

PLENARY

**U.S. Delegation Statement
70th Session of the UNHCR Executive Committee
October 2019**

Mr. Chairman,

Five years into the ambitious ten-year *#IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness*, we are reminded that UNHCR has set a high bar, and that every Member State should play a role to achieve this noble goal. Statelessness is a problem that can be solved – actually solved – through political will and technical assistance. We can get to zero stateless persons globally, but only if Member States take bold steps and avoid creating new situations of statelessness. For our part, the United States – consistent with the U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security – is committed to improving the meaningful participation of women in processes connected to peace, security, and decision-making. We continue to support efforts to end discrimination against women in nationality laws, and are pushing for nationality law reforms in the 25 countries that currently do not allow women to confer citizenship to their children on an equal basis with men.

We pledge to make strong diplomatic efforts to advocate for the prevention and reduction of statelessness, and will continue to provide U.S. humanitarian assistance through UNHCR to help protect stateless persons, particularly in

countries hosting large stateless populations, such as Cote d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, Kenya, Kuwait, and Thailand.

Our efforts are paying off, but we know that our work and commitments can be even stronger. To this end, The United States has commissioned an external evaluation of our financial and diplomatic efforts over the past five years to end statelessness. Once completed, this evaluation will provide valuable information about how we can improve our impact.

Mr. Chairman, as the High Commission and others discussed earlier today, in December we will reconvene here in Geneva for the first Global Refugee Forum. In line with the U.S. Women, Peace, and Security Strategy, the United States will highlight American best practices for maximizing the “protection for women and girls” in conflict areas. For example, our “Safe from the Start” initiative, and related gender-based violence innovation funding, addresses prevention of and response to gender-based violence in emergencies, thus providing safety for women and children.

We will also showcase our overall shared commitment to education, including our efforts to ensure access to quality education for displaced children, and challenge donors and private sector partners to leverage their contributions to share the burden.

Furthermore, in December we will commit to improving the sustainability of our humanitarian responses and highlight our work through improved coherence between relief and development programming. The United States has strongly supported the World Bank's investments and policy engagement in refugee-hosting countries through the Global Concessional Financing Facility and the IDA 18 Refugee Sub-Window, bringing game-changing additional resources to support refugees and host communities by building the capacity of local institutions and infrastructure to address the needs of both. As we continue to foster close coordination and planning between humanitarian and development actors we will continue working to ensure there are effective protection mechanisms in the refugee financing facilities.

Finally, I'd like to emphasize that the United States remains committed to leading the world in humanitarian assistance. In our Fiscal Year 2019, which just closed last week, we provided nearly \$1.7 billion to UNHCR. But we also remain committed to promoting burden sharing with our partners and allies, and ensuring greater efficiency, transparency, accountability, and effectiveness of our humanitarian assistance. In this regard, we will continue to press for the fulfillment of commitments made under the Grand Bargain, especially those related to joint needs assessments and the reduction of management costs.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, the United States remains a grateful nation for the tireless efforts of humanitarian workers who every day risk their personal safety on behalf of the forcibly displaced. We will continue to support protection for humanitarian workers. We call on parties to armed conflict to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, including those relevant to the safety and security of humanitarian personnel. And, we will take every action to support humanitarian organizations, and to respect their independence and neutrality. To UNHCR leadership and staff alike, we applaud your devotion to serving others through your unbounded dedication and unyielding resolve. Thank you.