

**73<sup>rd</sup> UNHCR Executive Committee**

**Palais des Nations, Geneva**

**Statement by Ireland**

**October 2022**

***DRAFT STATEMENT***

Excellencies, High Commissioner, Ladies and Gentlemen, Chair,

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and adds the following in its national capacity.

We would like to commend the opening statement from the High Commissioner and, given your strong personal dedication to safeguarding the rights and well-being of refugees, we are delighted that you will continue for another two and a half years to lead UNHCR. You and your team can be assured of Ireland's continued full support.

Chair,

High Commissioner Grandi said in his statement that working together to help those in need is a greater priority now than ever and yet political disputes often block the obvious solutions.

Ireland, in our term at the UN Security Council, has consistently taken a strong principled stance rooted in Building Peace, Strengthening Prevention and Ensuring Accountability – each of critical significance for displaced persons and the causes of displacement. We will continue

to stand firm in our commitment to these principles over the coming months.

The challenges we all faced entering 2022, still feeling the impact of Covid and facing multiple and complex crises the world over, were already significant. With the unprovoked and unjustified Russian invasion of Ukraine we have seen not only the direct and devastating impact of this war in Ukraine but also reverberations on global supplies, and increasing cost of food and fuel worldwide.

People forced to flee their homes bear the brunt of additional shocks. We know that figure stands at a staggering 100 million people, and more, displaced. There is a danger that the sheer scale of the statistics might blind us to the stark reality of what we are discussing – the lives of individuals interrupted by circumstances outside of their control.

The overwhelming majority of people fleeing conflict or other crises stay as close to home as possible. Firstly as displaced people and secondly as refugees in neighbouring countries which are overwhelmingly developing countries. We have an obligation to help them as close to their origin as possible. We also have an obligation to help those host countries – from Lebanon to Uganda to Moldova – if needed. We cannot allow host countries to suffer for their generosity. Finally, we need to provide pathways for refugees to move on, either through safe and voluntary return or through resettlement.

Chair,

It is imperative that we continue to respond, and Ireland is determined to be part of that response. Ireland's funding to UNHCR continues to grow, and our core funding to UNHCR is at the highest it has ever been. As with last year over two-thirds of Ireland's assistance is either unearmarked or softly earmarked. It is our intention to continue to work in partnership with UNHCR to ensure improvements in the delivery of our humanitarian assistance in line with our commitments in the Grand Bargain to quality funding.

We have also demonstrated our trust in UNHCR as the key partner in the response to displacement by providing funding for UNHCR's work in specific crises such as in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Uganda, Jordan. Our assistance to Ukraine was from additional rather than existing resources and we acted swiftly, within days of the invasion, to make that funding available.

Allow me to end by once again expressing our appreciation to the staff of UNHCR and their local partners. Humanitarian workers in conflict affected contexts have been targeted, abducted and killed in the course of their work. There can be no impunity for parties to armed conflict who target humanitarian actors and utilise starvation and denial of access to humanitarian assistance against civilians. There must be accountability for violations of international humanitarian law. In the face of these challenges UNHCR staff continue to champion the

protection of displaced persons in the most dangerous of situations and  
for this we salute you.

Thank you.

ENDS