

**Friends of the #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness
UNHCR ExCom Plenary Statement
For A/S Noyes's Delivery
October 10, 2022**

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to deliver this joint statement to UNHCR's Executive Committee on behalf of the Friends of the IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness.

When this campaign began in 2014, we came together with one common goal: to end statelessness for millions of people around the world who are prevented from their full enjoyment of human rights by being denied their right to a nationality.

Statelessness has severe and lifelong impacts on individuals as well as the communities where they live, often preventing a stateless person from obtaining identity documentation and civil registration, blocking access to public services like education and health care, creating barriers to legal employment, financial services and property rights, and leading to further vulnerabilities throughout their lives.

Stateless persons often experience marginalization and exclusion as a result of racial, ethnic, gender, and religious discrimination in law or in practice. UNHCR reports that more than 75 percent of the world's known stateless persons belong to minority groups. Ending statelessness requires greater safeguards and efforts to eliminate discrimination that deprives people of nationality – including by addressing discrimination in nationality laws and civil registration, and ensuring birth registration for all children.

Over the past eight years of the #IBelong Campaign, the Group of Friends has been pleased to see many Member States take meaningful actions to eradicate statelessness, including by acceding to the UN Statelessness Conventions, implementing safeguards to prevent childhood statelessness, removing gender discrimination from their nationality laws and adopting statelessness determination procedures, and improving data on stateless populations. We commend all those States that delivered more than 250 pledges at the 2019 High Level Segment on Statelessness and Global Refugee Forum, and welcome their efforts to implement those pledges. With only two years of the #IBelong Campaign remaining, we call upon Member States to redouble their efforts to ensure that all pledges on statelessness are implemented by 2024. We also call upon Member States to consider making similar pledges in the context of the next Global Refugee Forum in 2023, and to join us in the Group of Friends in addressing this cause.

As we approach the last two years of the #IBelong Campaign, discrimination and many other barriers must still be addressed before statelessness can be eradicated. At the same time, the severe impacts of COVID, climate change, and food insecurity combined with historic levels of forced displacement threaten lives and risk exacerbating rather than reducing levels of statelessness around the world. As an international community it is vital that our plans and responses to growing forced displacement be inclusive of stateless persons. Central to the efforts of the IBelong Campaign is the acknowledgement that the problem of statelessness is largely avoidable, and with adequate political will, is entirely solvable.

The Group of Friends welcomes UNHCR's continued advocacy and assistance in support of Member States' implementation of their pledges and National Action Plans to address statelessness. The Group of Friends encourages UNHCR to dedicate sufficient human and financial resources to accelerate progress toward the goals of its Global Action Plan to End Statelessness and to sustain momentum beyond the end of the IBelong Campaign in 2024. We also wish to emphasize the crucial role of civil society organizations, in mobilizing action at local and national levels to resolve statelessness and provide protection to stateless persons.

We urge Member States to continue to enhance efforts to resolve existing situations of statelessness, prevent emergence of new cases, and better identify and protect stateless persons.

Most importantly, throughout every step we take to address statelessness, we encourage Member States, UNHCR, and other stakeholders to listen to stateless persons to understand their needs, challenges, and hopes. We will not end statelessness without their voices and participation, and we must find solutions together.

Thank you.