

SLOVENIA

08-12-11 PM

**Statement of the Republic of Slovenia at the ministerial conference
commemorating the 60th anniversary of UN Convention on the Status of Refugees and
50th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness**

Mr Chairman,

Slovenia aligns itself fully with the statement of Poland delivered on behalf of the EU.

Slovenia welcomes the inter-ministerial conference commemorating the 60th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees and 50th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. As a State Party to the Convention and its 1967 Protocol, we encourage all states to ratify this standard-setting international convention and thus contribute to better protection of refugees worldwide.

Slovenia values the dedicated work carried out by UNHCR in the past years and decades. The need for its work is still very much present. In the past year alone we have witnessed the displacement of thousands of persons due to different circumstances. The Arab spring has led to thousands of people being displaced. The situation in Northern Africa, in the Horn of Africa, South Sudan and elsewhere in the world, demand attention of the UNHCR and international community.

As a result of complex interaction of different global challenges such as climate change, environmental degradation, migration, inadequate food security, issues of sustainable use of natural resources, particularly water and energy, and the rising number of intractable and complex armed conflicts, the refugee crises have multiplied and deepened.

Mr Chairman,

Despite the present global financial and economic crisis, the international humanitarian support to UNHCR's activities has remained a priority to many States worldwide. This year Slovenia has topped our regular annual financial contribution to UNHCR by its activities in South Sudan, Darfur and Libya.

The attitude towards refugees is the litmus test of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms of every modern democratic society. Allow me to briefly outline some national developments in this field. Slovenia regularly harmonizes national legislation on refugees with the relevant EU legislation in this field. The amendments to the existing legislation, grant higher standards of treatment of refugees and asylum seekers. Among other provisions we have introduced an individual financial grant, enabling refugees and asylum seekers not only the right to attend primary and secondary schools, but also higher education. We have established free legal aid for all asylum seekers and regulated guardianship for unaccompanied minors.

In the Asylum Home we have continued with implementing the PATS project, co-financed by the European Refugee Fund. The project introduces a mechanism to identify, assist and protect victims of trafficking and sexual violence. Important progress has also been made in the area of treatment of unaccompanied children and their well-being in the Asylum Home. In this regard we would like to thank UNHCR for contributing to the renovation of the playground in the premises of the Asylum Home. In 2010 Slovenia participated in the EUREMA project for relocation of refugees from Malta by accepting several refugees from Africa.

Mr Chairman,

I can assure you that the Slovenian government will continue to work in line with its international obligations. In doing so, our guidance will be steered by the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the principle of legality.

Thank you.