

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mani Prasad Bhattarai,
Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United
Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva, and
Head of Delegation of Nepal at the First Global Refugee Forum**

Burden and Responsibility Sharing

Geneva, 17-18 December 2019

Mr. High Commissioner,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates!

We take pleasure to attend the first Global Refugee Forum as a primary platform for the follow-up and review of the Global Compact on Refugees.

Our country has provided, on a humanitarian ground, shelter to almost 120,000 Bhutanese refugees over three decades despite our limited capacity and difficult domestic situation. We continue to support their livelihood through access to basic services including health and education. We appreciate the support of all relevant agencies including the UNHCR in this regard.

We commend the core group of eight host countries for taking our significant refugee burden through resettlement. Since 2007, some 113,000 Bhutanese refugees have been resettled. Nearly 7,000 Bhutanese refugees remain; and most of them are desperate to return to their homeland.

Mr. High Commissioner,

True transformation of refugees' lives hinges upon voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration into their homeland. We, therefore, reiterate our call to the Royal Government of Bhutan to resume immediate results-oriented dialogue and, without further delay and on a priority basis, repatriate the remaining small number of its citizens living a refugee life in

Nepal over thirty years, as they have chosen the only option of repatriation to their homeland in safety and with dignity and honour.

We, at the same time, call upon the international community to act decisively for protecting refugees' right to return to their homeland and to ensure their rapid rehabilitation under all circumstances.

In this context, we also recall relevant UNGA resolutions placing the primary responsibility on countries of origin for creating conditions for safe and dignified voluntary repatriation of their nationals.

Mr. High Commissioner,

As documented by UNHCR reports, low-and middle-income countries have assumed the huge burden and responsibility of global refugees by hosting about 85 percent of them.

It is, therefore, critical to generate necessary political will and galvanize robust international cooperation and resources mobilization for addressing all global refugee problems.

Let us commit to the spirit of partnership, responsibility and service to the humanity, commensurate with our capacity and leaving no one behind, as we pursue a transformative agenda of sustainable development for all.

Thank you.