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GEORGIA

Statement by Mr. Irakli Jgenti, Chargé d' Affairs of Georgia to the UN Office and other international organizations in Geneva,

Global Refugee Forum

Geneva, 18 December 2019

Distinguished Colleagues

Excellences,

Grandi

First of all, let me express sincere gratitude to the High Commissioner ~~for Refugees~~ and Federal Council ~~of~~ of the Swiss Confederation for co-hosting the first ever Global Forum ~~and~~ also extend thanks to the co-conveners of the Forum, for jointly taking the plight of more than 70 million of forcibly displaced persons ~~to~~ ^{AND} the top of the global agenda.

Indeed, as we face the highest level of forced displacement ever recorded, it is of utmost importance to reinvigorate our collective efforts in order to better address root causes of forced displacement, as well as mitigate the risks of grave human rights violations that millions of forcefully displaced persons face on a daily basis.

Distinguished Delegates,

Georgia has its own difficulties with regard to forced displacement. For more than 25 years, hundreds of thousands of Georgian citizens, who as a result of several waves of ethnic cleansing have been expelled from Georgia's occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions, continue to be deprived of their fundamental right to return to their homes in safety and dignity.

Yet, against this dire background, Georgia spares no effort to ensure fair and efficient asylum procedure on a national level, providing adequate social and economic guarantees to asylum-seekers and international protection holders. With this aim, like all citizens of Georgia, asylum-seekers, refugees and humanitarian status holders are eligible to the numerous state

services, including, inter alia, state universal healthcare program, free professional education and access to free legal aid and representation in court, related to their cases on international protection.

Mr. High Commissioner,

Georgia pledges to enhance access to education services for refugees and humanitarian status holders. The pledge encompasses several directions, including refinement of higher and vocational education recognition procedures; Improvement of access to free of charge general education; and elaboration of legal mechanisms to support better access to higher education.

In addition to this, we pledge to further improve our national legislation on international protection, with due regard to guarantee efficiency of the procedure through introduction of new rules and regulations based on EU standards ~~that are~~ applicable to Georgian context.

As the Georgian asylum system has been advancing over the past few years, we pledge to share our experience and knowledge to interested parties within the scope of Asylum Capacity Support Group, taking into account the current capacity and human resources of asylum authority;

Furthermore, to extend the support base beyond the government, ~~the Public Defender of Georgia, in its capacity as a~~ ^{საქართველოს} National Human Rights Institution, pledges to provide assesment on human rights situation of asylum seekers, refugees and humanitarian status holders and submit relevant recommendations in its annual Parliamentary reports.

In conclusion, let me extend Georgia's full support to the global endeavor to alleviate the suffering of millions of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced and stateless persons around the world.

~~Georgia stands ready to contribute to these efforts.~~

I thank you!