

Check against delivery

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Statement by H.E. Ms. Terhi Hakala, Permanent Representative of Finland to the UN

Mr Chairperson, High Commissioner, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. I would like to start by commending the the High Commissioner for his leadership and for the strong advocacy in addressing the global refugee crisis. This was recently reflected in the success at the highest level, at the UN General Assembly. Global phenomena such as large movements of refugees and migrants call for truly global responsibility-sharing and response.

By adopting the New York Declaration the international community highlighted its continued, firm commitment to the principle of protection, that is a core issue in today's crises. For Finland, we were especially happy to see emphasis on the need for protection of persons in a vulnerable situation such as persons with disabilities, women at risk, children and victims of violence and abuse.

New York Declaration and its annexes provide a good basis to go forward. The eventual adoption of the Global Compact for Refugees based on the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework is a very promising agenda for us as Members. Our goal should be clear: to respond quickly, coherently, and effectively to refugee situations. Finland welcomes the approach outlined by the High Commissioner for a a UNHCR-led, consultative process on this matter. We look forward to actively supporting the process.

The critical situations in the Middle East, Africa and Asia, all remind us of the remarkable contribution of the host countries and communities in welcoming and hosting the displaced. We would like to express our appreciation and recognition for their vital role.

Today's unprecedented crises require new approaches as Mr. High Commissioner noted yesterday. Finland lends its full support and commends the UNHCR's initiatives that actively seek comprehensive solutions. We appreciate UNHCR's proactive engagement with development partners in this regard.

UNHCR is the most important humanitarian agency funded by Finland. We have committed to a multi-year agreement providing predictability for the organization and more than one third of our funding is unearmarked. In addition to humanitarian

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assistance, our national resettlement programme has been an integral part of the Finnish policy for international protection. We welcome and echo the call expressed in New York for more countries to share the global responsibility for refugees through the establishment of resettlement programmes.

As agreed in New York, we need to improve further our readiness and agility to respond to large refugee movements. During the arrival of unforeseen number of asylum seekers into Finland in 2015, the government successfully scaled up its reception capacity according to pre agreed preparedness strategy and in close cooperation between different authorities and the civil society, including organizations such as the Finnish Red Cross. Special attention was, and is, paid to persons in vulnerable situations at all stages. This multistakeholder approach, including community volunteers, has been crucial and is a best practise also in the integration processes. Finland has also been at the forefront in receiving asylum-seekers from Greece and Italy as part of the EU's relocation scheme.

In the past year, the first ever World Humanitarian Summit was also a significant milestone in terms of tackling displacement and implementing Agenda 2030 in this regard. At the core of preventing displacement is the promotion of human rights, rule of law and good governance as well as solving conflicts. Particularly important is ensuring the functioning of justice and security sectors of fragile conflict or post-conflict states. We need to create secure and stable living environments through sustainable and equitable development.

Moreover, it is essential that all persons in a vulnerable situation have access to services, education and protection. In the spirit of leaving no one behind, Finland promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities into development and humanitarian action. A recent concrete step is The Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities into Humanitarian Action, launched in Istanbul. Finland encourages all stakeholders to endorse it.

Mr High Commissioner, we commend UNHCR staff for its dedication and tireless work to provide refugees with opportunities for a dignified life. Children and youth will be paid special attention this year in the High Commissioner's Dialogue meeting, we very much welcome this emphasis and initiative.

Thank you.