

PODIUM VERSION

Check against delivery

**Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Program
Protection Debate**

Statement by the Government of Canada

Delivered by Ms. Susan Dragan

First Secretary (Migration and Refugee Affairs)
Permanent Mission of Canada, Geneva

to the
71st SESSION
of the
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE UNITED NATIONS
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

Geneva, 5 – 9 October 2020

Vérifier à l'audition

Déclaration du Gouvernement du Canada

Prononcée par Mme. Susan Dragan

Première Secrétaire
Mission Permanente du Canada, Genève

À la 71^{ième} SESSION
du
COMITÉ EXÉCUTIF
DU HAUT COMMISSARIAT DES
NATIONS UNIES POUR LES RÉFUGIÉS

Genève, 5 – 9 octobre 2020

**Intervention du gouvernement du Canada lors de la 71^e session du
Comité exécutif du HCR (2020)**

Énoncé sur la protection

Monsieur le Président, Haut Commissaire Grandi, distingués délégués,
merci.

Lorsque la communauté internationale s'est lancée dans la démarche de revitalisation du régime de protection internationale en 2016, guidée par la Déclaration de New York pour les réfugiés et les migrants, nous avons collectivement déterminé que nous devions atteindre un niveau sans précédent de coopération internationale pour répondre à des niveaux sans précédent de déplacements forcés. Nous étions encouragés à préparer et à confirmer le Pacte mondial sur les réfugiés en 2018, puis à prendre des engagements concrets conformément aux objectifs du Pacte lors du Forum mondial sur les réfugiés en décembre 2019.

Malheureusement, Monsieur le Président, nous avons tous été débordés par nos efforts afin de lutter et de répondre à la crise sanitaire mondiale actuelle. Cette situation a nui au partage équitable nécessaire de nos

responsabilités collectives, comme nous l'avons exprimé dans le Pacte mondial sur les réfugiés.

Il est clair pour le Canada que la communauté internationale ne peut se permettre de dévier de la voie de coopération accrue sur laquelle elle s'était engagée.

Pour cette raison, le Canada accueille toutes les mesures favorables prises dans l'environnement difficile actuel, comme la volonté continue des États hôtes à offrir un espace vital de protection, et la promesse et le potentiel que représentent les plateformes de soutien nouvellement lancées.

Le Canada continuera de s'acquitter de sa part de responsabilités dans ce contexte exceptionnel :

- Canada has been working to resettle as many refugees as conditions allow, including those in the most urgent need, as identified by UNHCR.
- As Co-Chairs of the 2019-2020 Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, Canada and UNHCR successfully delivered a full program of activities in the past year to support the implementation of the Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways, building on the efforts at the Global Refugee Forum to expand solutions for refugees.

- Canada, alongside UNHCR and our other core partners in the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, will continue our strong support for the development of community sponsorship for refugee protection.

- As part of its ongoing commitment to complementary pathways, Canada will admit 500 refugees over the next two years through the Economic Mobility Pathways Project, to facilitate access to permanent residence via existing economic immigration programs.

- Canada also recently assumed the role of State Lead in the Global Task Force on Third Country Employment Pathways, where it expects to contribute to building the global capacity of this innovative pathway. Work is underway to establish membership in the Task Force, and a soft launch is expected to take place before March 2021.

- Canada will also continue its funding support to UNHCR and other humanitarian partners to help the Agency protect and assist refugees and other persons of concern, including our increased support due to the additional impact of COVID-19.

- On September 25, Canada launched the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies 2021-2025 Road Map to identify opportunities for collective action. Canada is calling on all partners to

increase efforts to mitigate the risk of gender-based violence and to ensure humanitarian assistance meets the needs and priorities of people in vulnerable situations, especially women and girls.

Mister Chair, the selfless contributions of asylum claimants to Canada's health care system during this health crisis has provided us with a clear demonstration of what persons seeking protection can, and are, willing to do for the national good of their country of asylum.

This is why, earlier this year, the Canadian Government announced measures to grant permanent residency to asylum claimants who had cared for the most vulnerable in long-term care homes and other medical facilities.

We know there have been many such acts of altruism and our hope is that the current pandemic may, in some way, help to change the refugee narrative from helpless dependents, to individuals able to actively contribute and participate in the well-being of their new country.

Mister Chair, Canada commends UNHCR for the degree of agility it has demonstrated in response to the global health crisis, and its inspiring commitment to "stay and deliver" on assistance and protection to refugees.

Canada calls on all Executive Committee Member States to now, in turn, “stay and deliver” on refugee protection.

To be clear, the choice is to continue to pursue our collective commitment to revitalizing the international protection regime, or inevitably later face the high cost of inaction.