

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Statement by Sweden, PR Mr. Magnus Hellgren, Seventy-Fifth session of the Executive Committee, 15 October 2024

Madame chair, Mr. High Commissioner, Excellencies, Colleagues, and friends,

Sweden aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union and delivers the following in national capacity:

In light of the current dire humanitarian environment, where civilians suffer the burden of on-going violence and the harsh consequences of climate change, we must also recognize the extremely dangerous situations in which humanitarian actors operate.

I wish to express Sweden's deepest condolences to UNHCR on the loss of two staff members in Lebanon. This is yet another painful reminder of the importance of protecting civilians and humanitarian workers, in accordance with international humanitarian law.

Mr. High Commissioner,

It is evident that we are experiencing unprecedented times. Never have we seen over 120 million displaced people, at the same time as crises are becoming more protracted and grow even more complex. The need for humanitarian assistance and protection is immense and increasing, while available resources fail to sufficiently meet needs. The current state of the humanitarian environment is not a hypothetical depiction of a possible future; it is the reality of the world we live in today. In order to not only meet the needs of today, but to create a better and sustainable future for tomorrow and beyond, we need actors like the UNHCR, leaders like you Mr. High Commissioner, and dedicated and professional staff like yours.

Madame Chair,

Sweden recognizes UNHCR's efforts to find solutions for displacement crises. We reiterate the need for innovation, a whole-of-society approach as well as efficient and durable solutions to enable voluntary, safe, and dignified return and sustainable reintegration. Thus, we welcome the sustainable programming approach, and we are also in close dialogue with UNHCR, IOM and other key partners on the route-based approach. Sweden commends the UNHCR for being a frontrunner of holistic and efficient solutions, by inviting development actors and private sector in the displacement responses.

We also recognize UNHCR's progress in the reform processes, under the leadership of Deputy High Commissioner Clements, in increasing the organization's overall efficiency, risk-mitigation, transparency, and performance reporting. We especially welcome efforts to limit risks of aid diversion, including corruption and other forms of irregularities.

Madame Chair,

UNHCR plays an indispensable role in upholding international protection for the most vulnerable refugees. We appreciate UNHCR's effective leadership and its strong commitment to upholding the rights of forcibly displaced and stateless people in all activities.

Displaced women and girls remain disproportionately affected by gender-based violence in times of conflict. Sweden strongly supports UNHCR's commitment to placing protection at the center of humanitarian response, and to strengthen sexual and reproductive health and rights of affected women and girls.

Additionally, we need to strengthen third countries' capacity to manage all different aspects of migration. We reaffirm our readiness to contribute to building asylum capacity in countries in need thereof.

Fewer people should need to undertake dangerous journeys to seek protection. Resettlement remains a sustainable, safe, and organized way to offer international protection to refugees in the most vulnerable situations, as well as an act of solidarity with host countries. Sweden is a longstanding resettlement country and would like to recall that receiving quota refugees cannot be a task only for a few countries.

This year we continue our engagement for resettlement, upholding a quota of 900 refugees. Priority will be given to women, girls and LGBTIQI+ refugees. In 2024, Sweden will engage largely for the refugee situation of the Great Lakes region in Africa, Uganda and Tanzania.

Statelessness is yet another major protection challenge, that continues to limit thousands of people from acquiring basic human rights and freedoms. Sweden has therefore decided to join the new Global Alliance to end statelessness, to show political support for advancing progress even further.

Madame Chair,

In closing, I wish to reiterate Sweden's strong and steadfast support to UNHCR and to the extraordinary leadership of the High Commissioner.

Sweden is a proud partner of UNHCR. Not only as a leading donor of unearmarked and multiyear funding, which enables swift and efficient humanitarian responses in countries like Sudan, Ukraine, and Lebanon, but also by believing in the core principles of UNHCR's mandate and in your tireless work to provide protection and assistance to millions of displaced people across the world.

We will continue to show our support to UNHCR and to the millions of people in need of your indispensable services.

Thank you.