



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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## **Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme**

### **Seventieth Session**

### **National Statement**

Chair, High Commissioner, your excellencies, distinguished delegates.

Australia thanks UNHCR for convening the High Level Segment on Statelessness. We welcome this opportunity to reinvigorate our collective global commitment to preventing and reducing statelessness. Addressing the causes and consequences of statelessness requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach at the national, regional and international levels.

Australia remains concerned by instances of protracted statelessness and profound discrimination, particularly in our region. Since the sudden onset of the Rohingya crisis, Australia has been working closely with the Government of Bangladesh, host communities, our UN partners, and international, Australian and local non-government organisations to meet humanitarian needs. We are proud to have provided more than \$160 million in humanitarian assistance to address the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh and Myanmar, as well as other humanitarian crises in Myanmar, since August 2017. We commend the Government and people of Bangladesh for their generous hosting of displaced Rohingya and reiterate that a sustainable solution requires the creation of conditions conducive to safe, dignified, voluntary and sustainable returns. Further implementing the recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory Commission is vital in this regard. The Australian Government is committed to continuing our assistance to the crisis.

As part of our broader efforts to address statelessness, Australia was proud to support, through the Regional Support Office of the Bali Process on People Smuggling,

Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, the development of the Bali Process Civil Registration Assessment Toolkit.

The Toolkit offers practical methods for States to identify the gaps and barriers that refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons and persons of undetermined nationality experience when accessing civil registration. Reducing these barriers allows vulnerable populations to access identity documents and the rights and protections that come with them.

Civil registration is particularly important for access to education. As the international community celebrates the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we acknowledge the right to education and the critical role education plays in reducing poverty and promoting peace, tolerance, development and economic growth. Support for education programs is central to Australia's humanitarian assistance packages for displacement crises and we will continue to work with our partners to ensure all children, including stateless children, are free to play, learn and grow.

Chair, Australia commends UNHCR for its continued efforts to respond to escalating global humanitarian needs. At a time of unprecedented displacement, we cannot underestimate the burden placed on countries that host large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers. Multi-year funding and programs have become the new normal for Australia's response to protracted displacement crises, and predictable and sustained contributions of assistance remain key to achieving global responsibility sharing.

Australia has a longstanding commitment to finding durable solutions for refugees, which is a key objective of the Global Compact on Refugees. We remain one of the world's top three permanent resettlement countries. Our generous resettlement program has increased up to 18,750 places this year, and will be maintained at this size over the next two years – representing Australia's largest ongoing Humanitarian Program in over 30 years.

This year we are proud to mark the 30th anniversary of our Woman at Risk visa program, which assists refugee women and their dependents in particularly vulnerable situations to resettle and rebuild their lives in safety in Australia, free from the constant threat of danger and violence. Over 23,500 visas have been granted to vulnerable women and their dependents since this visa program was established. This year also marks the highest ever allocation of places within Australia's Humanitarian Program for vulnerable women and their dependents, with the target for resettlement of this group now at 20 percent of our overall resettlement program.

Chair, we look forward to continuing to work closely with UNHCR and participating in the Global Refugee Forum in December.

Thank you.

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