

71st Session of the Executive Committee of the UNHCR Programme
Intervention by Permanent Representative of Ukraine
Ambassador Yurii Klymenko
October 6, 2020

Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of Ukraine welcomes the High Commissioner and thanks for his report, which makes a valuable contribution to the on-going global discussion on the current humanitarian trends especially under conditions of COVID-19 pandemic as well as provides an overview on policy priorities of his Office.

Ukraine aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union on Monday. Our delegation would also like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

We commend the comprehensive and integrated approach taken by the UN agencies, in particular the UNHCR, on the ground in providing assistance to countries to better contend with the COVID-19 pandemic, including rapid response.

In its efforts of containing the pandemic while ensuring continuous realization of social and economic rights, the Government of Ukraine has introduced a number of measures aiming to protect the affected population, primarily its most vulnerable groups. Just to name a few measures. Ukraine has adopted a number of legislative acts that, i.e., prohibit suspension of social assistance subsidies, soften tax burden on self-employed, suspend mortgage payments and penalties for late payment for utility services, prohibit the disconnection of these services and forced eviction from housing for late payment, etc.

Mr. Chairman,

We support the UNHCR's greater involvement in responding to and addressing IDP issues. In particular, we welcome the launch in March 2020 of the UNHCR's Initiative on Internal Displacement for 2020-2021, as well as the Office's participation in the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement set up by the UN Secretary-General in October 2019. We are looking forward to the effective work of the Panel and its comprehensive recommendations next year.

More than seven years, Ukraine has been suffering from ongoing Russian aggression, the illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions that have caused the displacement of the 1.4 mln persons internally.

The humanitarian situation in the conflict-affected areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions continues to be dire. According to the UN estimates, more than 3.4 million people in Ukraine require humanitarian assistance. Over half a million people live in the areas directly affected by the armed conflict, while another two million people are exposed to landmines and explosive remnants of war.

In the temporary occupied territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions as well as in Crimea, Russia stubbornly imposes its citizenship on the local population, thus violating the IHL norms and the sovereignty of Ukraine.

In addition, Russian occupation authorities continue to block access for the international humanitarian organizations to the occupied territories.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite these challenges, Ukraine demonstrates consistent commitment to implementation of durable solutions in addressing the needs of IDPs.

The Government is considering extending the existing Strategy for Integration of IDPs and Implementation of Long-term Internal Displacement Solutions until 2020 with appropriate updating and taking into account new challenges in establishing guarantees for the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of IDPs.

Relevant legislation has been further developed, in particular, to open the doors for IDPs participation in the upcoming local elections. Thus, IDP voters who do not have a registered place of residence will be able to determine their place of voting.

In July, the Parliament has also simplified access of IDP high school graduates, as well as those residing along the line of contact to higher education.

Draft laws are being considered with aim to further simplify access to birth / death registration as well as to receive pensions.

Ukraine thanks the UNHCR for its consistent attention to the humanitarian situation in Ukraine and for its everyday engagement in assisting the vulnerable population. We are grateful to our partners for their support and continue counting on them, especially in the conditions of the pandemic, with regard to appropriate funding of the UN-led Humanitarian Response Plan 2020 for Ukraine and UNHCR programmes.

Mr. Chairman,

To address the existing challenges, the world community must respond more effectively to the root causes of existing and emerging crises, find effective solutions using available means and strengthen humanitarian-development-peace nexus. It is quite important to not only meet the urgent humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable, but also to systematically reduce these needs. To achieve this goal the continuing engagement of the international donors remains as relevant as ever.

Summing up, I would like to express my appreciation to the High Commissioner for his leadership, as well as to reiterate Ukraine's commitment to further support the High Commissioner's Office activities.

I thank you.