



**I T A L Y**

**STATEMENT BY  
H.E. AMBASSADOR GIAN LORENZO CORNADO  
AT THE 72<sup>nd</sup> SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME  
(GENEVA, 5<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2021)**

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Thank you Chair,

Mr. High Commissioner, Excellencies,

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union and would like to make some further remarks in its national capacity.

One year and a half after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world is still facing exceptional challenges and it's dealing with complex and multi-layered humanitarian crises which have further aggravated the fragilities of those in most vulnerable situations, including refugees, internally displaced persons, asylum seekers, stateless persons and those entitled to international protection.

The 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention has been marked by another significant increase in the number of forcibly displaced people in the world, a worrying trend that appears to be reconfirmed this year as well. Protracted displacement situations, conflicts, socio-economic effects of the pandemic, violence, extreme weather events and natural disasters are forcing people to flee their homes. The recent dramatic developments in Afghanistan, Mozambique and Ethiopia, just to name a few, are already contributing to a grimmer picture.

Confronted with exceptional circumstances, Italy has responded with unprecedented means to fight against the pandemic and to reduce its secondary effects, in particular on UNHCR's persons of concern. We have shown our solidarity to those

in need, we have mobilized increased financial resources for ensuring a timelier and more effective emergency response and we have promoted a stronger collective engagement and increased humanitarian efforts. As current G20 Presidency, we have boosted the joint commitment of its Member States to pursue a strong, inclusive and sustainable post-pandemic recovery, that includes investing in innovative measures and in preventing humanitarian crises. We strongly believe that multilateralism, mutual help and close cooperation is the only way forward for achieving more solidarity and for building a stronger International Community.

Guided by the so-called three Ps, ‘‘People, Planet and Prosperity’’ the Italian Presidency of the G20, has been working to tackle the numerous and multifaceted challenges the world is facing today. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to focus on shared and coordinated responses to global challenges and to re-ignite multilateralism. In the absence of political will and of economic and financial support, the plight of the displaced persons will not be properly addressed.

Despite our efforts, as the number of persons falling under the mandate of the UNHCR keeps growing, the Agency has proven to be more relevant than ever. Allow me to commend UNHCR and its staff for their tireless efforts in addressing the global response to the pandemic and its secondary effects and ensuring the continuous delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need.

Italy is committed to do its part also in implementing the provisions of the Global Compact for Refugees. The pandemic might have slowed down some of our pledges, but it has not prevented us from showing our engagement and strengthening our action, in close partnership with UNHCR. We have been continuing our resettlement and relocation programs, in order to ease pressure on first countries of asylum, we have transferred additional refugees from Ethiopia and Lebanon through humanitarian corridors and we have launched another edition of the « University Corridors for Refugees Project », benefiting refugee students who will have a chance to complete, or have access to, university education in Italy.

The Global Refugee Forum and the Global Compact for Refugees are key elements that remind us of how the notions of responsibility and burden-sharing are central to today's approach to forced displacement and they require the continuous active engagement from all stakeholders. To this end, we encourage UNHCR to keep the momentum and further expand its donor base, especially by increasingly involving the private sector and relevant international financial institutions.

Throughout the COVID-19 emergency, Italy has increased its efforts to ensure access to asylum, despite the many challenges and growing migratory pressure at its sea and land borders. Besides, we have been increasingly working to uphold the principles and processes of refugee protection to improve the balance between responsibility and solidarity underpinning the new EU Pact on migration and asylum. In terms of our commitment on the international scene, the Afghan crisis has been no exception since we have evacuated around 5,000 Afghans after the Taliban's takeover of Kabul.

Chair, let me take this opportunity to reiterate my country's contribution and its strong commitment to providing support to UNHCR's humanitarian activities in major crisis areas, in line with its long-standing tradition of partnership and cooperation with the Agency. With around 37 million dollars in financial contribution to UNHCR in 2020 and 41 million allocated for the first 9 months of 2021, we have invested in its capacity to respond to major crises and to help improve the living conditions of its persons of concern worldwide.

We will continue to be actively and strongly committed, also at the collective level, since we believe that the international community should increase its efforts to alleviate human suffering and cover the basic needs of asylum seekers, refugees, IDPs and stateless people, not only in a spirit of solidarity and responsibility-sharing, but also with a view to shining a spotlight on those who are often unseen, unheard and unknown.

I thank you for your attention