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Statement by the Government of Finland

**Delivered by H.E. Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Finland, Geneva**

Chair, High Commissioner, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, let me express our deep condolences over the lives lost in the abhorrent attack against Israel. Finland unequivocally condemns terrorism in its all forms. We call for protection of civilians and a peaceful solution. Safety belongs to everyone.

We also express our solidarity to the victims of the earthquake in Afghanistan.

Finland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the

EU and its Member States, as well as the joint statement of the Group of Friends on Disability Inclusion.

The number of forcibly displaced persons is expected to exceed 130 million, a proof of our failure as the international community. We pay tribute to host countries and communities showing solidarity to refugees despite their own challenges. The Second Global Refugee Forum could not be more timely.

We also show respect to UNHCR employees working in dangerous environments. Employees are UNHCR's strongest asset.

As resources are plateauing and needs growing, we thank UNHCR for seeking cost efficiencies and synergies with other agencies. Prioritization is key to ensure that limited resources reach those who are at most risk. We also highlight the importance of humanitarian coordination.

Risk is an inherent element of humanitarian action. We have again seen reports of different forms of abuse, such as aid diversion. We appreciate UNHCR's continued attention to oversight and risk

management. Integrity and transparency are ingredients for trust and thus enable the delivery of aid as well as flexible funding.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We stand firm to protect the principles enshrined in international human rights and refugee law, including the right to asylum. We must also fight racism, hatred and discrimination.

We emphasize age, gender and diversity sensitivity in humanitarian action. We applaud UNHCR's commitment to a rights-based approach. Being sensitive to intersecting vulnerabilities and ensuring the inclusivity of humanitarian action is also a means to improve aid effectiveness.

Globally, there are over one billion people living with disabilities, disproportionately affected by conflict and violence. We call on UNHCR to continue advancing disability inclusion, whether through more accessible services or more targeted activities. We commend UNHCR's progress, but also expect continued commitment in this uncertain global situation. UNHCR is in a unique position in this area as the Global Cluster Lead Agency and as a champion of the Independent Review of IASC Protection Policy.

We would also like to raise the situation of LGBTIQ+ people. In many contexts, people need to live in fear of violence and exclusion due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. It is our obligation to afford these people with the protection and services they need, and we thank UNHCR for its leadership in this.

Finland continues to stand up for the rights of persons in the most vulnerable situations, including through our resettlement programme. Particular priority will be given to children, women and persons with disabilities in several UNHCR priority situations. To promote integration domestically, Finland will implement an action plan to increase the participation of under-represented groups in working life, such as immigrant women. Civil society actors and volunteers often have a meaningful role in supporting newcomers.

In closing, we wish to reassure the High Commissioner of our commitment to be a predictable donor, partner and proponent of humanitarian principles.

I thank you.

