

**PLENARY**

**U.S. Delegation Statement  
75th Session of the UNHCR Executive Committee (EXCOM)  
Acting Assistant Secretary of State Marta Youth  
Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration  
U.S. Department of State  
October 14, 2024**

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High Commissioner, Chair,

It is an honor to join you as the head of this year's U.S. delegation. As many of those gathered here have noted, the scale and complexity of humanitarian and refugee needs are staggering. Even as we meet, displacement is growing in Lebanon and spilling across the border into Syria, while displacement in Sudan and its neighboring countries represents the largest humanitarian crisis in the world. To meet the challenge before us, we must all more efficiently channel stretched humanitarian resources to where they are needed most.

The United States is doing its part to meet that challenge, both with record humanitarian funding and enhanced coordination with our partners. In Fiscal Year 2024, the United States provided more than \$16 billion in humanitarian assistance, including for resettlement of refugees, overseas assistance, and support for vulnerable migrants around the world.

Yet the sheer scale of humanitarian need means that basic standards in many responses are not being met. It is imperative that other donors step up to contribute more resources to help meet this unprecedented challenge.

Even as we recognize the need for greater donor funding to respond to these crises, we also urgently need to transform *how* we address these crises. Secretary Blinken convened a ministerial side event on the margins of the UN General Assembly to highlight the urgent need for better coordination and more strategic investments. Together with the World Economic Forum and InterAmerican Development Bank, the Secretary's event brought together senior government officials, development banks, the private sector, humanitarian and development agencies, foundations, and civil society. Importantly, it served as another platform to include the voices of displaced people themselves. The United States aims to carry forward the momentum from this event and invites all of you to join us.

Together, we **must** seek solutions that allow refugees to lead their lives in freedom, in safety, and **with dignity**. It is more important than ever that our collective humanitarian response focuses on and advances **solutions** for forcibly displaced people. This is not easy, nor will changes happen quickly. But it is necessary, and it has begun. At last year's Global Refugee Forum, the United States highlighted the need to look **beyond** traditional humanitarian donors and organizations. Sustainably addressing the humanitarian crises we face today requires a broad coalition.

The United States is taking a whole-of-government approach to implementing humanitarian solutions using all of the tools in our toolkit, including some innovative approaches we've not tried before. In Uganda, for example, the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation is directly supporting refugees in a new program that will use loan portfolio guarantees through a local bank to improve refugee and host communities' access to credit.

As chair and founding member of the Resettlement Diplomacy Network, we are more committed than ever to strengthen global resettlement infrastructure and to create a platform for states to engage in strategic decision-making. We've seen compelling evidence that inclusive policies expedite refugees on the road to integration and economic independence. Their success is a win for everyone – both for refugees as well as their host communities. A recent study showed that from 2005 to 2019, refugees contributed nearly \$124 billion more to the U.S. economy than they cost in government spending.

This year, the United States has proven itself once again as a leader in refugee resettlement. We proudly surpassed 100,000 refugee arrivals – the highest annual number of refugees welcomed in three decades.

Our collective efforts are made possible only by the tireless work of humanitarian workers. I would like to take this opportunity to renew our call to **protect humanitarian workers**. They should never be a target.

I would also like to note our appreciation of UNHCR's principled and inclusive stance on age, gender, and diversity, including sexual orientation and gender identity, to promote and sustain a diverse workforce.

We applaud UNHCR's focus on statelessness and wholeheartedly support efforts to combat statelessness.

Finally, in keeping with recent tradition and the U.S. commitment to raise up the voices of those who are most impacted by displacement, I would like to cede my remaining time to the U.S. Refugee Advisor, Ayda Zugay.



**Ayda Zugay, USDEL Refugee Advisor**

**Plenary Remarks**

**EXCOM 2024**

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Thank you, Marta. It is an honor to address this body.

After serving over two decades in cross-sector social impact, I have witnessed how solutions rooted in the technical and lived experience of displaced people can unlock new pathways to a more effective, innovative, and durable humanitarian protection landscape. As someone who was once stateless but has since gained full rights through U.S. citizenship, I intimately understand the profound loss of basic human rights and the isolation of not having a nationality.

A reimagination is needed to address the crisis of the 4.4 million stateless people around the world and 120 million (and counting) displaced. Bold, forward-looking leadership is crucial as we unite governments, civil society, and the private sector to drive meaningful change. It is essential that we enhance the effectiveness of our efforts

by placing the lived experience and technical expertise of displaced people central in the solutions that directly affect them.

I hope that my voice will galvanize commitments to create more meaningful opportunities for displaced people to contribute their expertise. Let us build a future where displacement and statelessness become obsolete, creating a global society that no longer accepts the uprooting of lives. Thank you.

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