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**UNHCR Executive Committee, 75th plenary session
(Geneva, 14-18 October 2024)**

Agenda item 3: General debate

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Darius Staniulis, Permanent Representative of the Republic of
Lithuania to the UN Office and other International Organizations in Geneva**

Thank you, Madam Chairperson,

Lithuania fully aligns itself with the statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

As we witness new and recurring armed conflicts as well as natural disasters, we share the concern of the High Commissioner regarding the increased need for humanitarian assistance to the refugees, asylum-seekers and the internally displaced persons.

We highly value the worldwide activities of UNHCR in safeguarding the rights and well-being of all refugees. Lithuania is a strong supporter of UNHCR work and implementation of its mandate in responding to the many complex challenges, including the Russian aggression against Ukraine. UNHCR can count on our continued cooperation.

Chairperson,

Since the beginning of Russia's war against Ukraine, almost 85 thousand Ukrainians, 35 percent of them children, have already received shelter in Lithuania. Currently there are over 55 thousand temporary resident permits issued to the Ukrainian refugees in Lithuania. These persons benefit from access to accommodation or means to obtain housing, health care, education and access to the labour market.

The aftermath of the war will have long-term consequences for the people and for the security and natural environment not only in Ukraine, but also worldwide. In this context, the international community must unite to take all measures to stop the cause of human suffering, that is, to stop Russia's brutal war.

We urge for immediate and unimpeded access for UNHCR and other mandated international bodies to all Ukrainian refugees. We remain extremely concerned about the reports of children from Ukraine being forcibly deported to Russia and Belarus. We support initiatives aimed at seeking to clarify the fate of them all.

Chairperson,

I would like also to underline the issue of the continued attempts to instrumentalize migrants and refugees flows from third countries into the European Union for political purposes. We remain concerned by continued actions of the authorities of Belarus and more recently by Russia in this regard. It leads to serious human rights violations and poses serious challenges related to states' security. We urge UNHCR to condemn any attempts to instrumentalize migration by orchestrating movement of the third country nationals across state borders.

Chairperson,

We are pleased with the results of the second Global Refugee Forum held in Geneva last December. We thank UNHCR for organizing it. The Government of Lithuania has made a number of new pledges

and reconfirmed our commitments with regard to proper implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees.

We recognize the increased protection challenges faced by refugees, particularly, women, children, persons with disabilities and other forcibly displaced persons in vulnerable situations. In this respect, we stress the importance of UNHCR's gender-sensitive approach in addressing the specific needs of women and girls and reaffirm our commitment to combatting sexual and gender-based violence, as well as sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in all its forms.

Chairperson,

Let me assure you that Lithuania is committed to continue supporting UNHCR, politically and financially, and actively engage in finding solutions to global refugee related challenges that we face today.

I thank you.