

## Education for refugee children focus of new H&M Foundation campaign

STOCKHOLM, 3 November 2016 – Refugee children will benefit from school supplies under a global campaign launched today by non-profit H&M Foundation in support of UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency.

For every H&M gift card sold from 3 November until 31 December 2016, H&M Foundation will make a donation to help UNHCR provide school supplies for refugee children in countries around the world, including Ethiopia, Malaysia, Pakistan, South Sudan and Syria. The campaign will run in some 4,000 H&M stores in 47 markets worldwide.

Today, there are 16.1 million refugees under UNHCR’s mandate, of which more than half are children. When children are forced to flee, they often miss out on years of schooling.

Education is crucial to helping refugee children thrive and build brighter futures for themselves and their communities. Yet, globally, only 50 per cent of refugee children have access to primary education and only 22 per cent go to secondary school.

Ensuring that refugees have access to education is at the heart of UNHCR’s mandate to protect the world’s rapidly increasing refugee population, and central to its mission of finding long-term solutions to refugee crises.

“My father used to tell me education is key. You can lose almost everything but you can never lose your knowledge,” says supermodel and former refugee, Alek Wek, a supporter of the campaign.

As a former refugee from what is now South Sudan, Alek knows what it is like to be forced to flee her home. Today she is an ambassador for H&M Foundation as well as a UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador.

“With this latest donation H&M Foundation will have committed a total of US\$7.5 million to different partners and programs related to refugees during the last two years. Children who have been forced to flee their homes are often the most marginalized and hardest to reach and we want to support UNHCR in their work to ensure an education for children in crisis settings,” said Diana Amini, Global Manager for H&M Foundation.

“We are thrilled to see H&M Foundation engaging people worldwide in support of refugees, as part of its continued commitment to the refugee cause. At a time when record numbers of people have been forced to flee, campaigns such as this one are invaluable – they enable UNHCR to assist refugees and at the same time provide a way for the public to take action,” said Lionello Boscardi, UNHCR Head of Partnerships (Leadership Giving).

#### **Media contacts:**

Larissa Schlotterbeck  
Senior Fundraising Communication Officer, UNHCR  
[schlotte@unhcr.org](mailto:schlotte@unhcr.org)  
+45 45 33 73 84

Diana Amini  
Global Manager, H&M Foundation  
[diana.amini@hm.com](mailto:diana.amini@hm.com)  
+46 (0) 729 804 802

#### **About UNHCR:**

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is a global organisation dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people. UNHCR leads international action to protect people forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution. UNHCR delivers life-saving assistance like shelter, food and water, helps safeguard fundamental human rights, and develops solutions that ensure people have a safe place to call home where they can build a better future. UNHCR also works to ensure that stateless people are granted a nationality. UNHCR's dedicated teams are on the ground in some 127 countries across the world, working in partnership with governments, NGOs, the private sector, community groups, host communities as well as refugees.

#### **About H&M Foundation:**

H&M Foundation is a non-profit global foundation, privately funded by the Stefan Persson family, founders and main owners of the fashion company H&M. The mission is to create long lasting positive change and improve living conditions by investing in communities, people and innovative ideas. Through partnerships with prominent organizations around the globe, H&M Foundation drives change within four focus areas; Education, Clean water, Equality and Protecting the planet. In addition, H&M Foundation can also provide emergency relief. H&M Foundation has been working with UNHCR since 2015, when it donated US\$500,000 in support of UNHCR's response to the Europe emergency, helping to provide much needed food, shelter, medical care as well as registration services and special support for children.

###