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**Statement by the Government of Finland**

**Delivered by Ms. Kirsti Kauppi, Permanent Representative of Finland to the UN in Geneva**

Chair, High Commissioner, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Finland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

We are experiencing grim times globally. Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine has highlighted the invaluable role and special nature of UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations. We cannot pay enough tribute to them.

Enabling humanitarian access and respecting humanitarian principles, including the neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian actors, remains key in Ukraine and globally. Those involved in conflicts must respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and members of the international community should keep up the pressure in this regard.

Finland strongly condemns Russia's missile strikes against civilians in Ukraine. Indiscriminate targeting of civilians is a war crime.

Despite our attention to Ukraine, we must not lose sight of other parts of the world. The number of forcibly displaced persons has exceeded the shocking level of 100 million. We cannot commend UNHCR enough for its work to deliver aid in some of the most challenging environments. We are also grateful to host countries and communities for their willingness to help those in greatest need. Finland finds it important to continue providing assistance to humanitarian crises globally and our budget allocations to Ukraine have been additional to our support in other parts of the world.

It is critical that all humanitarian efforts are well coordinated at the headquarters, regional and country level. We would like to learn more about the coordination efforts of UNHCR with different humanitarian actors and would be grateful of shared good practices that would lead way to enforced efforts in this regard.

Finland is committed to supporting refugees fleeing from Ukraine and temporary protection is offered to over 40 000 persons. Globally speaking, resettlement needs have grown drastically while solutions remain highly inadequate. We have increased the resettlement programme for this year to receive 1 500 refugees. We see resettlement as a means of solidarity and responsibility sharing and encourage more countries to participate in resettlement.

We are also committed to promote integration, employment, education and inclusion of refugees. To help newcomers to settle in a new society, it is important to develop various services and processes as well as co-operation between authorities, municipalities, NGOs and various other stakeholders including local residents with a refugee background. It is also important to recognize the significance of community volunteers, who often help newcomers to utilize their skills and potential in society.

Finland pursues a human rights-based foreign and security policy. As a member in the Human Rights Council, we act to promote universal human rights and defend the multilateral rules-based system emphasizing non-discrimination and gender equality and the rights of the persons and groups in the

most vulnerable situations. We also act against discrimination and xenophobia that migrants and refugees may face.

Protection of persons in vulnerable situations is more important than ever. We commend UNHCR for ensuring age, gender and diversity responsiveness throughout its operations. We would like to highlight the situation of persons who need protection due to their sexual orientation and gender identity in many parts of the world. We also applaud UNHCR's work to ensure that gender parity, racial equality, disability and age, as well as sexual orientation and gender identity are given due consideration in its own human resources policy.

Disability inclusion is Finland's long-standing priority and we have had a good cooperation with UNHCR in this field. Nearly every fifth person lives with some kind of a disability and these persons are often in the most vulnerable situations from the onset of conflicts and catastrophes. Women and children with disabilities may face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. We are pleased by the progress made by UNHCR in disability inclusion and hope to see disability inclusion further mainstreamed at country-level in terms of reported activities and expenditure.

We encourage all UN agencies to pay attention to risk management and to the prioritizing of efforts when deemed necessary. Finland is a committed supporter of UNHCR and we believe in non-earmarked funding which enables UNHCR to respond swiftly to crises, including forgotten situations. As a response to UNHCR's financial challenges, we are looking to do our share and provide more funds still this year. We are also committed to supporting the agency in the long term, with a predictable and flexible approach. We encourage other countries to support UNHCR too if they are not doing so yet.

Thank you.