

Item 2 (a)

Note on International Protection Talking Points for 66th Mtg of Standing Committee of ExCom 21 June 2016

Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, This year's Note on International Protection focuses on the fundamental concepts of international cooperation, solidarity and responsibility-sharing. The Note examines ways in which States, international organizations and national entities responded to situations of forced displacement from a protection perspective including areas such as how persons in need of international protection accessed safety; how they were identified; and how specific categories such as youth supported were empowered and a favourable protection environment fostered.

This reporting period was witness to some of the largest and most complex population movements seen in recent years. Alarming numbers and situations of forced displacement underscored the criticality of international collaboration in efforts to address the scale of human suffering witnessed daily on television screens. The need for collaboration in ensuring the integrity of procedures and addressing security concerns was equally reinforced. Internal displacement reached unprecedented numbers while linkages were drawn between root causes of displacement and statelessness, for example, given the uncertainties and lack of access to basic needs and rights faced without a confirmed nationality. Efforts to secure solutions, interim and long term, provided platforms for advancement in the form of enhanced resettlement procedures as well as additional pathways for entry to third countries. Coordination in approaches to solutions also furthered support to refugees and to their host communities through increased focus on addressing overall needs, including through programs for education, age, gender and diversity and youth initiatives. Every challenge presents an opportunity ... today it appears that the international is facing more challenges, and has more opportunities, than ever before.

As the reporting year's events confirmed in many contexts around the world, current refugee and mixed movements cannot be effectively addressed in isolation or by a handful of states alone. Increased and sustained support for countries of first asylum and intensified international cooperation are still needed, to provide protection and timely solutions to all who require them. In addition, the importance of addressing the root causes of displacement and creating additional pathways which reduce the need for refugees to undertake dangerous onward journeys remains clearly evident. This year's Note therefore highlights the reality that international cooperation based on international law, principles of solidarity, fair sharing of responsibility and collective international efforts, is essential to meet in sustainable ways today's challenges relating to forced displacement. The importance of community engagement, with refugees, IDPs and stateless, particularly through an age, gender and diversity lens, is increasingly critical as is engagement with host communities. It is through this dialogue and strengthening of support to the men, women, children and youth, directly facing their daily circumstances that long-lasting, sustainable solutions-based outcomes can be secured. Refugees, IDPs, stateless persons and communities which host them are drivers of change ... given the opportunity.

The Note on International Protection outlines that of the millions of refugees that were hosted and given shelter in countries across the world, eighty-six per cent of those in need of international protection remained in middle-income and developing countries. The readiness of these and other countries to open their borders to admit and extend protection has saved

countless lives. These important contributions to international protection highlight the imperative for the international community to share responsibilities equitably and to support and reinforce national capacities where required.

During the reporting period there were also concrete advances in innovative approaches to international protection. These include efforts to ensure that at all stages in the displacement cycle, from registration and refugee status determination through to resettlement or humanitarian entry into third countries, are efficient and streamlined, placing resources where needed to ensure the integrity of systems while also exploring effective new strategies to deliver protection and solutions more quickly to more people. UNHCR collaborated with many of you here today in these efforts and we seek to advance these strategies even further. An effective, holistic, swift and protection based approach to all situations, large or small, in which persons seek international protection is the basis on which we believe we can address the protection challenges we collectively face today.

UNHCR continued to work closely with States on quality assurance initiatives, capacity-building including ‘twinning’ between States, and other forms of support to state-led RSD processes. Acknowledging young people’s desire for engagement in matters that affect their own lives, and the particular needs of youth, UNHCR expanded participatory approaches including through initiatives such as the global refugee youth consultations, and this year’s NGO Consultations on Youth. Working with development actors and with ministries of education, UNHCR strengthened national education systems and promoted inclusion of refugees in their programmes, fostering social cohesion in host communities, both in countries affected by emergencies and in protracted displacement situations. Efforts to address and mainstream approaches to Sexual and Gender Based Violence were focused, and a renewed emphasis on gender equality underlined. Responding to calls from Member States to protect and assist IDPs, based on its capacity, competence and expertise, UNHCR provided protection and assistance to some 34 million conflict-induced IDPs in 26 countries during the period under review. In November 2015, the first anniversary of UNHCR’s “#IBelong” Campaign to End Statelessness outlined the efforts of many states in the reduction of statelessness including the resolution of a number of protracted statelessness situations.

Against this backdrop, however, today's global forced displacement challenges are nonetheless unprecedented. Extreme vulnerabilities are exacerbated by multiple factors and require reinvigorated approaches to ensure actual delivery of protection at the operational level. Conflicts are multilayered and have caused immense suffering, magnified humanitarian needs and resulted in increasingly complex protection environments. During the course of 2016 the international community is gathering on various occasions to analyze, review, and consider the collective response to humanitarian needs and emergencies. These high level events should be seized upon for the valuable opportunities they offer: to work towards a significantly strengthened framework for solidarity, which could ensure more collaborative responses to large-scale movements in the future including through the adoption of a global compact on responsibility-sharing for refugees. I trust the Note on International Protection will assist in review, reflection and consideration of these collective challenges while facilitating partnership in securing the opportunities before us.

Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, thank you.