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UNHCR – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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CZ Statement – General Debate

Madam Chair, Honoured High Commissioner, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Czech Republic aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

I would like to thank the High Commissioner for his opening speech as well as for the engagement of UNHCR in multiple humanitarian challenges.

In view of the unprecedented scale of forced displacement around the world, with millions of long-term refugees and internally displaced persons, the Czech Republic indeed welcomes the new stress on an efficient and effective multilateral cooperation, which can contribute to lasting solutions for these groups of people around the globe.

The Czech Republic really appreciates the leadership and guidance by the UNHCR in the consultation process and drafting of the Global Compact of Refugees. In this context, I reiterate our hope that the Global Compact on Refugees will contribute to comprehensive and efficient responses to forced displacement, based on existing international legal frameworks. We hope also that both the UN system, national states and regions as well as the civil society and private sector will concentrate on “leaving no one behind” even in relation to forced displacement.

The Czech Republic takes an active part both in the EU-wide and UN-wide discussions and forming of new policies and initiatives in relation to forced displacement, towards refugees, IDPs and returnees.

Just recently, the Czech Government has approved a substantial contribution to the UNHCR in support of its assistance in a relatively new displacement in Gedeo/West Guji areas of Oromia and SNNPR states of Ethiopia. We have also extended our long-term cooperation with UNHCR in relation to Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan as well as our assistance to people returning to Afghanistan. Both in Ethiopia and Afghanistan, we interconnect this

basically humanitarian assistance with our long-term development cooperation. In this respect, we also appreciate the swift and transparent cooperation between UNHCR and IOM.

The Czech Republic continues also its assistance to Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey as well as the comprehensive assistance provided to IDPs and returnees in Iraq. We have also extended our assistance provided to Northern Africa as well as to the Sahel – G5 countries. In these comprehensive crises, a comprehensive cooperation and coordination of all donors and stakeholders, including the UN agencies such as UNHCR or UNICEF, and including the EU with its EU Trust Fund for Africa. Our enhanced effort in Sahel is confirmed and be further enhanced by the recent decision on opening of a Czech Embassy in Bamako.

We are ready to continue our cooperation with UNHCR in the overall implementation of these efforts, including through our active participation in the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees. In order to promote closer partnership with UNHCR we signed three months ago an agreement on the provision of Junior Professional Officers. The overall vision and final goal of our efforts continues to be a resolving of the current protracted displacement problems and establishing of an efficient international early warning – early action system for any future displacement risks.

Let me conclude by expressing our gratitude for the work of UNHCR dedicated staff who put themselves in harm's way to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are met. The multitude of challenges we face in 2018 will continue into 2019 and beyond and we look forward to working with UNHCR in order to react to these unprecedented circumstances our world is facing.

Thank you, Madam Chair