

Global Refugee Forum 2019
Plenary Debate
Statement of the Principality of Liechtenstein

Geneva, 17-18 December 2019

**H.E. Ambassador Peter Matt, Permanent Representative of the Principality of
Liechtenstein in Geneva to the United Nations**

Chair,

It is mostly a matter of luck where we are born, whether the place we are born to is affected by conflict, political crisis or war and whether we are subjected to persecution for reasons closely tied to our identity. The 70.8 million people currently forcibly displaced around the world had no choice. Had they had one, most of them would have stayed where they felt they belonged. This thought should make us humble and be at the heart of our efforts for collective solidarity with persons in flight as well as communities hosting them. The 1951 Refugee Convention was a giant leap to cast the most essential rules of this much needed international solidarity into legal form. The Convention has shaped many States' national asylum systems and made this world a more humane place. Nonetheless, the past has demonstrated that our answer needs to be more comprehensive and go beyond the fulfilment of our legal obligations. In recognition of this fact, States adopted the Global Compact on Refugees in December 2018. The Compact is a clear statement that our solidarity must aim for real burden- and responsibility-sharing. Liechtenstein is aware of its responsibility in this regard. Our country participated in the resettlement program and even though not legally bound to do so, in the EU's relocation program too. Every year, Liechtenstein spends 2.7 million Swiss Francs on refugee and migration assistance projects. Since 2012, 5.1 million Swiss Francs went to emergency aid and education programmes for refugees in the Syria context alone. Also in the future, Liechtenstein will take its fair share in strengthening cooperation and solidarity with refugees and host countries. For the first Global Refugee Forum, the Liechtenstein Government has therefore decided on two pledges:

As a first pledge, Liechtenstein will provide additional multi-year funding to the UNHCR and increases its contributions for the years 2019-2021 by 33% per year. This multi-year funding caters to the financial stability and flexibility needed for long-term planning by the UNHCR, an indispensable actor to address the plight of refugees worldwide.

As a second and joint pledge, the Liechtenstein Government will fund a Language Teaching Programme for Syrian and Iraqi refugees in South-East Turkey totalling 1.1 million Swiss Francs. Our implementing partners are the charitable foundation "Liechtenstein Languages" and RET International. The Programme will teach Turkish and English to Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Turkey to enable their participation in society, interaction with authorities and access to health services and the labour market. "Liechtenstein Languages" has developed a playful teaching method based on latest neurological research which enables refugees and asylum-seekers to acquire a new language quickly in a friendly environment that fosters community-building among course participants.

RET International has extensive experience in providing refugees with access to education and employment. It will provide the human and material resources for the Turkish and English classes at various sites in South-East Turkey. "Liechtenstein Languages" will train RET personnel in its teaching method and new language trainers who will be able to train new language teachers. The programme will run from 2020 to 2022 and reach 2'136 direct and more than 10'000 indirect beneficiaries. The joint pledge aims to address the complex challenges of the refugee situation in Turkey. It is meant to meet needs and support communities in the area of education, to enable local integration and further the GCR objectives of easing pressure on host countries and enhancing refugee self-reliance.

Our delegation, RET International and Liechtenstein Languages stand ready to provide additional information on the joint pledge as required. States interested in developing similar Language Teaching Programmes for refugees are invited to approach us.

Let me end by thanking the co-hosts, UNHCR and Switzerland, and the co-conveners for their tremendous efforts in organizing the first Global Refugee Forum. We hope for promising results.

Thank you.