

**72<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee  
(19-21 June 2018)  
Agenda item 2 (d)**

**Oral Update on the Campaign to End Statelessness**

The Deputy Director, Policy and Law in the Division of International Protection, Ms. Shahrzad Tadjbakhsh, will update the Committee on progress made in the Campaign to End Statelessness during the last year, with a focus on the following key areas:

**1. Accessions to the Statelessness Conventions and reforms to nationality laws to bring them in line with international standards.**

- In 2017, more than 56,500 stateless persons and persons of undetermined nationality acquired nationality or had their nationality confirmed.
- Burkina Faso, Chile and Luxembourg recently acceded to one or both of the Statelessness Conventions, raising the total number of accessions since the Campaign was launched a few short years ago to 17, and bringing the total number of Parties to the 1954 Convention to 90 and the total number of Parties to the 1961 Convention to 71.
- In 2017 Madagascar and Sierra Leone became the first States since the launch of the campaign to reform their laws to allow women to confer nationality to their children on the same basis as men. This has brought the number of States that continue to deny women this right down to 25 globally. At the same time, Armenia, Cuba and Peru have simplified the process to grant nationality to a child born to its nationals abroad, reforms which help prevent childhood statelessness.
- Brazil, Ecuador and Montenegro recently adopted dedicated statelessness determination procedures to identify stateless persons on their territories and grant them legal status.
- New national action plans to address statelessness were adopted in Burkina Faso and Mali.

**2. New regional commitments**

- New regional commitments continue to demonstrate the growing awareness and political will to tackle the issue of statelessness. The Banjul Plan of Action entered into force for members of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) last June. In October 2017, twelve Member States of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) signed the *Declaration of International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Member States on the Eradication of Statelessness*. These States also committed to a concrete plan of action to implement their commitments.
- Three expert meetings have now been held to discuss a draft African Union Protocol on the Specific Aspects of the Right to a Nationality and the Eradication of Statelessness, and it is hoped that this Protocol will now move forward for adoption by States as a progressive instrument on nationality law matters.
- In the Middle East and North Africa, members of the League of Arab States adopted a *Declaration on Belonging and Legal Identity*, a ground-breaking document that calls for equal nationality rights for women and for all children to be able to enjoy their right to a legal identity.
- A regional consultation among Latin American and Caribbean States was held in Brazil to take stock of implementation of the Brazil Plan of Action to date and to contribute to the development of the global compact on refugees; the “100 Points of Brasilia” adopted there included nine good practices on statelessness. These regional instruments provide a strong basis for additional progress at the national level.

**3. Working in partnership**

- There has been increased attention to statelessness issues through the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations, including the Universal Periodic Review and the special procedures.

- Statelessness is now recognized as an important development and human rights issue, thanks in part to the commitment of the Sustainable Development Agenda to “leave no one behind” and to ensure birth registration and legal identity for all. UNHCR will encourage further attention to the issue of statelessness at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2019. Furthermore, improved data and research on statelessness will be an important area of work of the new Joint Data Initiative with the World Bank.
- Statelessness issues have already found solid footing the draft program of action of the global compact on refugees, and will be an important part of the work carried out in the context of the global compact and the comprehensive refugee response framework in the years to come.
- Strengthened partnerships with Member States, including the Friends of the Campaign to End Statelessness, civil society groups, regional organizations, faith-based groups and sister agencies have contributed to progress.

#### 4. **The road ahead: towards the 2019 high-level event**

- These partnerships will be critical going forward towards the High-Level Event on Statelessness that UNHCR will convene with partners on the first day of the annual session of the Executive Committee in October 2019.
- Between now and October 2019, a number of regional preparatory meetings are planned. These regional meetings will allow UNHCR to support States—and States to support each other—in preparing achievements and pledges that can be presented at the high-level event. More information about the high-level event will be made available in due course.
- The 2019 event will mark the midpoint in UNHCR’s campaign and the achievements and pledges made there will set the stage for the campaign’s second half.

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