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Global Refugee Forum National Statement

High Commissioner, your excellencies, distinguished delegates.

Australia thanks UNHCR for convening the inaugural Global Refugee Forum. At a time of unprecedented global displacement, Australia welcomes this opportunity to reaffirm the principles of the Global Compact on Refugees. The Compact galvanises our collective commitment to shared responsibility for protecting and assisting those who are displaced, in solidarity with the generous host countries.

We know that forced displacement is often protracted - our assistance must be predictable and sustained. Multi-year funding and programs have become the default approach for Australia's response to protracted displacement crises. The Syria crisis prompted our first ever multi-year commitment to a specific humanitarian crisis. This provided our partners with much-needed certainty of funding and an ability to work beyond short-term objectives. We aim to provide multi-year support to other displacement contexts in the Asia-Pacific, and will maintain our strong commitment as one of the top donors to the Rohingya response.

High Commissioner, the international protection system remains under considerable strain and we echo your call for states to initiate, maintain or increase resettlement programs. Australia is one of the world's most generous contributors to international refugee resettlement efforts, successfully settling more than 900,000 refugees and others in humanitarian need since the end of the Second World War. Providing protection and opportunity for people has been key to building Australia's successful multicultural society. We acknowledge the contributions of all refugees participating in the Forum and are proud to see that so many refugees resettled in Australia are here

in Geneva to share their experiences and expertise. They have an important voice in this inaugural forum.

Our generous resettlement program recently increased – with up to 18,750 places this year, and will be maintained at this size over the next two years – representing Australia's largest ongoing Humanitarian Program in over 30 years. Australia has a strong focus on providing resettlement for vulnerable women and children, and includes unaccompanied humanitarian minors. This year we are proud to mark the 30th anniversary of our *Woman at Risk* visa program, which assists refugee women and their dependents in particularly vulnerable situations to resettle and rebuild their lives in safety in Australia, free from the constant threat of danger and violence. Australia has long been committed to delivering high quality settlement services for newly arrived refugees.

Protection of the most vulnerable remains central to Australia's humanitarian action. We are committed to promoting women and girls' inclusion and leadership in refugee and host communities; to preventing sexual and gender-based violence; and to meeting the needs of persons with disabilities in all displacement contexts. In this regard, we commend all those who have worked tirelessly over the last two years to produce the Inter-Agency Standing Committee *Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action*. We have a collective responsibility to people with disabilities in crisis situations. These guidelines will be a valuable tool for all our partners to ensure their operations are disability-inclusive. Australia has recently adopted a new policy on Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment which requires safeguarding measures across all our humanitarian investments.

High Commissioner, the shared challenge of forced displacement requires a shared response. Once again, we thank you for convening the Global Refugee Forum to re-energise our collective commitment to sharing responsibility for the global displacement crisis.

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