

Information Note 2019 High Level Segment on Statelessness

Background

In 2011 UNHCR held a Ministerial Meeting on Refugees and Stateless Persons (2011 Ministerial Meeting) that galvanized the international community to take action to address statelessness. At the 2011 Ministerial Meeting, more than 60 States made concrete pledges to address statelessness in areas ranging from accession to the United Nations statelessness conventions and law reform to prevent statelessness to removal of gender discrimination from nationality laws and establishment of statelessness determination procedures.¹ Many of these pledges were implemented following the event, and the new level of interest and activity by States prompted UNHCR to launch, in 2014, an ambitious **Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024** (the Campaign).

The year 2019 will mark the mid-point of the 10-year Campaign. It therefore affords an important opportunity for UNHCR and others to take stock of the Campaign's achievements and to identify what more needs to be done to meet the Campaign's goals and targets as set out in the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness.

To build on the success of the 2011 Ministerial Meeting, UNHCR will convene a global High Level Segment on Statelessness on October 7, 2019 in Geneva (2019 HLS). The purpose of the 2019 HLS will be to assess achievements to date, showcase good practices, and **encourage concrete commitments** by States and others (regional organizations, international organizations, the private sector, civil society, etc.) to take action to address statelessness in the remaining 5 years of the Campaign.

Format of the 2019 HLS on Statelessness

The 2019 event will take place as a High Level Segment on the first day of UNHCR's Executive Committee meeting in 2019. This will help to ensure attendance by senior Government officials from Member States. The event will also be open to regional organizations, other United Nations and other international organizations, international financial institutions (IFIs), and invited civil society groups working to address statelessness, as well as to stateless and formerly stateless persons who will be able to convey the human impact of not having any citizenship, as well as the impact of actions taken by States to resolve their statelessness.

After the High Commissioner's opening statement and other formalities (approximately 10.00 am – 11.30 am), the 2019 HLS will feature a High-Level Panel (approximately 11.30 am – 1.00 pm). Panel participants and a special video montage will help frame the issue and the importance of increasing momentum during the remaining 5 years of the Campaign. The Panel will also highlight positive achievements to date.

¹ For examples of the types of pledges on statelessness made at the 2011 Ministerial Meeting, please see: *Ministerial Intergovernmental Event on Refugees and Stateless Persons - Pledges 2011*, October 2012, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/50aca6112.html>

Over the two-hour lunch break (1.00 pm – 3.00 pm), two consecutive side events will take place:

- 1) From 1.00-1.30pm, the Treaty Section of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs will be invited to co-host with the High Commissioner a special treaty ceremony to enable States that wish to use the occasion to deposit instruments of accession to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and/or the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness to do so. The event will also provide an opportunity for these States, as well as all States that have acceded to one or both of the Conventions since the start of the #IBelong Campaign, to be acknowledged by the High Commissioner and have a photo opportunity with him. Only States that have acceded since the start of the Campaign and any States depositing instruments of accession will be invited to this event.
- 2) From 1.30-3.00pm, a side event co-organized by civil society groups working to address statelessness and UNHCR will be held over the lunch break. This event will be open to anyone attending ExCom. Sandwiches and refreshments will be provided outside the room.

Following the break, the General Debate will commence and the remainder of the day (3.00 pm – 6.00 pm) will be devoted to General Debate statements from States and others. As part of their General Debate statements States and others will be invited to showcase their achievements against the Campaign's 10 Actions, share good practices, and **deliver concrete, time-bound commitments** to address statelessness in the final 5 years of the Campaign. All Campaign achievements to date and HLS pledges will be featured in a **special UNHCR publication following the HLS. In addition, pledges made at the HLS will be included in the outcome document of the Global Refugee Forum that will be held in December 2019.**