



PHILIPPINES

**73RD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAM
Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**

NATIONAL STATEMENT

Secretary (Minister) Jesus Crispin C. Remulla
Secretary of Department of Justice, Republic of the Philippines

Geneva, Switzerland
10 October 2022

Delivery time: 5 minutes

Mr. Chair,
High Commissioner,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

We wish to extend our gratitude to the UNHCR, most especially **aid workers at the frontlines of humanitarian work**, who remain resilient and dedicated in the face of conflicts and crises.

Our frontliners bring hope and inspiration to the most vulnerable amongst us who live under the most trying of circumstances: humanitarian crises, climate change and armed conflicts. The growing and continuing forced displacement of peoples from all over lead us to the conclusion that the **global humanitarian agenda is, and must be, about people, their well-being, health, livelihood, and basic human dignity.** It is

imperative that we must take real action and solid plans, not mere token gestures, to help ensure a better future for the displaced and the most vulnerable, including women and children, persons with disabilities, older persons, and indigenous peoples.

We hear you, High Commissioner, when you made a plea to the **international community for solidarity**. In this light, We, the Filipino people, affirm and confirm our continuing, strong and active support and cooperation to ensure the success of the global humanitarian agenda. Despite our being a modest country, facing serious domestic issues like the energy crises, climate change, disaster-induced internal displacement and a polarized citizenry, we stand hand in hand with the international community in pushing **the boundaries of how much we can help, to go beyond our comfort zone**.

We assure the High Commissioner of **the Philippines' resolve to continue to be one of this organization's most vocal ally**. We are a nation of migrants, a land of people on the move, a safe haven for nine waves of refugees fleeing persecution. Our history is replete with images of our welcoming of refugees from all over the world under our long-standing open-door policy towards displaced people and other persons of concern. We do so despite the serious challenges facing us and the domestic displacement of our people resulting from climate change and internal armed conflict.

However, we urge for **equitable attention to different crises in different regions** - to ensure that no refugee situation and no hosting community remain ignored or underfunded. We need to **provide**

sufficient support for all hosting communities, who do much of the heavy lifting and divert limited resources to help those in need. We also emphasize **the generosity of donors**, and urge them to explore how assistance can be scaled up.

In our aspiration of a better, more emphatic world, each of us should work hand-in-hand, to the best of our individual capacities. There is an urgency to **broaden the base of support beyond traditional donors and traditional hosting countries**. It is our hope that middle countries can also become formidable, pro-active voices and champions, who can fill in gaps where needed, and increase contributions where possible. The so-called 'missing middle' must step up and strive to be agents of change. We must build a coherent and cohesive humanitarian ecosystem that has strong synergies at the global, regional, and national levels, with all stakeholders playing their indispensable roles.

Mr. Chair,

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. affirmed this advocacy of rallying for an international system that must work for the most vulnerable, especially the marginalized, migrants, refugees. Our national development plan also gives a clear directive to uplevel our policies and programs.

This year, we ratified the 1961 Statelessness Convention, passed the Foundling Act, established an inter-agency body for protection services, and piloted Complimentary Pathways for Rohingyas.

We are also already looking ahead. Our focus is refining our small but scalable programs that suit our own national condition as a modest host country, while also remaining a donor to UNHCR and other humanitarian funds. **Our vision is for my country to continue to carve its niche and become an example of how us in the “missing middle” can help carry the burden as member of our community of nations.**

Mr. Chair,

We must give a clear direction to the UNHCR on how to **integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation, with defined action areas and operational guidelines, in the work of the organization.** There should be sufficient support for developing countries to address climate displacement, which is within the obligations under the Paris Agreement.

We must also ensure that the **global food crisis and the rising inflation** do not detract from our ability to deliver humanitarian services, nor create more vulnerabilities for displaced persons. This requires political will from all parties, including ending protracted and new crises, and demanding comprehensive political solutions to end conflict and build enduring peace.

Finally, we must ensure that **the UNHCR has the resources and political support to fulfill its mandate.** Our vision is also for an efficient fit-for-purpose UNHCR that can respond with agility and efficiency to any humanitarian crises, in any part of the world.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.