



Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic  
to the United Nations Office  
and other International Organizations  
at Geneva

## **UNHCR – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**66<sup>th</sup> Session**

**(5 – 7 October 2015)**

---

### **High Level Segment on Afghan Refugees**

Mr. President, Honorable High Commissioner, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Czech Republic fully associates itself with the EU statement.

We welcome the choice of Afghanistan as the focus of this ExCom. We should not lose sight of grave Afghani refugee problems, even when we face number of other emergencies. Moreover, Afghani refugees are significant part of the current unprecedented influx of migrants and refugees to Europe. There are more than enough challenges in Afghanistan.

Mr. President,

One type of response to refugee problem is development cooperation. For the Czech development cooperation, Afghanistan is one of the priority countries, and we primarily try to target security problems. Unfortunately, security situation is not improving: the recent tragic events in Kunduz area just underline this observation. We have to continue and even step up our efforts.

The Czech Republic has been part of the concerted international support to Afghanistan, focused on security building, good governance, rule of law, education, economic development, social and health related services as well as on disaster risk reduction, resilience building and humanitarian protection. Apart from security, we operate some 10

development projects in Afghanistan, not mentioning the annual direct sectoral budget support of the Government (some 3 mil. USD).

In the area of humanitarian assistance, we praise the UNHCR for its leadership, while trying to contribute: for instance, over last couple of years we have been supporting UNHCR programs for Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan as well as returnees in Afghanistan. We are ready to continue this support in the coming years because, in our view, the international community has a responsibility not to forget the long-term displaced just because of the large numbers of new displacements. Here, the advocacy as well as response role of the UNHCR is much needed.

The newly endorsed Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development should become a new impuls also for Afghanistan and for the international cooperation and partnership with Afghanistan. The security stabilization, together with the sustainable socio-economic and environmental development, are key prepositions for the reducing of enforced displacement of the civil population in Afghanistan. The Czech Republic is ready to support the implementation of the Agenda 2030 in Afghanistan both through the bilateral development assistance, programmed at least until 2017, and through the suitable and sustainable multilateral channels, including in cooperation with UNHCR.

The international community should also continue its support to the voluntary returns of displaced persons to Afghanistan. In this regard, we hope that this High Level segment can contribute to greater visibility of the Solution Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), as well to its implementation. One particular measure can be the empowerment of women and girls through education, employment, and last but not least, through efficient protection.

Thank you Mr. President