



NEW ZEALAND

United Nations High Commission for Refugees
Intergovernmental Meeting on occasion of 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
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Mister Chairman

It is regrettable that in 2011 as we commemorate the 60th and 50th anniversaries of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1961 Statelessness Convention, that we continue to struggle with the problems of refugees and statelessness.

High Commissioner yesterday in your address to this meeting you provided us all with a stark reminder of the challenges faced by refugees, and stateless persons. The scale and magnitude of the challenges you outlined is further underscored by the fact that over two thirds of all refugees are in protracted situations. Many are in vulnerable situations. That vulnerability is evidenced across the breadth of the refugee world; persistent and often inhumane conflict; lack of access to water and sanitation; xenophobia and racial bias; sexual violence and abuse against children and women all add to the misery of life as refugee. More recently the scale and incidence of natural disasters has added to the burden.

Durable solutions must continue to be the overarching objective that we member states and UNHCR work towards.

We welcome the move to exploring new approaches, such as the possibility of refugees accessing migration opportunities, including through existing or new employment and education schemes. High Commissioner, your commitment delivered to this conference to address sexual and gender based violence and support states in ensuring access to justice for the survivors is a position New Zealand fully supports. We look forward to learning of initiatives that you will lead, and how we might support you in delivering on this commitment.

Equally we strongly endorse the High Commissioner's commitment to enhancing protection through the building of stronger partnerships. This is important if collectively we are to deliver an effective response. But let us also

reflect that possibly our weakest partnership is with the refugees. We as member states more than ever have a responsibility in partnership with UNHCR not to fail them.

Mister Chairman

As part of our ongoing commitment to the work of UNHCR, New Zealand pledges four concrete measures to improve the settlement of refugees. New Zealand commits to implementing a new whole-of-government Refugee Resettlement Strategy to deliver improved refugee resettlement outcomes within existing reprioritised baseline funding. It will help ensure more refugees become self-sufficient at the earliest opportunity, and live independently of state support.

The Refugee Resettlement Strategy identifies five key outcome areas to improve integration of refugees in New Zealand. These are Self Sufficiency, Participation, Education, Health and Wellbeing and Housing. Success indicators have been developed for each outcome area which will be used to prioritise and coordinate services on a targeted basis. Targets will also be agreed for each of the outcomes.

New Zealand recognises the need to ensure that we play our part in the resettlement of the most susceptible groups. New Zealand pledges to continue including within our annual quota, refugees from the most protracted situations, such as Bhutan and Burma. We commit equally, to include an allocated proportion of our quota for vulnerable groups such as women at risk and disabled cases.

New Zealand welcomed the opportunity at the recent Working Group on Resettlement to present on the potential for the Strategic Resettlement of Columbian Nationals. This proposal is a promising step towards a

comprehensive response to the resettlement of Colombian refugees. New Zealand commits to jointly coordinating the proposed working group, in conjunction with other resettlement countries.

New Zealand takes this opportunity, on the occasion of their respective anniversaries, to reiterate our firm commitment to the 1951 Refugee Convention, and to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. New Zealand remains a firm supporter of UNHCR and its core mandate. It is through continued adherence to the core mandate that we can remain optimistic progress can be made on UNHCR's ultimate goal of finding solutions for forced displacement and statelessness.

Thank you