

INTERVENTION OF PAOLA PAMPALONI  
SPOTLIGHT SESSION ON THE SUPPORT PLATFORMS  
14 DECEMBER 8H – 9H15, VIRTUAL

**Segment 1 – Question:** *Can you share with us one or two key achievements since the launch of the Platform in 2019?*

- Excellency, High Commissioner Grandi, first of all I wish to thank you and all the organizers of the **2019 Global Refugee Forum** to have convened the present **High Level Officials Meeting** to take stock of progress achieved and challenges lying ahead.
- You asked me to highlight the main achievements of the Support Platform for the **Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR)**, a Strategy which was established by Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, with the support of UNHCR to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries of Afghan Refugees.
- The key objective of the SSAR Support Platform – was to ensure that the protracted Afghan displacement, affecting some 10 million people inside and outside Afghanistan, should not be forgotten. In practical terms, the initial experiences of the Support Platform reaffirmed the need for a comprehensive mindset and planning – the necessity to pull together the collective assets of partners: **political weight, technical expertise and financial capabilities** to help address this protracted displacement crisis in the region.
- 1) One of the important achievement of the platform was the **establishment of the Core Group**, a Group of States and Organizations which were traditionally the larger supporters of the Afghan refugees. And the EU, was the first ever Chair of this new “Core Group” of the SSAR Support Platform.
- The Core Group<sup>1</sup> gathers the main development partners of the Afghan regional displacement situation, and functions on two levels – the **Global level** with capitals and headquarters discussing the main orientations of work, and the **Local level**, where the day-to-day work and coordination takes place. Fully operational in Islamabad, now virtual “in” Kabul, and hybrid in Tehran (the EU is represented from Brussels).

---

<sup>1</sup> Denmark, Germany, the EU, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Qatar, Switzerland, Turkey, the UK, the USA, the Asian Development Bank, UNDP and the World Bank.

- 2) The focal areas of work for **Afghanistan** originally included land allocation for returnees and displaced persons, civil documentation, the inclusion of returnees in government development programs and mobilizing investments in the Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration. Following the dramatic turn of events in August, work has been reoriented, and there is a now much stronger emphasis on addressing the major **internal displacement**, affecting some 3.5 million people. EU funds (IOM) trained nearly 800 women in tailoring, mobile repair, hydraulics repair, solar panel installation. And EU provided grants for business start-up which has created new jobs and safe-guarded existing employment for over 12,000 vulnerable Afghan women and men.
- 3) The priorities in **Pakistan** focus on the provision of basic services and documentation, including the issuance of **renewed biometric cards for refugees**, necessary to have access to basic services.
- 4) In **Iran**, our key priorities are humanitarian protection and documentation.
- I am delighted to report that on all these fronts we have already made achievements and expect to continue a very close cooperation within the Core Group which is sharing information, assessing the needs of the Afghan refugees, defining key priorities, identifying areas for financial support, and maintaining a political dialogue with host countries to address the major difficulties of the Afghan population.
- But let me conclude confirming that **despite the difficult political and security context in which the Support Platform now operates** the EU is fully engaged to support this Platform and will continue its advocacy within the Core Group to maintain its financial and political support. WE also plan to maintain the Chairmanship of the Core Group in 2022, with the intention to share with you more concrete achievements at the next occasion.