

HUNGARY



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Hungary to the United Nations Office  
and Other International Organisations in Geneva

**Statement**

**of H.E. András Dékány, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of  
Hungary**

**at the intergovernmental event at the ministerial level on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup>  
anniversary of the 1951 Convention and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1961  
Convention**

**(8. December 2011)** PM

*Check against delivery*

## **Statement by Hungary at the UNHCR Ministerial Meeting**

**Geneva, 7 December 2011**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman!

Hungary fully aligns itself with the statement made by Poland on behalf of EU.

Today, we commemorate a special milestone in the history of the international protection of refugees and displaced persons: the anniversary of the 1951 and 1961 Geneva Conventions. Since the adoption of the Conventions, and the creation of UNHCR, the world has undergone significant political, economic and social transformations. The support of 'people on the move' resulting from these changes has, however, remained a constant challenge.

Refugee flows are the symptoms of the ills of a given age and place. People forced to leave behind their earlier lives, often deprived even of the most essential means to stay alive, are among the most vulnerable. During the past six decades, UNHCR played a key role in providing shelter and assistance to refugees worldwide and developing durable solutions – means that Hungary much appreciates.

Fifty-five years ago, many Hungarians also experienced this vulnerability – and relief. In 1956, after the nation's freedom fight was crushed, about 200 000 of my compatriots left Hungary from fear of repression. UNHCR, the Red Cross and IOM worked together in an exemplary exercise of international co-operation to provide care and support to the Hungarian refugees. At this forum I wish to again express our thanks and gratefulness for everything UNHCR did for us in these difficult times.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to recall that Hungary was the first country from the former "Eastern bloc" to accede to the 1951 Geneva Convention. Although Hungary is not a major receiving or destination country, we have always been committed to international standards set by this Convention and worked in close collaboration with UNHCR. Indeed, since our accession, UNHCR has been playing a leading role in advising the Government on how to build up the national asylum system. In addition, it has been Hungary's privilege to host the UNHCR Budapest Office, which, since 2005, has also functioned as a Regional Representation for Central Europe. In 2007, Budapest also had the honor to be chosen as the new administrative centre of UNHCR, which decided to relocate the Global Service Centre to the Hungarian capital. In 2009, the Hungarian Government made additional office space available for UNHCR's Global Learning Centre. In short, UNHCR and Hungary have a history of good cooperation and mutual support.

Hungary is committed to continue promoting the UN Conventions relating to the status of stateless persons and on the reduction of statelessness. Hungary is one of the few states in the world which

are not only parties to both UN Conventions on statelessness, but also have a formalized and operational procedure to determine statelessness.

In addition, we pledge to initiate the legislative procedure to allow for the withdrawal of reservations made with regard to Articles 23 and 24 of the 1954 UN Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, thus ensuring the full enjoyment of the rights contained in those Articles by all stateless persons. We believe that this will allow more stateless people in need of protection to benefit from the rights and privileges guaranteed by the Convention.

To complement the above, Hungary looks forward to collaborate with UNHCR in the creation and establishment of a quality assurance mechanism in the statelessness determination procedure. This would be a new and unique mechanism and could hopefully provide an example for future best practices.

Furthermore, in the fall of 2010, the government decided to launch a national resettlement program. The legal basis for resettlement already existed in the Hungarian legislation, but in response to the events of the "Arab spring" the government decided to launch, in close cooperation with UNHCR, an asylum solidarity program, which is considered to be a pilot program.

Finally, we would like to pay tribute to the brave men and women, who, many times taking huge risks, dedicate their lives to assisting and helping refugees and displaced persons.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman!