

UNHCR Pledging Conference 2021: UK statement

High Commissioner,

Thank you for your presentation and to Dominique, for inspiring stories from the front line. We are coming to the end of yet another year in which we have seen conflict, covid-19 and climate change driving up the numbers of those in need of humanitarian support, and the numbers of people forced to flee their homes increasing again.

As I saw at the launch of the Global Humanitarian Overview last week, more people than ever will need support from the largest yet Global appeal. And as the high Commissioner highlighted, the number of people who are forcibly displaced is expected to pass 100million next year.

Crises are also getting more severe, and they are lasting longer.

Despite these immense challenges, UNHCR have committed to stay and deliver, to continue providing life-saving support across the globe for the most vulnerable, and often in dangerous circumstances. Let me thank you yourself High Commissioner and your staff and partners for all that you continue to do. Equally important is the contribution made by generous host nations and communities. You continue to open your borders and homes to those forced to flee, without which the impact on those lives would be so much worse. Despite the pandemic-related economic challenges we have faced in our own country, the UK has continued in our proud tradition of supporting refugees. Over the last 5 years we have contributed over \$500million to UNHCR, of which \$134million was in 2020.

Our contribution for 2021 stands at \$78.6 million, and we are currently working through our national Spending Review through which our 2022 contribution will be determined. Looking ahead, the UK is committed to tackling the terrible combination of climate change, conflict and COVID-19.

Our approach will focus on:

- Prioritising those most in need and providing what they need the most;
- Protecting civilians: the marginalised, the displaced, and especially women and girls from violence and exploitation; and using all available levers to ensure humanitarian access; and
- Preventing and preparing for crises to come.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to be felt most acutely by the world's most vulnerable. This is why the UK has argued for equitable access to vaccines in conflict and humanitarian settings, including to refugees and internally displaced populations, and why we support the application of the humanitarian buffer, such as we have seen for people displaced by conflict in Iran and

Thailand.

In Glasgow at COP26 we all called for greater political ambition and practical action to help protect people from the worst impacts of climate change. And for our own part we have doubled our international climate finance to over £11 billion over five years, including nearly £500m to support developing countries to adapt to climate impacts. And we are on track to deliver our commitments under the G7 Famine Compact – the first of its kind, agreed under our presidency.

But let me also congratulate UNHCR's achievements in bringing the world's attention to the impact of climate change on displacement, the appointment of a Special Advisor on Climate Action, and the signing of the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organisations. We welcome the establishment of the Green Financing Facility and look forward to working with you High Commissioner as you take forward this vital agenda.

High Commissioner, we stand firm in our commitment to those who are forcibly displaced across the world. We will continue to work closely with you and your colleagues at UNHCR to support refugees and identify sustainable solutions for displaced persons in need of assistance and protection. We look forward to the High-Level Officials Meeting next week and to working together with UNHCR and fellow Member States ahead of the Ministerial Global Refugee Forum.