

Chair,

With more than 100 million people now forcibly displaced, the challenges to provide the needed protection and support for refugees and internally displaced people, are overwhelming. In addition to 40 new crises, there are too many protracted crises, with people being displaced for several decades.

UNHCR's mandate and role are more important than ever, and we commend UNHCR staff for their efforts to "stay and deliver", often under highly difficult circumstances.

For the first time since the 1990s, Norway has activated its regulation on temporary collective protection. Helping fleeing Ukrainians in addition to contributing with medical evacuations and support in many sectors. Today's horrific attacks on several urban centres in Ukraine create not only anguish but lead to more displacement. Russia's illegal war must stop. At the same time, we are concerned by the increased number of new conflicts as well as the many ongoing conflicts, resulting in many and long-lasting refugee situations.

A comprehensive approach to the protection of refugees and other displaced people remains a priority for Norway. We strongly support the Global Compact on Refugees, promoting inclusive refugee policies and improving international burden and responsibility sharing. We will support this approach inter alia by launching a special budgetary initiative for displaced populations and host communities.

Protection must remain the overarching priority and main goal for UNHCR's work, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable. Among the most vulnerable refugees and internally displaced people is the LGBTQI+ community. Protection of this group is of vital importance.

The recent spike in prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence is deeply concerning. UNHCR's role in prevention and response, including protection measures, is essential, not least as a cluster lead. We urge UNHCR to enhance its efforts to prevent as well as to provide support to survivors and reiterate that the protection needs of boys and men must be recognized.

Norway supports the Secretary-General's "Action Agenda" on internal displacement. UNHCR has a key role to play in efforts towards solutions to these situations.

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Norway supports initiatives that recognize refugees' resources and competence, seeking to improve refugees' access to jobs and livelihoods. It is also important to support solutions that can contribute to social and economic inclusion. Meaningful refugee engagement and consultations should be streamlined in these efforts. To safeguard inclusive policies and a credible, well-functioning asylum system, we also need a good framework in place for the return of those who are not in need of international protection.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate Norway's commitment to continue to be a strong supporter of UNHCR and its mandate. Protection of civilians is a priority for Norway in our tenure in the UN Security Council. We remain committed to providing un-earmarked and flexible funding to facilitate the provision of well-coordinated, rapid and effective assistance to persons of concern to UNHCR and will be providing multi-year support. We urge other Member States to follow suit and contribute to reducing the current extraordinary funding gap.

Thank you.