

Sixty-seventh meeting of the Standing Committee
21-22 September 2016
Agenda item 4(i)

Oral update on UNHCR's campaign to end statelessness

- In the almost two years since the #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness was launched, global awareness of statelessness and the political will to address it have increased substantially.
- A number of States have developed national action plans aimed at preventing and resolving statelessness, have begun making the necessary legislative and policy changes to achieve this, and have granted or confirmed nationality for hundreds or thousands of stateless persons.
- Since the campaign was launched there have been nine additional accessions to the statelessness conventions in total. As of 15 September, there are 88 parties to the 1954 Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons and 67 to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.
- UNHCR's strategy for achieving the campaign's ambitious goals relies on strong and effective engagement with States, robust civil society engagement and effective partnerships with international and local organizations. The "Friends of the Campaign" group, launched in October 2015, is helping to support initiatives that will advance these goals..
- At the global level, a resolution on the right to nationality was adopted by the Human Rights Council in June 2016, with a remarkable 111 co-sponsors.
- At the regional level, important achievements to date include the Abidjan Declaration on the Eradication of Statelessness and the Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action.
- The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights adopted a draft Protocol on the Right to Nationality that will be submitted to African Union Member States for review in 2017. A regional conference on statelessness in Central Asia was hosted by Turkmenistan in September 2016, and the League of Arab States will hold in October an expert meeting on issues of inclusion and belonging.
- In Asia, work is ongoing under the Bali process to produce a toolkit to support the commitment made by all states in the region to universal civil registration, and UNHCR is now partnering with ASEAN to promote the right to nationality.
- In Europe, following the adoption in 2015 of the first ever European Union Council conclusions on statelessness, UNHCR is working closely with EU institutions to encourage further engagement with governments, civil society and others to end statelessness on the continent.
- In the Americas, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States passed a resolution earlier this year welcoming the #IBelong Campaign and urging action to prevent and resolve statelessness.
- Civil society engagement is also increasing, including by organizations such as Amnesty International and Plan International. Civil society networks have sprung up in Central Asia

and the Middle East and North Africa region, complementing those already in place in Europe and the Americas.

- Inter-agency cooperation on statelessness is also being reinvigorated, particularly in connection with the rule of law, human rights and development mandates of other agencies, as well as in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- The year 2017 will be critical for the campaign, as UNHCR marks the first of the official milestone years when progress will be measured against each of the 10 actions of UNHCR's Global Action Plan.
- Collectively, stronger external partnerships with Member States, NGOs and international organizations will help ensure that efforts to address statelessness are prioritized through diplomacy, grassroots advocacy, national legislative reform and operational activity.

UNHCR
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