



**Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN
Geneva**

Statement

73rd Session of the Executive Committee of UNHCR

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Muhammad Talha Mahmood,
Minister for States & Frontier Regions (SAFRON)
10 October 2022**

**Chairperson,
High Commissioner,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me begin by expressing my deep appreciation to High Commissioner Filippo Grandi and UNHCR for their valuable work across the globe, including in Pakistan.

Pakistan appreciates its decades long partnership with UNHCR. However, it is time that more must be done.

For over four decades Pakistan has been on the frontline of ensuring protection of one of the biggest refugee crises.

Today Pakistan is also at the frontline of a climate change impact.

On both accounts, Pakistan was not responsible for these crises. Therefore, we look forward to demonstration of more responsibility in the form of enhanced engagement and support from international community especially the UNHCR.

Chairperson,

The recent climate-induced unprecedented floods in Pakistan have caused immense human and physical loss and damage, affecting 33 million people, majority of them women and children in the host communities. The impact is staggering. One third of the country was under water. 1500 people have died, over 1600 injured. 1.7 million homes have been damaged. Close to 1 million livestock lost. 5 million acres of crops, 12000 KM of roads and 350 bridges have been destroyed.

The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has echoed the estimates of total damage at USD 30 billion, that is 10% of Pakistan's GDP. Pakistan has suffered these losses despite less than 1% global carbon footprint.

This climate catastrophe has also affected Afghan refugees particularly in the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

Despite these challenges, Pakistan has stood firm to ensure protection and provision of basic services to over three million Afghan nationals.

Chairperson,

On its part, Pakistan remains committed to working with partners to advance the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) and its three pillars.

In the context of repatriation, I appreciate the increase in repatriation grant to returnees, from USD 250 to 375. However, this remains insufficient to meet the growing needs due to complex challenges especially rising inflation.

Chairperson,

Pakistan has undertaken documentation to advance access of Afghan refugees to livelihoods and banking services in Pakistan.

The DRIVE (document renewal and information verification) exercise, completed successfully last year with financial support of UNHCR, is aimed at facilitating Afghan refugees and their eventual voluntary return and reintegration into their homeland.

We welcome the donors' contributions to the Refugee Response Plan (RRP) of USD 310 million for Afghan refugees and host communities in Pakistan.

However, we are deeply concerned at the modest levels of funding to the RRP so far. Delay in funding may compromise our on-going efforts.

On behalf of the Government of Pakistan, I strongly request UNHCR to take steps for timely mobilization of resources.

Chairperson

These growing challenges are yet another reminder for operationalizing the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). As we approach the second Global Refugee Forum, implementing the pledges of 2019 GRF is very important.

The focus must remain on protracted Refugee situations.

It is in this spirit that we urge UNHCR to step up efforts to further broaden its donor base and advocacy for grant-based financing.

Let me conclude by, once again, appreciating the valuable contribution made by the UNHCR.

Pakistan looks forward to a strong and continuing partnership with UNHCR in the future.

I thank you.