

UNHCR 71th ExCom – October 2020

Agenda item 3 *General debate*

DENMARK

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Chair, High Commissioner, Distinguished delegates

Aligning with the EU statement, we commend UNHCR for its comprehensive response to the severe impact of the global health crisis.

COVID-19 affects us all but has hit particularly hard in existing humanitarian and forced displacement crisis. We fear that refugees and host communities will bear the brunt of the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic.

With an unprecedented level of forced displacement we must stand together.

Denmark has shown global solidarity with a COVID-19 response of more than 85 mill. USD in humanitarian assistance, including 14,7 mill. USD for UNHCR's COVID-appeal. This is testament to our continued commitment to burden and responsibility sharing.

In 2020 the Danish government raised its contribution to UNHCR to an all-time high of 510 mill. DKK¹– and we have pledged the same for 2021 subject to parliamentary approval. As a small country we are proud to be UNHCR’s 7th largest donor - by population size currently no. 2. Under our partnership with UNHCR, we provide **un-earmarked, flexible and multi-year** support. We are also including responses to protracted displacement in our **bilateral development programs**, incl. Uganda, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Jordan and Lebanon.

The pandemic has significant gendered impacts, incl. by exacerbating risks of GBV and SEA. We commend UNHCR for stepping up its efforts to protect forcibly displaced women and girls in a comprehensive manner. We call on UNHCR to ensure sufficient resources are channeled to GBV response, incl. sexual and reproductive health services.

Chair, the fundamental challenges in global displacement remain unsolved. There is a need to change the incentives that lead people to embark on dangerous journeys, we need to combat the cynical human smugglers and we need to effectively return those found not to be in need of international protection. Host countries are overburdened. Funding is too limited. The Danish government believes we need a fair and humane asylum system within international law.

¹Approx. 75, 6 million USD

Against this background, Denmark remains strongly committed to the GCR.

Inclusion in national education and health systems, access to labor markets and freedom of movement for refugees enable additional development funding for host countries and help facilitate durable solutions.

Inclusive responses as outlined in the GCR will ensure better protection in this crisis. It is crucial that our collective commitment to the GCR does not waver in the face of COVID-19 and we are pleased that UNHCR continues to facilitate the process so efficiently at all levels.

At the Refugee Forum, Denmark made a number of pledges incl. in support of **durable solutions, education and clean energy**. They have either already been implemented or are on the way to being implemented. We encourage other donors to match financially the inclusive policy pledges of host countries.

We have joined the core group of the SSAR Support Platform. This reflects our long-term support for durable solutions for displaced Afghans and host communities.

Chair, we hope the joint pledge on the rights of women and girls will help ensure that Age, Gender and Diversity considerations are mainstreamed in GCR-implementation.

We encourage AGD as a priority area for monitoring and reporting. We also highlight the need to ensure meaningful refugee participation.

Chair, we welcome UNHCR's engagement in IDP response. We hope that the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement will provide the impetus for an improved response to IDP situations.

We remain concerned of the situation in the Sahel and hope the ministerial Roundtable which Denmark co-hosts on 20 October will provide tangible support for this humanitarian crisis.

Chair,

We welcome UNHCR's focus on risk management and new approach to budgeting, planning and reporting.

Finally, allow me to express our sincere appreciation for UNHCR staff carrying out their important work under these particular difficult circumstances.

Thank you