

## **Standing Committee 14 June 2023**

### **Statelessness Update - Talking points**

#### *I. Progress in addressing statelessness*

- Since the high-level segment on statelessness in 2019, governments around the world have made 289 pledges to address statelessness. As of April 2023, at least 55 of these pledges have been fulfilled, and another 103 are in progress. This progress has strengthened States' ability to prevent and respond to statelessness.
- As we approach the Global Refugee Forum, we have a crucial opportunity to accelerate the implementation of the remaining pledges and renew our commitments to end statelessness.
- Since the last update to Standing Committee in 2021, several States have made important steps to address statelessness.
  - In Kazakhstan, a nationwide identification and documentation campaign resulted in 4,868 individuals, who were previously without a recognized nationality, being granted citizenship.
  - In Kenya, the government made a significant announcement in December 2022, recognizing the Pemba people as citizens.
  - And in Uzbekistan, progressive changes to their nationality laws in 2020 and 2021 have led to over 62,000 stateless individuals being granted nationality or having it confirmed. These are powerful steps forward, restoring dignity and belonging to those who have long been marginalized.
- Prevention is equally crucial in our fight against statelessness. Several countries have implemented reforms to prevent statelessness from occurring in the first place.
  - Liberia, for example, amended its aliens and nationality law to eliminate gender-discriminatory provisions that prevented women from conferring nationality to their children on an equal basis as men. However, we must acknowledge that in 24 countries, women still face barriers in conferring nationality to their children, resulting in childhood statelessness.
  - The Philippines introduced a foundling provision in its nationality law, granting Filipino nationality to children of unknown parentage within its territory, aligning with the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.
  - These reforms are steps in the right direction, but more must be done to ensure equal rights for all.
- Furthermore, several countries, including Albania, Benin, Colombia, the Netherlands, and Turkmenistan, have adopted legislation to establish statelessness determination procedures. These procedures are vital for identifying and providing legal recognition and protection to stateless migrants, as well as ensuring that states fulfill their obligations under the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.
- In terms of accessions, the Philippines became the first country in Southeast Asia to accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Togo also acceded to both the 1961 and the 1954 conventions, supporting its ongoing nationality law reform and commitment to eliminating discrimination and establishing gender equality.

## *II. Improving data on statelessness*

- Improving data on statelessness is a crucial aspect of our efforts. Collaborating with states and stakeholders, the UNHCR has been working to enhance quantitative and qualitative data on stateless populations. The increased focus on data collection has led to a higher reported number of stateless individuals - a total of 4.3 million stateless people in 95 countries as at June 2022. While the identification of stateless people has improved, efforts to confirm or grant nationality need to be intensified.
- An important milestone was achieved in 2023 with the endorsement of the International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics by the United Nations Statistical Commission. These recommendations aim to facilitate the production of statelessness statistics at the national level, promoting harmonization of data both regionally and globally.

## *III. Next steps*

- Looking ahead, the High Commissioner has identified statelessness as one of the eight strategic focus areas for UNHCR from 2022 to 2026. A strategic focus area plan has been developed to enhance efforts across the organization and address statelessness in collaboration with partners. This plan incorporates key recommendations from the 2021 evaluation of UNHCR-led initiatives to end statelessness.
- In 2023 and 2024 the #IBelong Campaign focuses on “statelessness and development” to guide efforts to deepen the engagement with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to better leverage partnerships with development actors.
- To sustain the momentum towards ending statelessness when the #IBelong Campaign concludes in 2024, UNHCR is working towards establishing a new multistakeholder global alliance to end statelessness. It represents a new phase in our efforts, accelerating the prevention and eradication of statelessness by significantly expanding the engagement of key stakeholders at the global, regional, and national levels.