

**Statement of Lebanon during the General Debate
Of UNHCR ExCom in its 72nd session**

Thank you Chair,

At the outset we align ourselves with the statement delivered by Egypt on behalf of the Arab group.

Lebanon thanks the High Commissioner M. Filippo Grandi for his oral update, brilliantly illustrating the efforts put by UNHCR to assist forcibly displaced people all over the world. These efforts are carried out by remarkable personnel on the ground that must overcome tremendous obstacles and difficulties. One way to appreciate their dedication and stamina is to increase the moral and financial support to the organization.

M. Chair,

The strategic competition that is raging in many parts of the world has eroded the efficiency of our collective security system, hence fueling all sorts of protracted violent conflicts and often sparking acute refugees' crises. We are therefore very concerned by the steady increase in the numbers of forcibly displaced persons, that have reached a record of 82,3 million. We are also very concerned with the decrease in the numbers and scope of durable solutions, notably voluntary repatriation, resettlement, and complementary pathways. In case these converging worrying trends are not seriously and properly addressed by the international community, they could lead into more humanitarian meltdown and unbearable pressure on host communities.

In this context, it is of utmost importance that member states renew their commitments to multilateralism and to the GCR AS A CONSISTENT WHOLE. Now, more than ever we must hold onto the principles of burden and responsibility sharing and durable solutions. More efforts and commitments are needed to translate these principles into concrete actions aiming at alleviating the pressure

on host communities, and at creating conducive conditions for voluntary repatriation as the preferred durable solution for host countries and refugees' alike. We expect the upcoming HLOM to seriously consider these challenges.

M. Chair,

Turning to the plight of my country Lebanon. For more than a decade now, Lebanon, like the other countries neighboring Syria, is bearing the brunt of huge refugees' crisis, which in the Lebanese context is further exacerbated by preexisting hardships.

Lebanon remains committed to provide protection and relief to our brothers the displaced Syrians, with the support of UNHCR as well as international and national NGOs. But ten years later, the well documented pressure on Lebanese infrastructure, economy and vital sectors has mounted to reach intolerable levels constituting one of the many catalysts and accelerators of the acute economic and financial crisis that engulfed the country 2 years ago. In this very dire context where extreme poverty is rampant, the international support albeit commendable, remains largely insufficient. Similarly, UNHCR budget and LCRP global appeal are largely underfunded.

As the crisis is dragging with no ends in sight, the needs are growing exponentially and are unfortunately unmatched by dwindling resources. We find ourselves in a situation in which the increasing vulnerability of the displaced Syrians is paralleled by the steep decline of the host communities' living conditions at all levels.

All potential risks associated with such a volatile situation and grim context could spin out of control, hence the importance of common efforts, predicated on the principle of shared responsibility if we are to avert a very bleak future. A more pragmatic and less politicized approach is needed to pave the way for a durable solution to the crisis.

M. Chair,

To sum up, we would like to emphasize once again the importance of durable solutions to avert the chronic instability and misery that a protracted refugee crisis could cause more particularly in Lebanon given the specificity of the country. And

***Permanent Mission of Lebanon
to the United Nations offices
Geneva***

as far as Lebanon is concerned durable solutions rest on cooperating for removing the impediments for the safe and dignified gradual return of the displaced Syrians to the many parts of Syria that are safe and where life is back to normal, because resettlement has proven anemic, and local integration can not be considered in the Lebanese context.

I thank you.

(644 words, speaking time 5 min)