

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME
87th meeting
14-16 June 2023

NGO Statement on Statelessness

Dear Chair,

This statement is delivered on behalf of a wide range of NGOs, including organizations and community led groups impacted by statelessness and discriminatory nationality laws, who must be able to fully participate in UNHCR and State-led decision-making processes, and be consulted on matters related to the rights of stateless communities. This statement comes at a critical time as global human rights violations facing stateless communities continue to expand, devastating the fundamental rights and protection of individuals and communities. We urge UNHCR and States to support the new and emerging opportunities to address these violations at the international level.

This statement builds on last year's High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges with a focus on Development Cooperation **to advance protection, inclusion, and solutions for forcibly displaced and stateless persons as well as host communities**. We continue to stress that development cooperation has the strong potential to respond to situations involving displaced and stateless persons and urge the High Commissioner to prioritize and resource actions on this important topic particularly in light of the stark realities faced by displaced and stateless people across the globe.

With the IBelong Campaign concluding in 2024 and the considerable work needed to continue to achieve its goals of eradicating statelessness, we are encouraged by the work to develop a Global Alliance to End Statelessness. This multi-stakeholder initiative, which will include Member States, UN bodies, NGOs, and most importantly stateless-led organizations, provides a unique opportunity to encourage further State pledges and create an ongoing platform to support implementation of the practical – international and regional – level initiatives planned until 2030. We urge UNHCR and donor States to fully resource and support the Global Alliance to achieve its goals.

We acknowledge the considerable support undertaken by the state-led Group of Friends of the IBelong Campaign and urge their continued and expanded work through UNCHR and Human Rights Council led initiatives on addressing statelessness.

We welcome state and other stakeholders' commitments made at the Global Summit on Gender Equality in Nationality Laws, organized by the Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights, UNHCR, UNICEF, and UN Women – particularly commitments by some States to reform nationality laws to uphold gender equality. We urge all States with gender-discriminatory nationality laws to take urgent action to uphold citizens' equal right to confer nationality on their children and spouse, and to acquire, change, and retain their nationality without discrimination on the basis of gender or other protected grounds.

The Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in 2023 will provide opportunities to help prepare the ground for the launch of the Global Alliance, and to demonstrate how the multi-stakeholder and partnership approach contributes towards the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees, for example through instigating and integrating new pledges by States, as well as joint and matched pledges or initiatives to address statelessness. The GRF will also provide an opportunity to review progress with existing statelessness pledges yet to be fulfilled, and to encourage their swift implementation.

We welcome the fact that civil society has been included in the planning process of the GRF and we urge that this be further facilitated at the Forum itself. The GRF agenda should include statelessness as a priority area, as identified as a key recommendation in the 2021 High-Level Officials Meeting outcomes document. We encourage all actors to increase efforts to mainstream and integrate priorities of stateless people to prevent statelessness through the Global Compact on Refugees, in particular to develop and strengthen systems for the identification and protection of stateless persons. We call on all States to consider, in the lead up to the GRF in December, to make pledges that address the underlying causes of statelessness, including discriminatory nationality laws, and to ensure statelessness and the rights of stateless people are addressed on their territory.

Crucially, Stateless persons and refugees must be central to the GRF discussions, including by being included as experts, advisers, speakers, and attendees, with logistical efforts made for their participation, such as visa support and interpretation. We encourage that a diversity of views, including specifically those of stateless women of all ages, girls, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community, be solicited and welcomed.

Ultimately, there remains a pressing need to more effectively mainstream and integrate priorities to protect stateless people and prevent statelessness through increased programming and resource allocation – including in line with recommendations from the recent external evaluation of UNHCR's statelessness work. This mainstreaming and integration is vital to support and complement the launch of the new Global Alliance to End Statelessness as a vehicle to galvanise necessary action by all relevant stakeholders, alongside UNHCR.

Further to the [joint civil society submission](#) to the International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics (IROSS) global consultation process, facilitated by the United Nations (UN) Statistics Division, we urge that the statistics on statelessness be more coordinated with civil society groups, especially if IROSS becomes an important framework to evaluate further work. We urge the adoption of the IROSS be delayed, allowing for further consultation on the issues raised in the joint submission, in particular with stateless led organisations. We also request UNHCR to clarify the impact of the IROSS on UNHCR's own statistical reporting.

Thank you.