



73rd Session of UNHCR Executive Committee

**General Debate: Statement by Ms. Shanchita Haque,
CDA a.i of Permanent Mission of Bangladesh
(12 October 2022)**

Mr. Chair,

High Commissioner Mr. Grandi

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I join others in congratulating His Excellency Mr. Filippo Grandi on his reappointment as High Commissioner of UNHCR. It is undoubtedly recognition of his tireless efforts to protect the refugees and the forcibly displaced people worldwide and ensure their wellbeing. We thank the High Commissioner for his insightful opening remarks.

We are deeply concerned that the refugee situation continues to worsen worldwide. Currently there are more than 100 million forcibly displaced people across the globe. The developing countries continue to bear the major share of the global refugee burden. It goes without saying that the protracted refugee situation is seriously undermining the host countries' efforts towards development and prosperity. Their sufferings have further compounded by the unprecedented waves of COVID-19 pandemic. In such a situation, enhanced international cooperation and assistance to refugees, forcibly displaced persons and their host communities is an absolute necessity. This can happen only when there is a robust demonstration of global solidarity and strict adherence to the principle of burden- and responsibility- sharing.

We are still fighting against the Corona virus. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of refugees, forcibly displaced people, and their host communities more than ever before. The emergence of new conflicts, and food and fuel crisis worsen the refugee situation. In this backdrop, we need to look for durable solutions as way forward. There must be strengthened efforts to address root causes of the situation and create conducive environment in countries of origin for safe, orderly, and voluntary return. We underline a solution-oriented comprehensive approach within the mandate of UNHCR which will emphasis on these issues.

However, it is a matter of disappointment that durable solution for the forcibly displaced people continues to remain the least important issue in the UNHCR's programme of work. We take note of the High Commissioner's announcement to revisit the existing work process and incorporate innovative responses. We underline that UNHCR's work must contribute to the greater interests of the persons of its concern. It is essential that the organization plays an effective role for finding lasting solutions, in particular through voluntary repatriation.

Mr. Chair,

Bangladesh has been hosting over a million forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals- the Rohingyas. Despite many challenges and resource constraints of our own, we are providing Rohingyas with necessary humanitarian assistance. Our efforts have remained uninterrupted even at a time when almost every nation of the world is facing economic downturn due to high inflation. Not to mention, we have introduced educational programmes in their own mother language and various capacity building projects for the Rohingyas. Most importantly, Government of Bangladesh has built spacious camps with modern facilities in the Bachan Char of Noakhali to accommodate around 100,000 Rohingyas. As of now 30,000 Rohingyas have willingly moved to that area.

Mr. Chair,

Bangladesh values its collaboration with UNHCR and international community on Rohingya issue. We appreciate UNHCR for its support to the Government of Bangladesh in this matter. I would also like to recall here with appreciation the recent visit of High Commissioner Grandi to Bangladesh. However, I cannot help mentioning that it is a matter of utmost concern for us to witness continued funding gap in the UN's humanitarian response - the Joint Response Plan for the Rohingyas. Obviously, this puts additional burden on our shoulder.

Mr. Chair,

Prolonged stay of the Rohingya in Cox's Bazar has already endangered the social, environmental, economical, ecological and security situation in the region. It is greatly disturbing to see crimes including drug and illegal human trafficking rising alarmingly among the Rohingyas. Regional stability is at high risk now. Let me reiterate that Rohingya crisis is created by Myanmar and its solution lies in Myanmar. High Commissioner has rightly pointed out in his opening statement that conflict has remained the biggest driver of forced displacement. He also aptly highlighted that a country of origin has to come up with the highest responsibility in creating conducive environment for safe, orderly and voluntary repatriation. Bangladesh has done everything possible on its part to resolve this crisis through engagement with Myanmar and other relevant countries. However, due to Myanmar's blatant non-compliance with bilateral agreements and flagrant breach of international commitment, not a single Rohingya could return to Myanmar during the last five years.

Sadly, the Rohingya issue has become a victim of the ongoing political turmoil in Myanmar. It appears that the international community has shifted its attention from the Rohingya crisis to the current political crisis in Myanmar. This approach of pushing the Rohingya crisis at the back burner will embolden

the perpetrators and belittle the effort to ensure justice to this community. We call on the international community to play a proactive role and take meaningful action for safe, voluntary and dignified return of the Rohingya from Bangladesh to Myanmar. We also urge UNHCR to step up its engagements and activities in Rakhine State in order to create a conducive environment for repatriation.

To conclude, Mr. Chair, we would like to register our concern at the chronic imbalances in equitable geographical representation at different professional levels in UNHCR. We request the High Commissioner to take effective step to improve the situation through recruiting more international staff from the underrepresented countries. Finally, please rest assured of my delegation's active engagement with the process of upcoming Global Refugee Forum 2023.

I thank you.
