

**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**  
**73<sup>st</sup> Session of the Executive Committee**  
**Palais des Nations, Geneva**  
**10. – 14. October 2022**  
**General Debate**  
**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF ICELAND**  
**- *Check against delivery* -**  
**H.E. Mr. Einar Gunnarsson**  
**Permanent Representative of Iceland to the United Nations, Geneva**

**Mr. Chair, High Commissioner.**

Iceland would like to commend UNHCR staff, under the exemplary leadership of the High Commissioner, for their tireless efforts and unwavering commitment to protect and assist those forced to flee. We would also like to use this opportunity to express Iceland's strong support for the High Commissioner extended tenure.

Mr. Chair.

Yet another forced displacement record has been broken this year with the number of forcibly displaced exceeding one hundred million worldwide. If ongoing conflicts, violence, persecution and adverse effects of climate change remain unresolved and the risks of new ones are not addressed, the twenty-first century will see the pace and scale of displacement by far outstripping durable solutions for persons of concern to UNHCR.

The protection crisis in Afghanistan following the Taliban take-over was high on our agenda last year. A crisis that came at a time when the humanitarian system was already under extreme pressure.

This year, we had hoped to gather under less strenuous circumstances allowing us collectively to address pre-existing challenges and take off where we left on burden and responsibility-sharing which unfortunately slowed down during the global pandemic.

Not only did global human suffering increase - the world also saw the most disruptive international armed conflict since World War II - a war of aggression by Russia against Ukraine - and the forcible displacement of nearly fourteen million Ukrainians in a matter of weeks.

Mr. Chair.

Last year, Iceland committed to welcoming Afghans in need of international protection following the Taliban take-over. This work continues until this day, including through family reunification.

Like other countries in Europe, Iceland also opened its doors to asylum seekers fleeing the war in Ukraine. Since the beginning of this year, Iceland received a record high number of asylum seekers with the majority fleeing the war in Ukraine. New resources were also mobilised for IDPs in Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees seeking protection in neighbouring countries.

More specifically on resettlement, Iceland will continue to share the responsibility for providing durable solutions. Our resettlement commitments stand, and we will continue to work in close partnership with UNHCR in honouring them.

We recognise that the second Global Refugee Forum is little over a year away. The GRF brings with it important opportunities for countries like Iceland who primarily act as donors to take a closer look at how to better share the responsibilities with larger refugee host countries. We look forward to this undertaking and will do our best.

Mr Chair.

Iceland values its partnership with UNHCR and we remain committed to strengthening it further. We strongly believe in predictable and flexible annual funding and see it as the most cost-effective, humane and logical way forward in

this dire humanitarian landscape characterised by life-threatening funding shortfalls, including for persons of concern to UNHCR.

Iceland is committed to help bridge the funding gap this year through additional unearmarked resources. We encourage other donors to do the same, before it is too late.

In situations of protracted crises, we are committed to the principle of predictable and flexible contributions and will continue to provide multi-year funding for UNHCR's operations, including in Syria, Yemen and Afghanistan.

UNHCR continues to be our main conduit for humanitarian assistance. This year, Iceland has responded to the deteriorating situation in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, and the most recent floods in Pakistan.

Mr Chair.

In closing, forced displacement and statelessness impact people differently, depending on age, gender and diversity. An intersectional approach is therefore vital for identifying protection risks and designing an effective response. Iceland commends UNHCR for its exemplary work and commitment to persons in the most vulnerable situations.

I thank you.