



PERMANENT MISSION OF PORTUGAL
GENEVA

UNHCR Executive Committee

73rd Session

10-14 October 2022

Agenda item 3: General Debate

Statement by Portugal

Thank you Chair

Portugal aligns with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

Let me start by thanking the High Commissioner for his opening statement and for the comprehensive overview on the numerous challenges the world is facing today, driving a growing number of people to flee their homes and to seek protection elsewhere, due to conflicts, climate change and food insecurity.

Protection challenges became wider and more urgent as we see historic numbers of refugees and forcibly displaced people, including in Europe, where millions continue to flee the war in Ukraine, after Russia's unjustified and unprovoked invasion. A war that, by itself, has a wide impact also in the various humanitarian crises around the world.

Portugal commends the solidarity and generosity of countries and communities hosting refugee populations, while often facing themselves challenges.

A global response, based on international solidarity, is the only possible to tackle the problem. This makes the Global



PERMANENT MISSION OF PORTUGAL
GENEVA

Compact on Refugees and the 2^o Global Refugee Forum, in December next year, only more relevant and central.

In today's complex international context we are pleased and reassured to know that you, High Commissioner, will remain at the helm of UNHCR for another 2 and half years. We commend your personal commitment and dedication to the protection of refugees, displaced and stateless people worldwide. You can count on our continued support.

We also commend your staff and partners for their commitment to continue delivering assistance under growing difficult operational conditions and increased insecurity in humanitarian settings. Their work is extraordinary and deserves the highest praise.

Chair,

Portugal remains committed to the protection, assistance, reception and integration of refugees and migrants. The principles of responsibility and solidarity, the respect for the dignity of the human person, and combating trafficking of human beings and illegal immigration are at the core of our policies.

Since 2015, Portugal has been taking part in resettlement programmes, working closely with UNHCR and contributing to the collective effort to create legal and complementary pathways for persons in need of international protection.

Resettlement and integration have been conducted in partnership between central government, international organisations, local authorities, public and private entities and civil society.



PERMANENT MISSION OF PORTUGAL
GENEVA

Since February, under the Temporary Protection Directive, temporary protection was granted to almost 53 000 people of all nationalities fleeing the war in Ukraine, of which 42 000 are Ukrainians. Portugal has approved a large package of special measures for persons leaving Ukraine, in order to welcome, protect and integrate them in our country.

In this, as in other humanitarian crisis, we stand ready to share the burden and to welcome those in need of international protection, who decide to choose our country to pursue their lives.

Along the same lines, following the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, in August 2021, 884 Afghan citizens arrived in Portugal and have applied for international protection. Our commitment includes admissions of 650 people from vulnerable groups.

In addition, 283 non-accompanied minors (of our commitment to host 500 from the refugee camps in the Greek Islands) have also arrived in Portugal. They benefit from a specific programme to ensure integration in school and society.

In solidarity, we will continue to take our share of responsibility in the relocation programmes and be part in the rescue operations in the Mediterranean.

Chair,

Portugal pays particular attention to complementary pathways. We are particularly committed to creating opportunities for forcibly displaced persons to access higher education. Therefore, we have been an active partner of the *Global Task Force on Education Pathways*, we have contributed to the *Sustainable*



PERMANENT MISSION OF PORTUGAL
GENEVA

Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Initiative and have been supporting the Global Platform for Higher Education in Emergencies. This is an emergency scholarship program, enabling students from countries in conflict to continue their training and preparing for the future.

We believe that if we provide refugees with tools and opportunities, they will become autonomous, fully integrate in our country and contribute to their communities.

This approach is in line with our long-standing tradition in promoting Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and more specifically the Right to Education.

Chair,

Finally, let me welcome the adoption of ExCom conclusions on mental health and psychosocial support, by consensus at the end of this session, as this topic is of utmost importance and relevance also in the humanitarian context.

I Thank you