

## **UNHCR Executive Committee 73**

**10-14 October 2022**

### **Netherlands statement General Debate**

Thank you Chair, thank you High Commissioner Grandi.

- The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement made by the EU and its Member States.
- High Commissioner, let me first congratulate you with your re-election. We are very much reassured that this decision means UNHCR will be in competent hands for the next 2.5 years.
- Chair, in my statement I will touch upon Burden & Responsibility sharing, our humanitarian financing, localization, MHPSS and sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. I will start and close by looking back on this year and what it means for the future.
- So let me first address the current year. 2022 marks the year of a disruptive war in Europe, that along with many other grave crises and wars, results in record displacement and damaged resilience of refugees and those caring for them.
- We owe great appreciation to those countries and communities hosting the forcefully displaced worldwide.
- They have continued to show hospitality and generosity, providing assistance, protection and a place to stay for refugees.
- But gratitude is not enough Chair. The Netherlands joins you High Commissioner in emphasizing the importance of maintaining sufficient support to crises that are less spotlighted, yet protracted and urgent.
- We are particularly concerned about the increasing vulnerabilities of refugees and host communities in neglected displacement crises such as South-Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Bangladesh and Myanmar and other situations where cuts might be needed without additional support, as well as the protracted nature of the Afghan and Syrian crises.
- Against this backdrop, the Netherlands has again raised humanitarian contributions this year to a new record from EUR 435 mln last year to 512 mln this year.

- NL remains committed to providing significant multi-year unearmarked humanitarian funding, at least, but whenever possible, also above the agreed 30%. We call upon other donors to do the same. Only unearmarked and multi-year funding provides organizations, such as UNHCR, the needed flexibility and option, to respond fast and where needs are highest.
- We acknowledge the efforts by UNHCR to pass on some of these flexibilities to front-line implementing partners, especially through structural overhead sharing. We hope sister agencies will follow and urge UNHCR to take a leading role in pushing forward the broader localization agenda, with an emphasis on refugee-led organizations and meaningful refugee participation.
- We also urge UNHCR to ensure that those donors providing unearmarked funding receive the credits and visibility for doing so.
- The Netherlands will also continue to make a portion of its development budget available to UNHCR via the PROSPECTS partnership, specifically for its involvement in humanitarian-development Nexus programming.
- For the Netherlands, Nexus is about seeking complementarities between mandates and expertise of different actors in displacement context, and we call on UNHCR to seek its added value in this space focused on its core protection mandate.
- PROSPECTS is our main funding instrument to support UNHCR, hosting states and key development partners in these efforts, and was our main GRF pledge in 2019. We look forward to be able to continue our support also with a view to the next GRF cycle.
- Chair, yesterday was Mental Health day. We appreciate the High Commissioner's sensitivity for PSS and related needs of refugee children, which stems so evidently from your visit to Ukraine.
- We welcome the important ExCom conclusion on MHPSS and we commend UNHCR for its work on integrating MHPSS in its crisis response, including in the work of the Protection and the Shelter Clusters. We look forward to continued efforts to strengthen the MHPSS response, capacity and integration at global and country-level.
- Chair, Sexual Exploitation, Abuse & Harassment keeps raising its ugly head in situations of uneven power differentials, as the recent New Humanitarian reporting on the situation in the Malakal camp in South

Sudan has shown again. We urge UNHCR to keep up and step up efforts to prevent and eradicate Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment in all its operations.

- Chair in closing, let me come back to where I started my statement, on the catastrophic year 2022.
- A year that once again demonstrated that the principles laid out in the Convention remain crucial, that the right to asylum must remain upheld and that refugees should never be instrumentalized for political gain.
- A year that once again demonstrates that international solidarity remains crucial, that all countries must take responsibility for the world's displaced and that burden & responsibility sharing can't only remain words on paper, but must be translated into action.
- A year that has in fact already proven to be very destabilizing and disappointing. But as Martin Luther King already said, "*we must accept finite disappointment but never lose infinite hope*".
- And I do see hope Chair. I see hope in the generosity of hosting countries, I see hope in the resilience of refugees, I see hope in the unwavering effort of the HCR and his staff, I see hope in the GRF next year which gives us the possibility and obligation to step up our efforts further. I hope others see that hope too.
- I thank you chair.