

**Statement of Ambassador Nassima Baghli
Permanent Observer of the
Organization of Islamic Organization
at the First Global Refugee Forum
Geneva, 18 December 2019**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Refugees are always the direct victims of the turmoil of their epoch. The causes of their predicaments have been very similar throughout the ages namely conflicts, occupation, poverty, intolerance to which we need to add climate change.

Today, their numbers are on the rise and their situation even more complex posing thus a serious challenge to the international community to find innovative ways and means to ensure them a decent life.

The notion of Burden and Responsibility Sharing as enshrined in the Global Compact on Refugees was much needed.

There is a need, indeed, to demonstrate greater solidarity with host countries who are in majority low- income countries. It is a fact that most of the refugees are being hosted by developing countries who are displaying a great generosity despite their own socio- economic challenges.

The international community should show the political will to bridge the gap between humanitarian activities and development for the benefit of the host countries and the refugees.

Our aim is to foster the resilience of refugees and increase their prospects for a normal and dignified life. Besides responding to their basic services, ensuring them Education is certainly a major component of this endeavor.

We are witnessing those last years, an overhaul of the approach towards refugees that we should consolidate. There is a need to put in place conditions conducive to their empowerment.

Our efforts should aim also at enabling refugees exercise their right to return to their homes on a voluntary and dignified manner when conditions permit.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation, for its part, is giving an increased importance to humanitarian issues as many countries of origin and destination are members of the Organization.

OIC has adopted in 2012 in Ashgabat (Turkmenistan) a Declaration on Refugees in the Muslim World which is more valid than ever which notably stressed that the need to address the root causes of refugee situations.

It has stepped up its assistance to OIC Member States facing difficult humanitarian situations.

Regarding Palestinian refugees and while reiterating its call to the international community to increase its financial contribution to UNRWA, the OIC has created, this year, a "Development Waqf Fund for the Palestinian refugees".

OIC is bringing assistance to the Rohingya refugees who have found shelter in Bangladesh.

OIC is very sensitive to the issue of Education. It has recently put in place a program offering grants to students living in war- torn countries to allow them study in other Member States.

The Islamic Development Bank is also funding many humanitarian projects in OIC countries hosting refugees.

The Bank has launched last year, a 2.5 million package program to notably support scientists who have been displaced because of conflicts or natural disasters.

The OIC is also very much concerned about the rise of intolerance towards refugees on the basis of their religion. We need to address this phenomenon which adds more distress to their precarious situation.

I thank you for your kind attention.