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**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**  
**73<sup>rd</sup> Session Executive Committee**

**Item 4 (a) – International Protection**

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Thank you, Madam Vice-Chairperson,

At the outset, I would like to thank the Assistant High Commissioner for the presentation of the Note on International Protection.

Furthermore, Israel would like to commend all the work carried out by UNHCR to implement its protection mandate.

Madam Vice-Chairperson,

Israel would like to highlight some points of the document before us:

- Regarding the efforts in the context of the Covid-19 Pandemic, we welcome the implementation of the High Commissioner’s Strategic Directions 2022-2026, that emphasizes the organization’s commitment to bolstering preparedness and response capacities. We share the view that this will foster resilience and access to rights.
- Regarding the activities to countering smuggling and trafficking in persons, we welcome the agreement signed by IOM and UNHCR to operationalize their joint 2020 “Framework document on developing standard operating procedures to facilitate the

identification and protection of victims of trafficking”. Moreover, we commend UNHCR’s collaboration on the issuance by the Global Protection Cluster of an introductory guide to anti-trafficking action in internal displacement contexts to aid protection specialists. Cross-agencies work and collaboration with States is key to work towards the eradication of this phenomenon.

- Regarding UNHCR’s work on ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities, Israel welcomes UNHCR’s participation at the second Global Disability Summit, and in particular the ten new commitments on disability inclusion. We look forward on receiving updates on their implementation.
- Moreover, we welcome UNHCR’s work on ensuring that the voices of children and youth are heard. We commend the child-friendly procedures put in place, as well as having the best interests of the child as the key concept guiding any activities related to them.
- Regarding gender-based violence, we commend that the organization affirms its prioritization of the implementation of its policy on prevention, risk mitigation and response to gender-based violence. We encourage UNHCR’s leadership to continue this important work.
- However, we note that in paragraph 47 it is indicated that “services for male survivors of gender-based violence are

scarce”. In this regard, could you share with us your ideas on how this situation could be improved?

- Finally, we welcome the emphasis given to UNHCR’s long-standing commitment to integrating age, gender and diversity into its policies, programmes and advocacy across all its operations. This same Executive Committee already promoted this approach in its Conclusion No. 108 (LIX) from 2008. Moreover, we welcome the development of disaggregated data collection that helps to guide policies and programmes based on facts, and not on prejudices or stereotypes.
- Let me conclude by strongly **welcoming and supporting** the references to sexual orientation and gender identity.
- We have heard many times in this room that UNHCR and States should behave guided by the rejection of “discrimination of any kind”. However, this is immediately followed by a rejection to reference of that diversity that characterizes all our societies, even if it is publicly denied.
- We do not believe that UNHCR reports are “documents for advocacy of controversial concepts” but on the contrary, they are a strong exhibition of the commitment of the organization towards fulfilling its mandate without discrimination and aiming at protecting every person of concern.

- As the UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity has clearly explained:

“Only by acknowledging the stereotypes, power asymmetries, inequality and fundamental violence that lies at the foundation of this system does the State comply with its obligation to address the violence and discrimination that it fuels, with its harrowing impact on women and girls in every corner of the world, including lesbian, bisexual and trans women; on gay, bisexual and trans persons; on other gender-diverse persons; and on intersex persons.”

- We commend UNHCR work in this regard and encourages it to continue in this path.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.