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**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AND
OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
G E N E V A**

**SEVENTHY-THIRD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF
THE HIGH – COMMISSIONARE PROGRAMME**

Statement of Mr. Gordan MARKOTIĆ, Ambassador, Charge d'ffaires

Mr Chairman,

Croatia aligns with the statement of the European Union.

At the outset we would like to congratulate High Commissioner Grandi for the extension of his mandate, also for his report, which once again highlighted the disturbing reality we are facing and the necessity for firm international action.

We congratulate High Commissioner and the Organisation for unyielding resolve to keep focus on sustainable solutions as well as for its continued efforts to transform and increase efficiency within the organization with focus on aligning systems and processes with the recent decentralization.

Mr Chairman,

According to latest data, more than 100 million people have been forced to flee from their homes around the world, trying to escape violence, conflict, persecution and human rights violations, natural hazards and consequences of climate change.

That figure amounts to more than 1 percent of the global population. Only 13 countries have a bigger population than the number of forcibly displaced persons in the world.

We need joint action and effort to address the causes of displacement, as humanitarian aid is only treating the consequences of the displacement as a first aid kit.

Croatia remains deeply concerned by the record-high global humanitarian needs that have been increasing lately at a tremendous pace. Humanitarian assistance is, as never before, of crucial importance for the people in need. Their livelihoods and their dignity should be at the centre of our actions. For Croatia, it is essential to maintain a robust humanitarian response in all current crises around the globe, as no one should be left behind.

Therefore the focus of our work should be on tackling the complex root causes of crisis and promoting long-term solutions for humanitarian emergencies

Mr Chairman,

In a world already saturated with crises of various origins, and after one of the worst with the COVID -19 pandemic, yet there comes another crisis with global implications.

The unjustified Russian aggression against Ukraine, which we strongly condemn, has been one of the factors propelling millions of people in Europe to flee their homeland in search of safety and protection. The majority of them remained in the neighbouring countries, hoping for the fast return.

Croatia received 21.852 Ukrainians. Out of this number, 85% are most vulnerable ones, women and children. They are all in the process of temporary protection, status that enables them access to accommodation, education and health care. Total amount of the assistance rendered is 9,6 milion EUR.

Mr Chairman,

Access to health care for forcibly displaced and stateless persons, especially when it comes to **mental health** or **to sexual and reproductive health and rights** still pose a challenge in many parts of the world. Croatia consider very relevant that this years's Executive Committee conclusion focus on mental health and psychosocial support.

Croatia has a **lot of experience in** this area stemming from our experience in the Homeland war. The ways of implementing MPHSS has been changing over the years as the needs of the affected population were changing, but its importance still stands high on our agenda, as the sad consequences of the war still linger on. Material consequences of the war can be repaired quite quickly, but those invisible ones, take time to heal.

We are pleased that sharing our experience was recognized at the High-level panel on IDPs last year, and hopefully our best practices could serve as guidance for others.

Education for children remains one of our priorities both nationally and abroad. My country pays particular attention to include forcibly displaced children in our national education

system, and they enjoyed the same level of participation in education.

Unfortunately, apart from Ukraine, another **protracted conflicts** like those on Ethiopia, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Burkina Fasso, Mali, Myanmar .., just to name a few, are also behind the high number of displacement we are facing today. We should not forget any of them, **and we should show the same level solidarity and compassion for all of them.**

Current crises are characterized by recurrent natural disasters or conflict, longevity of food crises, breakdown of livelihoods and insufficient institutional capacity to react to the crises.

People flee and get refuge mostly in the neighbouring country which takes the brunt of the burden in caring for them. **Burden sharing** should be a norm for all of us. In that vein, Croatia engaged in a project for Syrian children refugees in Jordan. The aim was to improve learning conditions in refugee camps in Jordan - Azraq and Za'atari - by building five inclusive playgrounds with access for children with physical disabilities.

At the same time we were implementing, in cooperation with UN Women the project for 110 women, Syrian and Palestinian refugees and vulnerable Lebanon nationals and provides them with high quality and market-based ICT skills training, and supports their access to temporary or full-time employment at the local market. The aim was to ensure economic empowerment of women and influencing the change in perception of the role of women in the society.

In conclusion, to try to mitigate the consequences of world crises which cause massive displacement and sufferings of the population, we should do our best to predict and foresee possible problems that could arise from unexpected situations and take necessary measures to **build preparedness and resilience**. **We must invest our best efforts in anticipatory actions**. **Holistic approach**, which caters for development and at the same time for solutions to the root causes, becomes indispensable.

Let me once again reiterate Croatia's commitment to continue to
b. Strong supporter of UNHCR and its mandate.

Thank you!