

**STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC
MR. VLADIMÍR GALUŠKA
AT THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL EVENT AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL
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
Geneva, 7 - 8 December 2011 PH**

Dear Mr./Ms. Chairperson, Honoured High Commissioner, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to congratulate the UNHCR on the six decades of its valuable work in favour of refugees, IDPs, stateless persons, returnees and other people in need around the whole world. I would like to commend the UNHCR for its sixty years of advocacy and protection for the sake of people without their homes and without their homelands. Last but not least, I would like to thank the UNHCR for the support the Czech Republic has received during the years of mutual cooperation in the fields of asylum and migration.

When commemorating 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, we have to express with regret our concern that the number of refugees and IDPs is rather growing in line with the increasing complexity of protracted situations and the gravity of emergencies around the globe. Notwithstanding the enormous work done by the UNHCR, the prospect of sustainable and durable solutions for the refugees is rather bleak.

This does not mean, however, that we should resign face to face to the current challenges. On the contrary, the cooperation is even more important now than ever. In this respect, the Czech Republic mobilizes its own resources and also supports the efforts made in the European Union in the area of a common migration and refugee policy. Among the 27 Member States of the EU, several, including the Czech Republic, have experiences with migration flows both from and to their countries. On this background, we can understand the global challenges and concerns regarding asylum procedures, voluntary return or resettlement.

The Czech Republic has a good cooperation both with the local UNHCR office in Prague and the regional office in Budapest. We appreciate the UNHCR projects aimed at improving of the asylum procedures or at the protection of vulnerable asylum seekers. Further, we really appreciate the role of UNHCR in the humanitarian emergencies such as Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen, or the current Libya crisis. We indeed welcome the active role UNHCR is playing in the UN coordinating system as well as in its reforming efforts.

The Czech Republic will continue its financial support for the UNHCR programmes and operations, despite the general budget restrains. We are ready to intensify our cooperation on the design and implementation of joint projects in our country and region. We have pledged to enhance even our resettlement activities both in the framework of annual programmes and in urgent cases. Last but not least, we are ready further to improve the quality of our asylum system, incl. the enhanced qualification of the staff as well as the improved quality of refugee facilities.

Allow me once again to congratulate you, Honoured High Commissioner, and the UNHCR staff on your dedicated mission for the most vulnerable under increasingly difficult and complex circumstances. We are ready to support your work both with our means and our deeds.