



S. R.
MINISTÉRIO DOS NEGÓCIOS ESTRANGEIROS
DIRECÇÃO-GERAL DE POLÍTICA EXTERNA

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**Projecto de Intervenção
de
S.Exa. o SENEC**

Mr. Chairman,

1. I would like to start by congratulating the distinguished High Commissioner for his opening remarks and by reiterating my country's appreciation for his work and that of the entire UNCHR in these challenging times.

2. We are gathered here today to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 50th anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and also the 160th anniversary of Freidtfjof Nansen – a man beyond his time, whose ideals and values remain at the very core of UNHCR's action. As the High Commissioner rightly reminded us in his statement, while much has been achieved, our work is far from over. We are constantly called upon to address new challenges and we have yet to find a durable solution for protracted refugee situations. The international community and the main humanitarian actors, in particular the UNCHR, cannot shy away from their responsibility to preserve life, prevent and alleviate human suffering and ensure that the human dignity of all those fleeing insecurity is respected.

Mr. Chairman,

3. Portugal remains firmly committed to the respect of international humanitarian law, human rights and refugee law. In this respect, allow me to announce that my



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country is in the final stages of the accession process to both the the 1954 Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

4. The protection of the rights of Stateless persons ranks high on our list of priorities and the ratification of the 1954 and 1961 Conventions is an important step along this road.

Mr. Chairman,

5. My country is deeply concerned with the persistence, and in some cases escalation of protracted refugee situations. The international Community, in close cooperation with the UNHCR, must strive to reach viable durable solutions capable of both addressing the expectations of the refugee population and alleviating the burden of host countries.

6. In today's global changing context, forced displacement causes are increasingly complex. Besides armed conflict, emerging global trends such as climate change and food and energy insecurity are likely to pose new challenges to humanitarian action. Portugal believes that this calls for innovative and enhanced responses by all. In our view, appropriate answers to these challenges can only be achieved through international coordination and cooperation among all relevant actors. In this regard, the efforts undertaken by the UNHCR, in partnership and cooperation with other international, regional and national stakeholders, merit Portugal's full support.

7. Furthermore, within the United Nations, Portugal strongly believes that the Security Council, as the body primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, should play an important role in monitoring



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situations of forced displacement arising from the so-called new threats to international peace and security.

8. During the month of November, under the Portuguese presidency, the Security Council held two fruitful debates during which matters relating to displacement were discussed. The first was an open debate on Protection of Civilians chaired by our President, and the second was a briefing on New Challenges to Security chaired by our Foreign Minister, which included a briefing by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees

Mr. Chairman,

9. 60 years after the Convention on the Status of Refugees, Portugal reiterates its firm commitment to work closely with the UNHCR and other States to solve the plight of refugees and stateless persons.

10. Allow me now to say a few brief words about Portugal's Resettlement Programme established in 2007. This programme has allowed Iraqi, Afghan, Congolese, Eritrean, Mauritanian, Sudanese and Ugandan nationals coming from ~~refugee camps in~~ Tanzania, Mozambique, the Ukraine, Belarus, Syria, Senegal, and most recently, Tunisia to begin a new life in our country. Portugal is firmly committed to working with the UNCHR, and calls on other countries to join efforts in order to close the gap between global resettlement needs and places offered.

11. The High Commissioner's successful visit to Portugal last September created a new momentum in this regard. Following the UNHCR's advice, we are currently considering new ways of improving our national resettlement program. We have decided to take steps to expedite the processing of resettlement applications. Furthermore, we are exploring ways to facilitate further the integration of refugees.



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12. Within the EU, Portugal remains committed to the creation of a Common European Asylum System, which we consider crucial for the increase of the quality of asylum within EU borders.

Mr. Chairman,

13. Portugal believes that this Ministerial Event will strengthen our shared commitment to face the challenges in the humanitarian field. In the words of the UNHCR, let us all not forget that «one refugee without hope is too many».

I thank you, Mr. Chairman