



**United Nations Refugee Agency
75th Executive Committee
Delivered by Permanent Representative Lucy Duncan
Wednesday 16 October 2024**

Thank you, Chair.

New Zealand is grateful to UNHCR for its tireless efforts to provide crucial humanitarian assistance, protection, and durable solutions for displaced persons worldwide. New Zealand remains committed to our robust partnership with UNHCR, as we collaborate closely with the global community to uphold the rights and well-being of refugees and displaced populations.

The past year has seen a further increase in the scale, scope, duration and complexity of humanitarian crises. Global humanitarian needs greatly exceed available resources. One in every 73 people are forcibly displaced, a ratio which has almost doubled in the past ten years. Children now account for an alarming 40 percent of the total refugee population.

Equally alarmingly is the continuous upward trend of resettlement needs. We note with concern that UNHCR projects these to spike to close to three million next year – an increase of approximately 20% compared to 2024, and more than 50% compared to 2021.

We are also seeing multiple, overlapping crises – escalating conflicts, heightened food insecurity, climate change, natural disasters and environmental degradation – which are exacerbating humanitarian need and leading to further destabilisation and displacement. These compounded crises will have inter-generational consequences. They also significantly add to the complexity of our responses.

The persistent surge in forced displacement due to armed conflict is a matter of grave concern. New Zealand continues to condemn, unequivocally, Russia's unprovoked and unjustified attack on Ukraine, now in its third year. Russia's actions have caused immense suffering and significant displacement within Ukraine and to neighbouring countries. The conflict in the Middle East continues to have a catastrophic impact on Palestinians and increasingly on other civilian populations in the wider region – including extensive displacement within Lebanon, a country that is already hosting an estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees and hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees.

New Zealand is particularly concerned about the humanitarian situation in Sudan, which now faces the largest internal displacement crisis in the world, with 10.9 million people internally displaced, in addition to multiple disease outbreaks, climate shocks, and famine.

New Zealand is also concerned about the increasingly complex and dangerous operating environment for humanitarian workers, and extends our deepest sympathies to UNHCR for the recent loss of two staff members in Lebanon.

In short, UNHCR's work remains as important as ever. We welcome UNHCR's dedication to inclusive humanitarian action, especially in terms of gender and disability inclusion. We also applaud UNHCR's efforts to recognise differentiated protection needs.

Humanitarian agencies require flexible and reliable funding to effectively respond to emerging crises. New Zealand has consistently provided multi-year and unearmarked funding to UNHCR to address this need. Over the past year, we have supplemented this with contributions to UNHCR's humanitarian protection and assistance programs for Sudanese and Ukrainian refugees. We note with concern that UNHCR consistently operates at around half of its overall budget, receives contributions from a narrow pool of donors, and is receiving a decreasing amount of flexible funding.

New Zealand remains resolute in its commitment to collaborate with UNHCR, host countries and the broader international community in the resettlement of refugees. Our long-standing Refugee Quota Programme and complementary pathways, and our efforts to help refugees settle successfully, demonstrate that commitment. In the past year, we delivered on our commitment to resettle 1,500 UNHCR-referred refugees with priority protection needs, as well as 600 Refugee Family Support Category applicants.

New Zealand reaffirms its commitment to the full realisation of its Global Refugee Forum pledges. These encompass meaningful refugee participation, refugee employment and self-sufficiency and inclusion of refugees in health systems. We are also working to strengthen protection and solutions capacity across the Asia-Pacific, and bolstering the issuance and acceptance of refugee travel documents globally.

In closing, New Zealand commends you, High Commissioner, and the work of your staff throughout the world for your service to the world's refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced and other persons of concern. We are committed to doing our part to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable.

Thank you.