

DIP DIRECTOR, Elizabeth Tan – Presentation of the NOTE ON INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

87TH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE – 14 June 2023

Mme Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- The 2023 Note has a thematic focus on the 75th anniversary this year of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (UDHR), including its Article 14, the first expression of the **right to seek and enjoy asylum** in a widely endorsed international instrument.
- The Note describes the **global picture in 2022-23 on asylum and international protection**, and the **access to and enjoyment of human rights** by refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees, internally displaced and stateless persons. It describes both the positive measures and practices of many states and partners, as well as the challenges and gaps UNHCR sees worldwide.
- The Note has been prepared pursuant to UNHCR’s mandate for the supervision of the application of refugee law, and the protection of the rights of persons under the organization’s legal responsibility.
- The first part of the Note recalls the **increasing intensity and prevalence of conflict and violence** across the globe, with humanitarian crises growing in scale and complexity. It notes that while some conflicts, such as that in Ukraine, were prominent in the media over the past year, others –including in Sudan - highlight the need for **greater attention and resources** to address unfolding emergencies and protracted situations in many parts of the world.
- It notes that **States located closest to countries in crisis** continue to shoulder the greatest burden and responsibility for supporting refugees. It notes that more political will and economic investments are needed to end violence, ensure stability and rule of law and build strong frameworks for protecting human rights. These measures, **rather than restrictive border and migration management policies**, can prevent displacement and to put in place conditions for durable solutions.
- In Section II, the Note describes a number of developments and trends related to the **right to seek asylum** – including ongoing prevalence of mixed movements; loss of life at sea; exploitation and rights violations, including by traffickers and smugglers.
- It discusses ongoing efforts to reinforce **asylum systems**, noting that robust mechanisms to identify international protection needs remain central to States’ ability to provide such protection. It notes that systems must ensure that all civilians fleeing violence and persecution have **non-discriminatory access** to safe **territory, international protection and basic rights**.
- It points to **practical measures to complement asylum regimes**, such as the headcount exercise in Iran, as well as temporary protection schemes in the Americas, among other places. It highlights the need for effective implementation of past GRF pledges to improve asylum systems and for new concrete, implementable pledges to come in 2023.

- Under the heading of the **right to enjoy asylum**, section III of the Note discusses challenges around **uneven and slow economic growth** limiting the ability (and sometimes the readiness) of states to support displaced and stateless people in accordance with their rights. It recalls that **disasters** have affected the ability of people in many countries to enjoy asylum and caused further displacement, including floods in Africa and Asia, and earthquakes in Syria and Türkiye.
- The Note contains a dedicated sub-section on **inclusion in national systems and economies and development action**, recognizing frankly that many countries welcoming large numbers of refugees have seen a decline in living conditions both for refugees and host communities. The Note underlines that **protection and development are mutually reinforcing**. It speaks of concerns around laws, policies and practices excluding displaced and stateless people from accessing their rights, citing the World Bank's recent **World Development Report**, which points out that as well as impacting refugee self-reliance, this leads to missed opportunities to address labour market needs.
- On **access to services**, the Note underscores that inclusive policies and practices can help ensure access to rights for people in vulnerable situations and with specific needs. It describes ways in which UNHCR and partners promote access to services, recognizing the need for effective responsibility-sharing and support to host countries and communities.
- The Note describes key trends, advances but also concerns around **child protection, education, and gender-based violence**, a protection risk to which refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons are particularly exposed.
- On **IDPs** (on which there is a separate dedicated Conference Room Paper before the Committee), it speaks of the work of UNHCR with other UN partners in the work of the Protection Expert Group on IDPs and in follow up to the UNSG's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement. The note also summarizes key developments in short sections on **solutions** and **statelessness**, complementing the separate papers before SC on these two issues.
- Finally, the Note includes a reference in paragraph 3 to its status as a report of the High Commissioner which does not necessarily reflect the views of all of the Member States. This factual statement articulates that which is implied in the Note's subtitle, and it does not represent any change in the authority or weight of the Note as an official UN document issued by the HC under his mandate authority.

Thank you.