

INTERGOVERNMENTAL EVENT AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL OF MEMBER STATES OF THE
UNITED NATIONS ON THE OCCASION OF 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

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. HUGO QUADERER
MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN**

GENEVA, 7 DECEMBER 2011 AM

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Co-Chair,
Mr. High Commissioner,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me first express the sincere thanks of the Liechtenstein Government to the High Commissioner and the entire UNHCR staff for their tireless efforts and courageous work in favour of refugees and displaced persons worldwide.

In the Ministerial Communiqué which we will adopt, all State representatives will reaffirm the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol as the foundation of the international refugee protection regime. We regret, in this regard, that it has not been possible to include in the Communiqué a firm call to all States which are not yet parties to these fundamental instruments to ratify them as a matter of priority. Universal adherence must not be an elusive goal.

Mr. Co-Chair

Liechtenstein is currently revising its national Refugee Act. Parliament approved the draft in its first reading and I am confident that the revision will be adopted in next weeks' session.

The new law will expand the protection of affected persons in several areas, such as persecution by non-State players, and it will offer the possibility of resettlement for recognized refugees. With this in mind, we have already made concrete concessions for resettling refugees from Malta – next week, the head of our asylum division will travel to Malta to make arrangements for the transfer.

Furthermore, the new law aims at providing individual legal advice to asylum seekers and strengthening their rights of appeal. On the basis of our positive experience over the last

decade the new law will maintain the possibility for asylum seekers to find employment for an indefinite period of time. Asylum-seekers will continue to be integrated into the Liechtenstein social insurance system and receive social assistance from the State, and children will continue to be integrated into the school system.

With regard to these legal developments I pledge that Liechtenstein will:

- *implement the new asylum law in the spirit of the Geneva Convention and in close cooperation with UNHCR, including the protection of refugees from prosecution by non-State players*

and will:

- *create the necessary framework with a view to resettling refugees in protracted refugee situations, as provided for under the bill for the new refugee law.*

Mr. Co-Chair

Two years ago - on 25 September 2009 - Liechtenstein ratified the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. In preparation of these ratifications, we revised our Citizenship Act. Since then, stateless persons have the right to be granted national and municipal citizenship upon application. Let me therefore pledge:

- *Liechtenstein will assume its responsibility to reduce statelessness by applying its national legislation in the spirit of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and in close cooperation with UNHCR.*

Mr. Co-Chair

Despite all efforts, we still face enormous challenges – almost 34 million people are of concern to the UNHCR. We are therefore here not only to commemorate what has been done, but foremost to support the UNHCR in its challenging task.

The UNHCR has been a long-standing and close partner of Liechtenstein. I therefore pledge that:

- *Liechtenstein will maintain its support of UNHCR as one of its main partners within the International Humanitarian Cooperation and Development, especially with regard to the protection of internally displaced persons and with regard to forgotten conflicts.*

I am confident that together we will be able to face the challenges that lie ahead.

Thank you.