



**Draft Statement by the delegation of Nepal during the General Debate, 73rd
Session of the Executive Committee of the UNHCR**

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Madam Chair

Mr. High Commissioner,

Nepal appreciates the High Commissioner for his comprehensive statement. The world, as highlighted by the High Commissioner, has been entangled in a situation where it has to deal with multiple challenges at the same time such as climate emergency, violence, and armed conflicts, among others. Doubtlessly, these challenges have been pivotal in forcing people to abandon their homes. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have impacts in the long term in the lives of the refugees including vulnerable population.

Nepal commends the able leadership of UNHCR and appreciates the efforts made by the High Commissioner in addressing the complex humanitarian challenges around the world. Despite capacity constraints, the role of UNHCR in responding to the emergencies faced by displaced populations and protecting and providing assistance to the refugees and other vulnerable populations around the world is praiseworthy.

It is the vulnerable group including the refugees, migrants who are most exposed to the challenges in the wake of the economic recession, food insecurity, climate crisis, and health emergencies. Nepal appreciates the extraordinary efforts made by the UNHCR and its partners, including the UN system and the concerned agencies in countering these problems.

Nepal shares the views with the High Commissioner who aptly underscored the growing impacts of climate change in the catastrophic proportion in his opening statement.

Nepal as a climate vulnerable country, joins voice with the High Commissioner to urge countries to fulfil their commitments in climate financing and looks forward for the meaningful outcome in the upcoming COP27.

Madam. Chair

Nepal, despite not being a party to refugee convention 1951 and the 1967 protocol, has been providing shelter for thousands of Bhutanese refugees for decades.

Nepal as a landlocked LDC with limited resources, financial constraints and other pressing national challenges has been continuously doing so on pure humanitarian grounds.

We made sincere efforts in every forum and occasion, through bilateral and multilateral efforts to find a lasting solution to the problem of Bhutanese refugees. But it has not yielded a result-oriented outcome due to the continued rigidity and non-implementation of the agreed decisions by the Bhutanese side.

We have made in every relevant forum and repeatedly in this august meeting every year, calling for the resumption of the stalled process and the repatriation of all remaining refugees to Bhutan return in safe and with dignity on a voluntary basis.

Currently, there are over 6000 refugees in the eastern Nepal, most of them are elderly who have preferred only the option of repatriation and are desperately waiting for return to their homeland.

As underlined by the High Commissioner, countries of origin have the biggest responsibility in creating conditions for safe return, we urge the Bhutanese side for the decisive action on resolving the long-standing issue of Bhutanese refugees. Additionally, we call upon the international community to act timely and comprehensively for protecting refugees' right to return to their homeland and ensuring their effective rehabilitation under all circumstances.

We reiterate our appreciation to the core group of countries for the support in third country resettlement.

Nepal commends UNHCR's support and care to the refugees in Nepal. Currently we have a dedicated unit – the National Unit for the Coordination of Refugee Affairs (NUCRA) – at the Ministry of Home Affairs who works closely with the UNHCR in addressing the issues of refugees.

The Government of Nepal, despite limited resources and capacity constraint, has implemented measures to enhancing the livelihood opportunities and self-reliance of refugees. We believe that safe and dignified return of the refugees to their homeland is the lasting solution to the problem and urge the international community to address the problem with a priority. As a host country of the refugee, we call for enhanced international cooperation and solidarity to address the plight of refugees and other vulnerable groups as the world continue facing multiple challenges.

I thank you