

GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM

Statement by Vice-minister of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania,

Mr. Tautvydas Tamulevičius

XX December 2019 [3 minutes]

Thank you, Chair,

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to participate here today and to address you on behalf of Lithuania. The Global Refugee Forum provides an opportunity to mobilise global effort to tackle challenges faced by the asylum seekers and refugees. It allows us to monitor the state of play and encourages for further actions.

Having listened to previous speakers, I am happy to conclude that we are united in our endeavour to find effective solutions and to cooperate in order to support refugees and their host communities. Common effort, common voice and visibility – all this leads to more people protected, more lives saved and more human destinies changed for the better.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its commitment to 'leave no-one behind' provides a powerful basis for the inclusion of refugees, internally displaced and stateless people. Our task is to help refugees and other displaced persons become accepted and productive members of their host communities. For example, Lithuania's development support closely considers global refugees needs with special focus on education; it is also worth to mention that refugee-students in schools in Lithuania receive an extra 30 percent towards the individual fund for education as compared with citizens.

Dear Chair,

Lithuania is a responsible member of the EU and of the international community:

- Since 2015, Lithuania has been taking voluntary part in EU special programmes and has carried our relocations and resettlements of asylum seekers, which face a significant migration pressure. To date, Lithuania has welcomed 493 persons in need of international protection from Greece, Italy, Malta and Turkey.

I would like to thank UNHCR for help and support in this matter. Their active engagement and commitment are very instrumental. In recognition of the important work that UNHCR does, our contributions to UNHCR budget are growing steadily.

Lithuania is also providing financial support through several channels. For example:

- We made allocation for the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa;
- and contributions to the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey, World Food Programme, UNICEF (providing humanitarian assistance to the victims of the conflict in Syria) and other programmes;
- also very recently, in the end of 2019, Lithuania has allocated financial support to help the Rohingya refugees;
- We increased financial support for the integration of persons who were granted asylum.

Mr. Chair,

Lithuania, as committed member of the international community will continue to contribute to the global effort in the spirit of partnership and solidarity.

In this regard, we are **considering the following measures and contributions for the nearest future:**

First, Lithuania stresses the importance of support to the host and transit countries. At the *Pledging Conference* two weeks ago, Lithuania has announced **allocation of €50 thousand** as un-earmarked funding to the UNHCR programmes. In addition, we will **continue our engagement in voluntary resettlement initiatives.**

Second, in order to **improve the living conditions** of asylum seekers, Lithuania **will invest €6.4 million** into the reconstruction of the **Reception Facility** by the end of 2022.

Third, Lithuania will continue efforts to **improve the integration** of refugees into society by:

1. enhancing **cooperation of institutions dealing with integration matters;**
2. integrating **asylum seekers into the labour market.** An amendment of Law, foreseeing the possibility for an asylum applicant to access the labour market if the first instance decision is not taken within the 6 month period is on the way;
3. **renewing Action Plan** on the Integration of Foreigners into Society.

Having said that, let me assure you that it is not an exhaustive list of our future commitments. We approach the issues at stake with an open mind and we are ready **to further contribute** to the global effort and pursue **solutions** for our common challenges.

We believe that **our shared values and common work** in a spirit of solidarity **will pave the way** to achieving the objectives of **the Global Compact for Refugees.**

I wish success to all of us!

I thank you.