



**Statement of Lebanon  
UNHCR ExCom 73<sup>rd</sup> Session**

***Delivered by H.E Ambassador Salim BADDOURA  
Permanent Representative of Lebanon***

Thank you, madam Chair,

At the outset we align ourselves with the statement delivered by Egypt on behalf of the Arab group.

Lebanon thanks the High Commissioner M. Filippo Grandi for his very substantive oral update and congratulates him warmly for his recent reelection and wishes him success in his new term. We appreciate all the efforts put by UNHCR under his leadership to assist forcibly displaced people all over the world. These efforts are carried out by dedicated and competent staff in Headquarters and the field. It is incumbent upon us to make sure that the tremendous challenges they face be matched by proper moral and financial support to the organization.

Madam Chair,

International relations are rocked by bloody protracted conflicts eroding the efficiency of our collective security system, curtailing multilateralism disrupting global economy and trade, and often contributing to a steady and worrying increase in the numbers of forcibly displaced persons, that have reached a record of 100 million. Concomitantly we witness the decrease in the numbers and scope of durable solutions.

In case these converging worrying trends are not seriously and properly addressed by the international community, they could portend more humanitarian meltdown and unbearable pressure on host communities impeding their development thus paving the way for future crises.

Member states should therefore renew their commitments to multilateralism and to the GCR. In such difficult circumstances, we should pay more than lip service to the principles of burden and responsibility sharing and durable solutions. More efforts and concrete actions are needed in this regard.

Madam Chair,

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to the United Nations offices  
Geneva*

I turn now to the plight of my country Lebanon. For more than a decade now, Lebanon, like other countries neighboring Syria, is bearing the brunt of a tremendous displacement crisis.

Lebanon was always committed to provide protection and basic services to displaced Syrians, with the support of UNHCR. But the situation has become untenable, and the well documented pressure has mounted to reach intolerable levels constituting one of the many catalysts and accelerators of the acute economic and financial crisis that is ravaging the country.

In this very dire context where extreme poverty is rampant within both host and refugees' communities, the international support albeit commendable, remains largely insufficient. Similarly, UNHCR budget and LCRP global appeal are largely underfunded. We find ourselves in a situation in which the increasing vulnerability of the displaced Syrians is paralleled by the steep decline of the host communities' living conditions. Since the inception of the LCRP in 2016 we have witnessed a steady increase in vulnerability among host communities. Today, more than 1,5 million Lebanese could be as we speak qualified as extremely vulnerable and in urgent need of assistance. Against this backdrop, despair is driving many families to risk their lives along illegal migration routes.

Moreover, the endless presence of huge numbers of displaced people with high birth rates is exacting a heavy toll on Lebanese infrastructure, health and education sector and security situation let alone its negative impact on job opportunities. Hence, a consensus has emerged in Lebanon that a paradigm shift is urgent.

Some wise remarks in the oral update of the high commissioner regarding our predicament gives us hope that the UNHCR is ready to help us come up with new approaches that will reverse these negative trends and curb the abuses of the current system. These abuses are exemplified by individuals who keep profiting from the status of refugee without being entitled to it anymore, or from Lebanese and displaced individuals alike that exploit the loopholes in the system and seek gains by illegal means.

In the same vein and more broadly, we call on the UNHCR to scale up its cooperation with the Lebanese competent authorities with a view to sorting out

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all lingering problems and bottlenecks, based on a spirit of transparency, access to information and data sharing between all interested partners.

Madam Chair,

With all this in mind, we would like once again to call for a durable solution to this crisis. And as far as Lebanon is concerned, a durable solution rest on the cooperation of all stakeholders, for removing the impediments for the safe and dignified gradual return of the displaced Syrians to the many parts of Syria that are safe and where life is back to normal, because local integration is not and could not be an alternative given the Lebanese particular context.

I thank you.

**(742 words, speaking time 5 min)**