



**71ª Sessão do Comitê Executivo do ACNUR  
5-9 de outubro, Palais des Nations**

Agenda item 4 – International Protection

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate Ms. Gillian Triggs for her first year (and great job) as Assistant High Commissioner for Protection. She took office right before the Global Refugee Forum, at a moment when we could not have been more optimistic about the next steps of humanitarian protection. Nobody could imagine that, a few months later, the COVID-19 pandemic would place refugees and other persons of concern in an even more vulnerable condition than they usually are.

Measures taken by many countries due to the pandemic have challenged the right to asylum and the principle of "non-refoulement". We strongly believe that those measures should be exceptional and temporary and that the cornerstone of international protection must always be preserved. In this regard, we would like to commend Member States who have found alternatives to guarantee international protection.

As mentioned in the report, despite the challenges brought by the sanitarian crisis, Brazil has kept improving its national asylum system, in particular simplifying the recognition of refugees, in line with the Cartagena Declaration. The Brazilian National Committee for Refugees has granted “prima facie” refugee status to more than 50 thousand Venezuelans, among them 722 children and adolescents. Today, our country has the largest number of formally recognized Venezuelan refugees in the world.

“Operação Acolhida”, basis of the Brazilian response to the flow of Venezuelan migrants and refugees, has assisted over 500,000 Venezuelans (including those who have traveled through Brazil to other countries). In Brazil, refugees enjoy free access to education, health and social assistance services. In this spirit, our Government has never hesitated to include migrants and refugees in our USD 38 billion exceptional cash transfer program in response to the public health emergency, destined to the low-income population.

While we stand firm in our commitment to the international protection of refugees, we recognize and encourage as an important tool of permanent solution their undeniable right to return to their countries of origin. Nevertheless, it is alarming to observe, especially in light of the socioeconomic deterioration caused by the pandemic, refugees returning without any relevant improvement in their origin countries. The international community must not condone to cases of returning refugees suffering from stigmatization, sometimes instigated by their own country's Government.

Since its establishment 70 years ago, UNHCR has been constantly challenged by new and more complex crisis: the Agency's mandate remains as relevant as when it was conceived. We wish to thank UNHCR once again for its continued collaboration and support to national and regional efforts in the field of international protection of refugees.

Thank you.