

EGYPT



مصر

The Permanent Mission of Egypt
to the United Nations
New York

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**Statement of
The Delegation of Egypt**

**Before
The Third Committee**

on

**Agenda Item 41:
“Questions related to Refugees, Returnees
and Displaced Persons and Humanitarian Issues”**

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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to express Egypt's appreciation for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees for its vital role in dealing with the issues of some 9 million refugees around the world, more than 50% of whom are in Africa alone. I would also like to express appreciation to the High Commissioner for his report that clearly reflects the actual problems that obstruct international efforts to protect and assist refugees, and the growing challenges on the ground, due to natural disasters, protracted conflicts and the spread of diseases in many areas in which they are found.

Although the report reflects a number of achievements of the High Commission, we remain concerned about the negative effects of the international crises, the most recent of which was the international financial crisis, as well as the negative impacts of climate change resulting in an increase in the numbers of refugees; these factors jeopardize and constrain the availability of resources to finance the activities of the commission, a matter that underscores the necessity to maintain the sustainability of pledged contributions, and the need to increase them in order to enable the High Commission to perform its duties and functions assigned to it according to its mandate. We take note of the Commission's contribution to the provision of protection and assistance to internally displaced persons in the context of inter-agency coordination in this field within the United Nations system. However, we would like to re-emphasize that such activities should be consistent with relevant General Assembly resolutions and within a framework of cooperation and complete transparency when working with Member States.

Undoubtedly, the world is witnessing exponential increase in the numbers of internally displaced persons as a consequence to natural disasters, drought and armed conflicts. These numbers could well multiply as a result of climate change if we do not coordinate our efforts to address the root causes of these issues. This serious problem requires increased attention from the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and the UN development institutions, so as to enable the developing countries to continue their pursuit for the legitimate aspirations of its peoples in progress and prosperity and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Whereas we acknowledge the gravity of this problem in a number of countries, we also believe that the solution should not be on the expense of the original mandate of the Commission in supporting the refugees, a matter that obliges us to devise new mechanisms and provide additional and diverse funding, in view of its intertwined political, economic and humanitarian aspects of the refugee problem. In this respect, it is quiet difficult to envision role of the Security Council in mitigating the impacts of climate change given the fact that this international issue falls within the realm of natural disasters and hazards, an issue efficiently handled by numerous UN institutions within their mandates.

Mr. Chairman,

Intensifying international action in the coming phase requires achievement of a number of primary objectives:

First: consolidating international efforts toward the elimination of the inherent causes of conflicts in the world, as they represent the driving forces that compel people to abandon their homes, including through the assumption of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council of their pivotal roles, each according to its prerogatives as outlined in the Charter of the United Nations and through enhancing the capacities of States to develop their economies, particularly the developing countries, in a manner that provides economic security from a

developmental perspective that aims at gradually eliminating the tendency to seek refuge as a means to seek better living conditions;

Second: addressing the protection of refugees within the context of promoting the respect of International Refugee Law and enhancing its complementarily with International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law, while maintaining that the human rights of refugees or the contractual obligations of States are not affected by security obsessions or the controls to curb irregular migration under the guise of protecting national identity;

Third: implementing the principles of international solidarity and effective partnership in sharing the burdens and responsibilities of protecting and supporting refugees, all the way through to allowing them to return voluntarily to their homelands or resettle in third countries, especially that most host States are in the developing world, while also encouraging developed countries to receive more refugees; in addition to helping the governments in countries emerging from conflicts, through the international, regional and bilateral tracks, to rebuild their institutional capacities and their ability to provide basic services to all their citizens, and to pay particular attention to women, children, a matter that calls for maximising technical and financial support to enable them to shoulder such burdens;

Fourth: securing appropriate conditions that encourage the voluntary repatriation of refugees to their home countries, mainly through contributing to the provision of opportunities for decent living to the returnees, hence offering them job opportunities, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes, and ensuring their inclusion in national reconciliation and peacebuilding processes, a matter that depends in turn on the commitment to provide sustainable funding to these programmes, while also reinforcing the role of the Peacebuilding Commission in this context as one of the instruments that have become available to the General Assembly to increase international engagement in containing the refugee problem.

Mr. Chairman,

Egypt has always joined the efforts to develop the principles of the International Refugee Law, attempting to invigorate several initiatives aimed at coping with the changing international environment. On top of them comes the “Convention Plus” initiative to complement the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, and to realise a more equitable partnership in sharing both burdens and responsibilities, hence offering sustainable solutions for refugee issues all over the world. Egypt hopes for international efforts to coalesce in order to develop frameworks for international action and better approaches to deal with the predicaments of refugees from all their angles, particularly in Africa.

The refugee problem is first and foremost of a humanitarian nature, but its essence lies in its political and economic roots. Protecting refugees and offering decent living to them through the host countries has to be a priority for any international humanitarian agenda. Should there be goodwill, the shortest road to realise this goal is to develop a holistic humanitarian vision in dealing with the problem, one that is founded on the entrenched principles of International Law, and enhances the possibilities of uprooting the causes for asylum seeking.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.