nations system for its efforts to deliver life-saving assistance and was deeply concerned about the groundless public attacks on its credibility.

27. Slovenia had presented several pledges at the second Global Refugee Forum, many of which had been implemented. It had provided financial support for the preparatory process of the Forum and contributed funds for mine action in Ukraine, to help create conditions conducive to the voluntary return of refugees. A team of refugees from Slovenia had played for the first time in a football tournament organized by the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) in Nyon, Switzerland.

28. Recognizing the importance of high-quality disaggregated data, Slovenia had initiated a dialogue with the Expert Group on Refugee, Internally Displaced Persons and Statelessness Statistics. It would soon accede to the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and it welcomed the ambitious yet achievable visions expressed by the Global Alliance to End Statelessness.

29. **Ms. Salsa-Audiffren** (Estonia) said that her country aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. It was disheartening to see the number of crises and, consequently, the number of forcibly displaced persons grow year by year. She welcomed the efforts of UNHCR to prioritize and improve efficiency, and underlined the need to engage development actors and the private sector where possible.

30. The war of aggression waged by Russia against Ukraine constituted a systematic violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian and human rights law. It had created an enabling environment for the commission of atrocities against the civilian population and remained the principal driver of forced displacement in the region. Estonia was hosting 40,000 Ukrainian refugees, equivalent to 3 per cent of the country's population. Thanks to the whole-of-society approach adopted by the Government, most refugees were well settled in the country and were engaged in employment and education. Almost half of the population in Ukraine was in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, and Estonia had provided an estimated €27 million in aid. The current focus was on preparations for the coming winter, which had become critical owing to attacks by Russia on Ukrainian energy infrastructure.

31. Estonia was a long-term and reliable donor of unearmarked contributions to UNHCR, which allowed the Office to respond effectively to the many crises around the world. She was deeply concerned about the escalation of conflict in the Middle East and the spillover of hostilities into Lebanon, where over a million people had been displaced in recent weeks. She deplored the deadly attacks against UNHCR staff in that country, stressed the need to protect humanitarian workers and condemned the obstruction of aid deliveries, which contravened international humanitarian law and exacerbated human suffering. Estonia was providing aid to Lebanon through its civil society partners, in cooperation with local organizations, and had greatly increased its humanitarian assistance to civilians in the Gaza Strip.

32. She condemned in the strongest terms the cynical instrumentalization of displacement by the Russian Federation and Belarus, which were deliberately sending persons from third countries to the Estonian border in blatant violation of international law, including the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Lastly, she welcomed the launch of the Global Alliance to End Statelessness, which was essential to guaranteeing basic human rights and respect for the dignity of stateless persons.

33. **Mr. Yáñez Deleuze** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the outbreak and aggravation of all kinds of conflict, economic inequality between countries of the global North and the global South, and persisting violence and insecurity had led to displacement on a scale that was unprecedented in contemporary history. The phenomenon affected all regions of the world and required an urgent, comprehensive and coordinated international response, based on joint responsibility and effective cooperation that addressed the structural causes and consequences of displacement.

34. Venezuela was committed to providing international protection to those who sought refuge in its territory. Protection and social inclusion for people persecuted on the basis of their race, gender, religion, nationality, membership of social groups or political opinion were guaranteed under the Refugees and Asylum-Seekers Act. Temporary identity cards allowed refugees to move freely around the country, access healthcare, education and employment opportunities, and receive food, fuel and public services. His country fully respected the principle of non-refoulement for all persons who met the requirements for international protection. Those who entered Venezuelan territory illegally to seek asylum were guaranteed the right to due process pursuant to the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees and were not penalized.

35. The Government had, on several occasions, denounced the misuse of the term "refugee" by certain United Nations agencies and States, including UNHCR donors, to describe Venezuelan economic migrants, as it distorted reality and was intended to portray Venezuela as a country of origin for refugees, without any basis in fact. The Venezuelan people and refugees residing in the country were victims of external aggression and almost a thousand unilateral coercive measures that had been illegally imposed by the United States and the European Union, negatively affecting the living conditions of the entire population. He recommended that the High Commissioner should engage in direct and ongoing dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights to gain a deeper understanding of the harm caused by such measures and inform the work programmes and plans of UNHCR. He called for an end to the use of such measures for political ends.

36. Venezuela recognized the importance of adopting inclusive policies in sport for persons displaced by persecution and war. However, the Government had expressed to the High Commissioner its disapproval of the methodology used to select the Refugee Olympic Team and called on UNHCR to correct practices that led to politicization and undermined transparency, impartiality and objectivity. He denounced the establishment of the Quito Process and the Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela, which were part of the maximum pressure campaign against Venezuela waged by the United States. Exaggerated statistics on refugees had been circulated as a justification for collecting funds without due accountability. Those platforms posed a major challenge for the international legal framework and undermined key initiatives such as the Global Compact on Refugees. He called on States and UNHCR to reject action that subverted effective protection and to resist being used for political ends and media campaigns against sovereign nations.

37. Article 32 of the Venezuelan Constitution established the universal principles of *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis*, which meant that no-one born in the national territory or born abroad to a Venezuelan mother or father would be stateless. Similarly, article 6 of the Nationality and Citizenship Act provided that persons who acquired another nationality did not lose their Venezuelan citizenship unless they renounced it. The Government had collaborated closely with UNHCR. The National Refugee Commission's care and protection system had been modernized by enhancing staff training, and the Integrated Refugee Management System had been strengthened.

38. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he wished to commend Chile on the progress it had made in combating statelessness and its leadership in the Cartagena+40 Process, which brought together countries in the region in developing good practice for managing refugees and seeking solutions.

39. He appreciated the close cooperation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela with UNHCR and reiterated his willingness to hold a technical dialogue on issues pertaining to Venezuelan refugees. He was ready to work with the Government to create the conditions for the return of Venezuelan nationals who had left the country. Athletes for the Refugee Olympic Team were selected by the International Olympic Committee based on their refugee status as determined by the host country.

40. His March 2024 visit to Mozambique together with the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Solutions to Internal Displacement had opened his eyes to the enormous challenge represented by mass displacement owing to conflict and climate change, but he could also see great potential for solutions.

41. UNHCR would allocate additional resources and time to dealing with the protection-related aspects of its work in Europe. He welcomed European countries' support for the route-based approach, which was especially useful for countries that had some of the highest numbers of asylum applications. The Office would continue to work closely with IOM to strengthen the capacity of countries such as Belarus to handle mixed flows of refugees and other migrants and help them build up their asylum systems. He recognized the hospitality shown by countries such as Lithuania and Estonia in hosting large numbers of Ukrainian refugees and fully agreed on the need to focus on preparations for the winter in Ukraine, which were vital for millions of the most vulnerable Ukrainians, especially given the high risk of displacement. He had been impressed by the support offered to UNHCR by Slovenia and he hoped that the Government would soon ratify the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Sport was a tool for coexistence and social cohesion, and he congratulated the Latvian refugee team on winning the recent football tournament.

42. He had been pleased to hear that Australia had reaffirmed its commitments on flexible funding for resettlement, and he commended the country for its support for Afghan refugees. He would engage in a dialogue with Australia at a later time to address the challenging questions that had been raised by the representative of the Australian Refugee Advisory Panel.

43. He was grateful to the Government and civil society of Qatar for their generosity and for the country's support in dealing with complex crises, particularly in Afghanistan.

44. **Ms. Neocleous** (Cyprus) said that her country aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. As the global landscape of displacement evolved, with the convergence of multiple crises, humanitarian challenges grew by the day. Urgent and sustained action was needed to provide protection, assistance and durable solutions for those forced to flee their homes. The likely rise in the number of forcibly displaced and stateless persons would pose a formidable challenge to the international community and test its resolve, resources and humanitarian capacity as never before.

45. Cyprus remained committed to upholding humanitarian law and condemned any attempt to instrumentalize migrants and refugees for political ends. Facilitating and orchestrating their movement across borders not only violated their rights but also posed significant obstacles to State security and humanitarian efforts. She called for States to comply with their international obligations to protect civilians and allow access to humanitarian aid. As a member of the European Union, her country supported the whole-of-route and rights-based approach espoused by UNHCR. She welcomed the focus on mixed movements and partnerships with organizations such as IOM.

46. In the light of current challenges, including the situation in the Middle East and the dangerous escalation in Lebanon, Cyprus had stepped up its humanitarian response by facilitating evacuation and accommodating those seeking safety. The country had welcomed over 20,000 Ukrainian nationals since the outbreak of the war of aggression waged by Russia against Ukraine and, over the previous decade, had granted international protection to almost 19,000 third-country nationals, mostly Syrians. For a number of years, Cyprus had been the European Union member State with the highest number of first-time applicants for international protection relative to its population, which had placed significant strain on its national resources and infrastructure. The Deputy Ministry of Migration and International Protection had been established to address the issue, and the Government was constantly upgrading the country's infrastructure to better support asylum-seekers. National refugee policy focused on promoting integration, ensuring access to education and healthcare, and providing vocational training to displaced persons.

47. Cyprus reaffirmed its commitment to the Global Compact on Refugees and recognized the need for sustainable solutions that empowered displaced persons and supported host communities. The Government worked closely with development actors and local organizations to that end. It welcomed the UNHCR strategic framework for gender equity, diversity and inclusion, which ensured that all individuals received support, regardless of their background or identity, and strengthened the effectiveness of humanitarian efforts by embracing the rich diversity of both beneficiaries and staff.

48. **Ms. Milačić** (Montenegro) said that her country aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. Montenegro would continue to be a strong advocate for the protection of civilians and humanitarian workers, who should never be the target of attacks, in accordance with international humanitarian law. She welcomed the route-based approach of UNHCR, which was key to addressing the challenges associated with mixed migration movements, and its sustainable programming initiative, which promoted socioeconomic inclusion, self-reliance and resilience for displaced persons and host communities.

49. At the Global Refugee Forum, Montenegro had committed to improve its statelessness determination procedure, guarantee socioeconomic rights for stateless persons, streamline birth registration procedures and simplify processes for obtaining identification documents. The country had pledged to join global initiatives to eradicate statelessness and protect stateless persons, and the Strategy on Migration and Reintegration of Returnees in Montenegro for the period 2021–2025 contained several measures to end statelessness. An amendment to the immigration law being debated by parliament would address a number of shortcomings in that area.

50. In 2024, almost 1,400 people who had fled to Montenegro from Kosovo had received identity documents based on a landmark 2011 technical cooperation agreement with the authorities of Kosovo. According to UNHCR field data from late September 2024, there were 430 persons at risk of statelessness and 10 stateless persons residing in Montenegro, of whom most belonged to the Roma and Egyptian communities; half of them were children. In July

2024, the Montenegrin parliament had amended its asylum law to allow temporary protection for refugees to be extended indefinitely.

51. **Mr. Andisha** (Afghanistan) said that the world was facing a critical and urgent need to address the unprecedented displacement crisis in Afghanistan. Since the Taliban had returned to power in August 2021, the country had witnessed the largest exodus in its history, with almost 8 million Afghan nationals – a quarter of the population – fleeing the country. The people of Afghanistan were placed in an impossible situation. On the one hand, they faced oppression by the Taliban, which imposed severe restrictions on their freedom and rights, and, on the other, they were confronted with increasing dehumanization and hostility amid rising anti-migrant sentiment in host countries. The recent tragic news that more than 200 Afghan nationals had allegedly been shot at the border between Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan underscored the urgency of addressing the crisis.

52. Many skilled workers and entrepreneurs had left the country, resulting in a lack of skills and a decrease in investment. The ensuing economic downturn had exacerbated poverty and hardship for those who remained. The situation had increased extremism and had turned the country into a safe haven for terrorist groups, which could use Afghanistan as a base to plan and launch operations across borders. Repressive rules had made life unbearable for the population, especially for women and girls, who faced systematic gender-based violence, discrimination and violations of their basic rights. In a recent landmark decision, the Court of Justice of the European Union had recognized gender-related persecution as a valid ground for asylum. International consensus was urgently needed on protection for those fleeing gender violence, as the precarious situation of Afghan nationals was further exacerbated by involuntary returns of refugees from neighbouring and European countries to Afghanistan and the unpredictability of humanitarian funding.

53. Afghanistan was grateful for the solidarity shown by many States that had hosted Afghan refugees, especially during the tumultuous period of the previous three years. Many countries from the region and beyond had, in a spirit of humanity, opened their borders and provided refuge from instability and persecution. However, the international community should advocate for sustainable responses that addressed not only immediate humanitarian needs but also the long-term inclusion of displaced Afghans within host communities.

54. The importance of combining humanitarian development and peacebuilding approaches could not be overstated. The commitments made at the second Global Refugee Forum, when over 2,000 pledges had been announced, must be honoured and converted into tangible progress for those in need. Lastly, he urged all stakeholders to remain committed to the principle of solidarity and to cooperation with UNHCR. The path towards meaningful solutions for displaced persons could not be taken alone but required a unified interdisciplinary approach that prioritized the human rights and dignity of all.

55. **Mr. Chen Xu** (China) said that his Government was grateful to UNHCR for its tireless efforts to respond to various refugee crises and to provide lasting solutions. The current global crisis, in which 200 million people had been compelled to leave their homes, presented a serious challenge. China therefore wished to make a four-point proposal.

56. Firstly, given the unprecedented funding shortfall faced by UNHCR, countries should increase their support, particularly for its work in countries that were bearing the brunt of the refugee crisis. China had contributed to UNHCR for many years, had led a number of projects with support from the Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund, and would continue to provide support where possible.

57. Secondly, efforts were needed to tackle the root causes of mass displacement, especially wars and conflicts. The international community must actively promote ceasefires and peaceful settlements. Communication should prevail over violence. No party to any conflict had the right to prevent humanitarian organizations from reaching refugees. As a permanent member of the Security Council, China had worked with developing countries to build consensus and promote peace, and would continue to do so.

58. Thirdly, a global approach was necessary to strengthen the development of countries of origin and create favourable conditions for the return of refugees. Developing countries must also be helped to bolster their capacity for disaster risk management, thereby reducing

the number of climate refugees. His country's experience showed that poverty reduction efforts should be combined with support for businesses, echoing the sustainable solutions promoted by UNHCR, which would help vulnerable people to become independent and to find long-term solutions.

59. Fourthly, emerging technologies should be leveraged to serve refugees. Artificial intelligence had already played a key role in refugee status determination and early warning processes. The Chinese Government encouraged UNHCR to use artificial intelligence to improve the precision and the efficiency of its services. China had recently proposed an inclusive plan for capacity-building in respect of artificial intelligence with the aim of ensuring that artificial intelligence contributed to the welfare of all humanity, including refugees.

60. **Mr. Turatbekov** (Observer for Kyrgyzstan) said that one of his Government's highest priorities was to eradicate statelessness by ensuring that every individual was properly documented. The Government was resolute in its efforts to ensure that all individuals could exercise their rights and had access to essential services from birth. Accordingly, in May 2024, it had launched a unique digital project to guarantee the universal registration of newborns. Previously, about 10,000 children each year had not been issued with a birth certificate and consequently had been deprived of access to public services. Through the use of advanced digital technologies and the integration of government information systems, the registration process had been made more efficient. Data on every newborn was automatically entered into the registration system. If a child's parents did not apply for documents, the social services would be notified and would intervene. Since the launch of the project, hundreds of children who had not been registered on time had received birth certificates.

61. The project had been selected as one of the finalists of the Digital Game Changers Award, which recognized contributions to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through digital technology. The success of the project demonstrated that even a small nation could take the lead in documenting individuals through innovation.

62. **Mr. Tiwari** (Observer for Nepal) said that the Government of Nepal appreciated the Office's efforts to respond to emergencies by protecting and providing assistance to refugees and other vulnerable populations. Refugees, migrants and displaced persons were among the groups most exposed to conflicts, climate crisis, disasters, food insecurity and health emergencies. The Government shared the High Commissioner's view that the effects of climate change – floods, drought, crop failures and extreme weather events – had become "displacement multipliers". As a climate-vulnerable country, Nepal called upon the international community to fulfil climate financing commitments and looked forward to a meaningful outcome from the upcoming twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 29).

63. Despite not being a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto and despite being a landlocked least developed country with limited resources and domestic difficulties, Nepal had sheltered thousands of Bhutanese refugees for decades. It did so on purely humanitarian grounds. There were currently over 18,000 refugees in Nepal, most of them elderly, desperately waiting to return to their homeland. As the High Commissioner had rightly pointed out, countries of origin bore the greatest responsibility in creating the conditions for their safe return. The Government expressed its appreciation to the countries that had supported the resettlement of Bhutanese refugees.

64. The unit for the coordination of refugee affairs, under the Ministry of Home Affairs, worked closely with the UNHCR. Despite capacity constraints, the Government had taken steps to promote the livelihoods, opportunities and self-reliance of refugees, and to provide them with access to education and health services and income-generating activities. Given the country's vulnerability to climate-induced disasters, Nepal would continue to address issues related to refugees' lives and livelihoods in its emergency response plans. Refugees had been included in the national coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccination programme. As a host country, Nepal called for enhanced international cooperation and solidarity to protect refugees and other people on the move around the world.

65. **Mr. Ali Ahmad** (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic) said that his Government was grateful to UNHCR for discharging its mandate under complex conditions, especially in the Middle East, which had seen a brutal return of the use of force, leading to unprecedented flows of migrants and internally displaced persons. In occupied Palestine, a genocide was being inflicted upon the Palestinian people, with the killing of civilians, refugees and internally displaced persons in shelters, schools and hospitals, and the destruction of civilian infrastructure.

66. Since the latest outbreak of hostilities in Lebanon, Syria had been overwhelmed by displaced persons. Some 450,000 Syrians, Lebanese and other foreign nationals had entered the country to escape Israeli shelling. The Government strived to ensure the dignified return of refugees and internally displaced persons, working with UNHCR and coordinating with neighbouring States to accelerate the return process, facilitating the issuance of entry documents and guaranteeing free transit for returnees. The requirement for returning Syrian nationals to exchange \$100 for local currency upon entry had been suspended, and shelters and other services had been made available to foreign nationals.

67. Israeli aggression had created a challenging situation in which to meet the needs of returning citizens, internally displaced persons and refugees. That could only be done if an end was put to support for terrorists, the foreign occupation of Syrian territory, unilateral coercive measures, the pillaging of national resources and the misinformation campaigns designed to undermine the Government's efforts.

68. To overcome the current global challenges, donors must honour their commitments to refugees and support must be provided for countries of origin, guided by the reality on the ground. The Syrian Government stood ready to maintain its cooperation and dialogue with UNHCR on the issues within its mandate.

69. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that the geographical position of Cyprus meant that it was exposed to population movements. He had recently met the President of Cyprus and had informed him that UNHCR stood ready to assist the country in responding to challenges presented by new arrivals. The Office would also engage with the Cypriot authorities on creating the conditions for the return of Syrian refugees, in full respect for the voluntariness and dignity of such returns.

70. Commending Montenegro on becoming one of the first countries to join the Global Alliance to End Statelessness, he said he welcomed the tangible progress the country had made in reducing statelessness and the measures that were being taken to end the displacement caused by the break-up of the former Yugoslavia.

71. UNHCR would continue to pay maximum attention to the plight of Afghan refugees, working in particular with the main host countries, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. It maintained its non-return advisory, calling on States to not to forcibly return Afghan nationals and would continue its humanitarian operations inside Afghanistan to address the plight of internally displaced persons.

72. The call by China for increased support for UNHCR was welcome, as the Office's budget was chronically underfunded. He agreed that it was important to focus on solutions to the root causes of displacement. In that regard, China had made an interesting observation regarding the need to strengthen sustainable development in countries of origin. Although development activities clearly fell outside the Office's mandate, it was willing to establish partnerships with development organizations.

73. He noted the innovative approach of Kyrgyzstan to eliminating statelessness and the fact that it had been internationally recognized for its use of digital tools. UNHCR was open to receiving advice and support in areas such as artificial intelligence and was willing to cooperate with all countries, large and small, and to learn from their valuable experiences.

74. Nepal had indeed hosted tens of thousands of Bhutanese refugees for decades – a situation that had been partly resolved through resettlement, although a group of people remained in the country. An extra effort was needed so that they might return in dignity to Bhutan. UNHCR would appeal to all relevant stakeholders, including the country of origin, the country of asylum and the resettlement countries, to find a creative solution.

75. He had witnessed the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic first-hand, having visited a few days previously. UNHCR put the estimated number of new arrivals at almost 300,000, although it was possible that the true number was higher. He appreciated the authorities' efforts to facilitate the entry of persons fleeing Lebanon, including by extending the suspension of the \$100 exchange requirement for Syrian nationals. He was also grateful for the space given to UNHCR and other organizations to monitor and support new arrivals and returns. Such monitoring, both at the border and in places of destination, was extremely helpful for the mobilization of resources.

76. **Ms. Osman** (Observer for Malaysia) said that her delegation associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. As a country directly impacted by the conflict in Myanmar, Malaysia supported regional and international efforts aimed at finding a peaceful and amicable political solution. While not a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto, it continued to provide the necessary assistance to refugees on its territory and currently hosted the largest number of refugees and asylum-seekers in South-East Asia. Persons from Myanmar, mostly Rohingya, accounted for 88 per cent of registered refugees in Malaysia. Despite numerous constraints, including overstretched resources, the Government continued to strengthen its social protection system for refugees by providing them with access to education through alternative learning centres and access to healthcare at a subsidized rate.

77. As much remained to be done to realize the right to education for refugees in Malaysia, the Government was keen to learn about the best practices of other host countries. It had revised its National Security Council Directive No. 23 with the aim of addressing the issues affecting refugees and asylum-seekers in Malaysia in a more holistic manner while awaiting their resettlement to a third country. The Government also cooperated closely with UNHCR on the management of refugees through a joint task force.

78. After a long struggle, it was expected that children born abroad to Malaysian women would soon be eligible to receive citizenship. A citizenship bill had been submitted and would undergo its second and third readings during the current session of Parliament.

79. The humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza had gone unchecked for over a year. About 90 per cent of the people of Gaza had been displaced and the conflict showed no sign of abating – in fact, it had escalated and spilled over to the region. In solidarity with Palestine, Malaysia had flown 127 displaced Palestinians, including 41 wounded, from Gaza to Malaysia for medical treatment. The Government strongly called for an end to the occupation and for Israel to comply with the decision of the International Court of Justice without delay. Malaysia stood firm on its position that the Palestinians deserved their own independent and sovereign State, based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

80. In conclusion, Malaysia reaffirmed its call for burden- and responsibility-sharing and for a collective effort to address the global conflicts that were the main driver of displacement and statelessness.

81. **Mr. Nyama** (Observer for Gabon) said that his delegation fully supported the statement made by the Congo on behalf of the African Group. A combination of armed conflict, political violence, climate change and food insecurity had caused mass forced displacement throughout the world. Africa had paid a particularly heavy price, with 45.9 million refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons on the continent, as well as 1 million stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness. The present meeting afforded another opportunity for States to reflect more deeply on how to manage migration flows and protect the human rights of refugees and displaced persons, while seeking durable solutions and holistic policy approaches based on early warning, preventive diplomacy, good governance and social and economic development.

82. For decades, Gabon had demonstrated its solidarity with refugees in conformity with the international instruments on the protection of forcibly displaced persons to which it had acceded. In 2018, it had made a commitment to strengthen refugee protection under the Global Compact on Refugees – a commitment it had renewed at the Global Refugee Forum. The country's transitional authorities had reaffirmed that they were willing to grant asylum to anyone who requested it. As the authority responsible for the reception and management of refugees and asylum-seekers, the National Commission for Refugees carried out activities

to promote their socioeconomic integration and independence, including through their participation in development projects. A good number of refugees and asylum-seekers had benefited from training, launched by the National Employment Office, in the project management and financial administration of income-generating activities. Refugees had been assisted in obtaining the documents they needed in order to carry out such activities.

83. Statelessness was a problem that merited particular attention, as about 10 per cent of the population of Gabon did not have a birth certificate. To effectively address the situation, the Government had taken a systematic approach to birth declaration and had made the late birth registration procedure more flexible. The Government was also working with stakeholders to set up a national commission to combat statelessness. Gabon reiterated its support for the I Belong campaign and the Global Alliance to End Statelessness.

84. Migrants and refugees in Gabon enjoyed free access to healthcare under national health programmes. Several refugees with long-term health conditions benefited from health insurance on an equal footing with Gabonese nationals, and more refugees were being enrolled in the health insurance scheme. His delegation called for collective action to uphold the inalienable right of all displaced persons to live in dignity.

85. **Ms. Suhail M. Baqer** (Observer for Iraq) said that Iraq continued to stand with the Palestinian people, who had a legitimate claim to self-determination, to return and to a Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital. For decades, the occupying Power had perpetrated systematic crimes, trampling on international law and United Nations resolutions. It was committing massacres in Lebanon, risking the spread of war throughout the region. Iraq called on the international community to put pressure on Israel to comply with international law towards lasting peace, so that the Palestinian people could enjoy their rights.

86. Iraq was concerned at the rise in the number of displaced persons and refugees throughout the world. The international community must stand in solidarity and work with host countries to address long-standing crises, in particular the growing problem of climate change.

87. Iraq was a country both of transit and of destination, hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees on its territory. The Government was committed to providing them with assistance and medical care, but called on the international community to increase burden- and responsibility-sharing in support of host countries.

88. It had effectively addressed the issue of internal displacement and had relieved the suffering of internally displaced persons. Following the liberation of parts of the country, the Government had worked with UNHCR and other international organizations to reintegrate refugees and internally displaced persons, and would be happy to share its experiences with other countries. After the operation to dismantle Da'esh, a number of refugees had remained in camps. In 2024, some of them had been moved, under the coordination of United Nations agencies, in order to improve their living conditions. Over 2,000 families had returned to their places of origin. Nevertheless, the Al-Hawl camp in the Syrian Arab Republic still held thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons who required assistance so that they could be rehabilitated and return to their homes and livelihoods. The Ministry of Migration and Displaced Persons was working with international agencies to rehabilitate and provide food and support for refugees and internally displaced persons.

89. **Mr. Mai Phan Dung** (Observer for Viet Nam) said that, to prevent the constant increases in mixed migration flows, peace and stability had to be maintained, the principles of international law and international humanitarian law had to be upheld and the root causes of displacement had to be addressed. At the same time, humanitarian assistance had to be provided more expeditiously and in greater amounts. Maintaining a distinction between those opting for migration through unsafe routes and those fleeing crises would facilitate appropriate action.

90. The measures that had been taken to address statelessness over the ten years of the I Belong campaign had contributed to improvements. His country, for example, had made remarkable efforts to implement the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness 2014–2024. It had also adopted laws on civil status and identity. An assessment was under way of the National Action Programme on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics 2017–2024, undertaken

in part to determine whether the birth registration targets set out in the Programme had been achieved. The possibility of acceding to the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness was being studied.

91. His country, which welcomed the launch of the Global Alliance to End Statelessness, was committed to continuing efforts to end statelessness. It looked forward to the tangible outcomes of the next phase of the Alliance's work.

92. **Mr. Alcántara** (Observer for the Dominican Republic) said that, in view of the unprecedented increase in the number of people seeking protection, joint efforts would have to be made not only to raise funds internationally but also to address the causes of mass displacement. In his country, everyone had legal pathways to the nationality that he or she was entitled to. Foreign nationals who gave birth in the country's hospitals or clinics received documents that made it possible for them to obtain birth certificates for their children and thus to register with the consulate or embassy of the country of which they were nationals or begin the naturalization process. The criteria for eligibility for Dominican citizenship were clear.

93. **Mr. Cuc** (Republic of Moldova), noting that ongoing crises had forced millions from their homes, said that the idea that there were likely to be 140 million forcibly displaced or stateless persons by 2025 was deeply alarming. Ensuring that UNHCR continued to provide protection and aid was critical.

94. In February 2022, after the Russian Federation, in an unprovoked and unjustified move, had attacked Ukraine, his country had found itself in the midst of a rapidly unfolding humanitarian crisis. Before then, there had been only one or two UNHCR staff members in the Republic of Moldova; within days of the start of the war, the UNHCR field presence had increased considerably. The High Commissioner himself had witnessed the situation on the ground, which had involved managing the arrival of more than a million Ukrainian refugees, around 120,000 of whom, mostly women and children, had chosen to remain. In only a few countries did refugees account for a larger share of the total population than in Moldova. Against that backdrop, his Government welcomed the closer focus on programming designed to help ensure that refugees contributed to the development of their host communities.

95. His country, whose people were grateful for the honourable mention they had received at the Nansen Refugee Award ceremony held two days previously, had demonstrated its commitment to providing international protection to those seeking refuge. At the second Global Refugee Forum, it had made a number of ambitious pledges. Moldova had also joined the Global Alliance to End Statelessness, acceded to the statelessness conventions and developed a legal framework for addressing statelessness.

96. His delegation welcomed the emergency preparedness planning done by UNHCR and echoed the call to scale up humanitarian assistance. The country would continue to keep its borders open to those seeking refuge, but counted on continuing to receive the support it needed to ease the burden that represented.

97. **Mr. Mata Prates** (Uruguay) said that his country and UNHCR had concluded an agreement to support the implementation of a recent decree under which more than 20,000 people who had entered Uruguay in search of a safe haven would be able to obtain residence permits. Support would also be provided for a refugee recognition programme developed by the country's Refugee Commission with a view to facilitating the provision of international protection to Venezuelan nationals.

98. Uruguay had ratified the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and acceded to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, which had entered into force for the country in 2018. In 2014, it had been one of the countries to adopt a plan of action for the protection of refugees and stateless persons in Latin America and the Caribbean. Provisional identity documents were issued to stateless persons and asylum-seekers; refugees and stateless persons were granted permanent residency; steps were taken to provide care for undocumented child and adolescent migrants; and refugees and stateless persons had access to education and health services on an equal footing with Uruguayan nationals.

99. **Mr. Eheth** (Cameroon) said that, despite the international community's determination to address statelessness, many challenges remained; his country had taken part in all efforts

to address them, including the I Belong campaign. After the 2018 launch of the N'Djamena Initiative on the Eradication of Statelessness in Central Africa, it had adopted an action plan to combat statelessness, which had the primary objectives of ensuring that no child was born stateless, eliminating gender-based discrimination in nationality laws, preventing the resolution of border disputes from leaving people stateless, registering births, issuing nationality certificates and other relevant documents, collecting better data on statelessness and acceding to the statelessness conventions. In 2019, it had made four related pledges and, in 2024, the country's lawmakers had authorized the President to proceed with the country's accession to the statelessness conventions.

100. **Mr. Da Silva Nunes** (Brazil), speaking on behalf of the Friends of the I Belong Campaign, said that the group's creation had been informed by a shared aspiration to fulfil the universal human right to a nationality. The campaign, together with the Global Plan of Action to End Statelessness, had led to significant progress over the previous decade. Since the campaign's launch, 14 States had acceded to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and 18 to the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Hundreds of thousands of formerly stateless persons had acquired nationalities. Countries the world over had adopted commendable reforms, including the removal of gender discrimination in nationality laws, to prevent statelessness.

101. Despite that progress, however, at least 4.4 million people, who often reported feeling invisible and excluded, were still deprived of a nationality. States that had not done so were thus encouraged to consider acceding to the statelessness conventions and take steps to reform relevant laws and policies, particularly nationality laws that discriminated against women, to allow women to confer nationality on their children on the same basis as men. Efforts to collect improved data on statelessness should be redoubled, and the capacity of developing countries to collect such data should be built. Quantifying statelessness was a shared responsibility.

102. The work done by UNHCR to address statelessness and help States do likewise was commendable. Provision for technical cooperation with States seeking to update their domestic legislation to prevent and reduce statelessness should nonetheless be strengthened. The launch of the Global Alliance to End Statelessness would bring together a broader and more diverse range of actors working to end statelessness, which was both preventable and solvable; States and other relevant stakeholders were encouraged to join the Alliance.

103. **Mr. Markotić** (Croatia) said that, despite the situation in much of the world, the humanitarian spirit was alive and well, as demonstrated by the thousands of pledges made at the second Global Refugee Forum. His country had supported and intended to continue supporting projects for Syrians who had fled their country and was firmly committed to honouring the pledges that it had made at the Forum, including to provide aid to civilian populations in Gaza and Armenia. In October 2023, Croatia had also pledged support for efforts to end statelessness in south-eastern Europe.

104. War in Europe had become a reality once again and, since 2022, Croatia had provided safe haven to 25,000 people displaced by the war Russia was waging on Ukraine. Those who had requested temporary protection had been provided with housing. They also had access to the labour market and to such basic services as healthcare and education.

105. Croatia, a country through which migrants passed on their way elsewhere, supported the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Priority should be given to safe and legal migration pathways.

106. Lastly, city officials in Zagreb worked closely with the local UNHCR office. Their most recent joint project had been the establishment of a welcome centre for asylum-seekers, persons under international or temporary protection and foreign workers.

107. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that UNHCR looked forward to working with the Government of Malaysia to address the challenges the country faced as host to fairly large numbers of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. Although there was a distinction between refugees and migrants, as the representative of Viet Nam had suggested, people moved together, often trafficked by the same criminals. UNHCR and IOM cooperated for that reason. For that reason, too, both global compacts were useful.

108. Several years earlier, when he had become High Commissioner, Iraq had been the theatre of one of the world's most severe displacement crises. UNHCR was proud to have contributed to the progress that had enabled the resolution of much of the crisis; there was much to be learned from that experience. However, in what could be a harbinger of a new refugee crisis in the Middle East, people from Lebanon were now beginning to arrive on the borders of Iraq.

109. UNHCR would continue to support the commendable efforts made to prevent statelessness by the authorities of the Dominican Republic. Other commendable developments in Latin America had included the decree under which more than 20,000 asylum-seekers had obtained permanent residency in Uruguay.

110. The measures that the transitional authorities of Gabon were taking or envisaging to prevent statelessness, including by issuing birth certificates, were also welcome. The Government of Cameroon, a country that both hosted refugees from elsewhere and was affected by internal displacement from the Far North, had likewise made commendable efforts in respect of statelessness.

111. On his first visit to the Republic of Moldova, in late February and early March 2022, he had been struck by the scale of the humanitarian and logistical challenges facing the country. Since then, the country's people, whose honourable mention at the Nansen Refugee Award ceremony was well deserved, had made tremendous efforts, showing considerable generosity and steadfastness, to enable their small country to move from emergency management to inclusion. Ukrainians had also sought refuge in Croatia, where UNHCR also worked with cities, which, although they might lack the resources available to national Governments, were often refugees' first ports of call.

112. Lastly, he thanked the Friends of the I Belong Campaign. If the Global Alliance to End Statelessness was expanding, it was in no small part due to that group's advocacy efforts.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.