

NEPAL

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**Statement by the Head of Delegation of Nepal at the General Debate of the  
70th Session of the Executive Committee of the UNHCR,**

**7-11 October 2019, Assembly Hall, Palais des Nations, Geneva**

**Mr. Chair,**

My delegation wishes to thank the High Commissioner for his comprehensive statement, highlighting the situation of forced displacement, statelessness and protection challenge across the globe. We appreciate his resolve to end statelessness by 2024 and also commend his vision for internal reforms of the organization for its transparency, accountability, gender-friendliness and effectiveness.

We are concerned that large-scale influxes and mixed-migration contexts of refugees and displaced people continue to remain unabated in the world today; and their basic human rights have also been denied. Refugees from some countries have become most protracted. We call for comprehensive global partnership, understanding and cooperation to address refugees' plight.

Nepal commends UNHCR's firm commitment to respond to emergencies and humanitarian situations of millions of refugees and displaced people around the world. Global Compact for Refugees and Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework provide guidelines for us to work together for avoiding such situations.

**Mr. Chair,**

Nepal is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol; however, we have provided shelter to thousands of Bhutanese refugees for decades on humanitarian grounds. Despite our limited capacity, difficult domestic situation, and pressing national challenges, we have done our best to ensure their protection over 30 years. We are concerned over growing shortfall of humanitarian budgets to meet increasing humanitarian needs for refugees. We underline that additional burden to refugee-hosting developing countries, particularly LDCs, will go beyond their very limited capacity.

Nepal's sincere efforts so far to find a lasting solution to the problem of Bhutanese refugees produced no outcome due to the continued rigidity and non-implementation of the agreed decisions by the Bhutanese side. This refugee

problem has become one of the most protracted ones. While remaining committed to bringing this humanitarian problem to an early end, Nepal has made, in every relevant forum, its repeated call for the resumption of the stalled process and the repatriation of all remaining refugees to Bhutan.

Nepal appreciates the sustained support by the Core Group of Countries in the third country resettlement of the Bhutanese refugees. While commending this generosity, we reiterate our position that safe, secure and dignified repatriation of refugees to their homeland on a voluntary basis is the only durable solution to the problem. Since most of the Bhutanese refugees have resettled in third countries, a small number, most of them the elderly, who have preferred only the option of repatriation, are desperately waiting for return to their homeland in safety and dignity. Nepal considers resettlement as only a temporary solution and believes that the refugees in all situations have inalienable rights to return to their homes in dignity and honour. In this context, we must recall the UNGA resolution 194 of 1948, which gives countries of origin the primary responsibility for establishing conditions that allow voluntary repatriation of refugees in safety and with dignity.

Finally, Mr. Chair, Nepal commends UNHCR's support and care to the refugees in Nepal. We are also thankful to the World Food Programme, donor community and other agencies for their continued support in the protection and care of the refugee population.

I thank you.