



Statement by H.E. Mr. M Shameem Ahsan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh, at the General debate of the 69th Executive Committee Meeting of the UNHCR, Geneva, 2 October 2018.

(Time slot: five minutes, total words: 938)

Excellency, President of the ExCom, High Commissioner Grandi, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I begin by congratulating you, Madame President for proactive leadership at the Executive Committee over the last one-year. We also thank the High Commissioner for his opening statement, and the CEO of the World Bank Ms. Kristalina Georgieva for her keynote speech. We note High Commissioner's report entitled "Note on International Protection", the reports of the Standing Committee and other documents relevant for the ExCom. On this occasion, we also congratulate fellow Member States and the UNHCR for finalizing, after consultations, the text of the Global Compact on Refugees.

Madame President,

We hope that the GCR, along with the GCM, would provide adequate impetus towards achieving the goals of the New York Declaration. We recall that collective outcomes, the results of our joint action that can be observed in the daily lives of people and can be measured by meaningful indicators and targets, are the fundamental premise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The UN Secretary General's "One Humanity: Shared Responsibility" report for the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit calls for "agreement on collective outcomes that are strategic, clear, quantifiable and measurable." A question thus arises, would the GCR text be adequately responding to that call? We also hope that the quadrennial Global Refugee Forums, commencing from 2019, and the biennial mid-term reviews in the form of high-level officials' meetings, would help to review and assess progress and ensure collective achievements. Therefore, the adoption of the GCR this year should be considered a beginning, and not the end, of this process. That is only possible, through, among others, Member States' clear commitments on burden and responsibility-sharing, since developing countries continue to bear the lion's share of the global refugee burden in protracted situations. We must not see global refugee scenario from a one-sided perspective of overemphasizing on the needs and protection of refugees and undermining the centrality of sustainable solutions involving countries of origin. Let us be very clear - the consequence of being humane can not be punitive. Or, this will result in closing of doors, resolutely, with unintended consequences.

Madame President,

More than one year now, total forcibly displaced Rohingyas and refugees on Bangladesh soil counts more than 1.1 million, with more than 720 thousands new entrants. The Government, with the

support of UNHCR, IOM and other international organizations as well of friendly governments and NGOs, is trying hard to meet their needs. Regrettably, only 39% of the present funding requirement has been met. Let a call go out to everyone to come forward to provide much needed support for these persecuted, destitute, forcibly displaced people of Myanmar. Surely, Bangladesh does not want another protracted refugee situation. Rather, international community's strong support is needed to implement the bilateral agreements for return signed with Myanmar. Unfortunately, no sincere effort is seen from Myanmar to create conducive conditions for that. Therefore the UN and international community must remain focused on the problem in the Rakhine State in Myanmar.

Madame President,

Last week in New York, my Prime Minister Hon'ble Sheikh Hasina articulated a three-point proposal to resolve the Rohingya crisis.

First, Myanmar must abolish discriminatory laws, policies and practices against Rohingyas and address the root causes of forced displacement in a genuine and timely manner.

Second, Myanmar must create a conducive environment by building trust and guaranteeing protection, rights and pathway to citizenship for all Rohingyas. If needed, create a "safe zone" inside Myanmar to protect all civilians.

Third, prevent atrocity crimes against Rohingyas in Myanmar by bringing accountability and justice, particularly in light of the recommendations of the Fact-Finding Mission of the UN Human Rights Council.

To reiterate Bangladesh's position, the Rohingya crisis has originated in Myanmar and the solution has to be found in Myanmar. We believe that Bangladesh Prime Minister's three-point recommendations could be good basis for the international community, including the UN system, to continue their efforts to find a sustainable and comprehensive solution. In this connection, we welcome the resolution adopted by UN Human Rights Council with the support of overwhelming number of Member States, that has established the follow-up mechanism of the Fact-Finding Mission to ensure accountability for the heinous crimes committed. Myanmar needs to cooperate with this resolution. The resolution also calls for investigation of UN's role in Myanmar since 2011, the premise being importance of all organs and agencies of the UN to operate in a coordinated manner, as parallel approaches deviating from core UN principles very often make the situation more complex. We welcome the MoU signed between Myanmar, UNHCR and UNDP and we urge UNHCR to take this into account in formulating their strategy in Myanmar, including in case of implementing the highly publicised "Solidarity Approach". Clearly, without a rights-based approach, only development interventions would not resolve this long-standing recurring crisis. The root causes of systematic discrimination towards the Rohingya population must be effectively addressed.

To conclude, Madame President, reiterating Bangladesh's strong commitment to the New York Declaration, we urge the UNHCR to reinvigorate its efforts to find sustainable solutions of large and protracted refugee situations around the globe, by emphasizing more on important areas of its mandate including addressing statelessness, attaining sustainable solution through repatriation or

through third-country resettlement. Needed are International community's strong commitment and additional funding, will to address conflict situations in countries of origin and readiness to accept more refugees in developed third countries when necessary. We must take forward the spirit of "Leaving no one behind" of the 2030 Agenda, and for that, must not allow the refugees and other displaced people to fall behind.

Thank you.