

Danish statement – UNHCR ExCOM 2023 – General Debate.

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Thank you, chair. Denmark aligns with the statement made by the EU and its Member States.

First, I will offer Denmark's condolences on the loss of lives due to the violence in Israel and Gaza, resulting from the attacks by the Hamas terrorists and the loss of lives following the earthquake in Afghanistan.

This year we have marked yet another sad milestone with record high global displacement, driven by new and longstanding conflicts, instability and the impacts of climate change. An only further fueled by Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and its global consequences, which are heartfelt by those already in vulnerable situations – not least refugees.

At the same time, this year marks an opportunity. The upcoming Global Refugee Forum is an opportunity to step up our collective efforts, at policy and operational level, to strengthen implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees. To solve the plight of refugees and provide support for countries generously hosting them. Denmark is committed to making the GRF a success – we simply can't afford not to. Our focus will be in the areas of economic inclusion, climate action and nexus approaches, as well as education and refugee youth empowerment.

The funding situation is of great concern. Denmark has for years been among UNHCR's top donors. We are proud that the vast majority of our funding is unearmarked or flexible and multiyear. This enables UNHCR to respond quickly and to allocate the funds where the needs are greatest. We call on all to provide UNHCR with quality funding.

We are deeply worried about the many persons who put their lives in the hands of human smugglers – for many with disastrous consequences. We therefore welcome the High Commissioner’s mentioning of the need for holistic whole-of-route-based approaches. We wish to create a more humane and fair asylum system in Europe, with focus on addressing the root causes of irregular migration, and we are looking at all viable solutions in this regard. It is, of course, paramount that all solutions respect international human rights and are in accordance with international law.

With the increasingly complex drivers of displacement and more protracted crisis, integrated approaches with a sustainable development perspective is of key importance. We welcome UNHCR’s continued strong focus on expanding partnerships with development actors, including the World Bank, IFC and other IFIs.

Further, we commend UNHCR’s increased focus on climate action and call on UNHCR to further step up its efforts. Both in terms of reducing environmental degradation in displacement settings, and by enhancing the preparedness and resilience of displaced persons and host communities. We stand ready to support.

Human rights must be at the center of all our efforts. Denmark wishes to underline the importance of UNHCR’s steadfast commitment to protecting and seeking solutions for all persons of concern under its mandate. Without discrimination on any grounds and regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. An Age, Gender and Diversity approach is the key to providing a truly inclusive and sustainable refugee response.

Chair; finally let me end by expressing our gratitude to all UNHCR staff for their tireless work, and underline Denmark’s continued commitment to our longstanding partnership with UNHCR.

Thank you.

