



**Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations**

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Statement

by

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**Open VTC: Briefing by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
(UNHCR)**

Security Council

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Check against delivery

Thank you Mr. President,

Let me begin by thanking High Commissioner Filippo Grandi for his useful and timely briefing. As the international community continues to navigate the complex risk landscape of the 21st Century, within which COVID-19 is but the latest emergent threat to international peace and security, we must renew our efforts to protect those made most vulnerable. In order to successfully do so, integrated and comprehensive strategies that unify and mobilize the entire United Nations' system to address *both* the root causes and the symptoms of insecurity, are urgently needed. In this regard, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes today's initiative as an opportunity to further strengthen the institutional nexus between the Security Council and other agencies operating across the peace and security, human rights, and development pillars of the United Nations. The work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is essential to our efforts to promote lasting peace and security, and as such, we commend the High Commissioner and his staff for their tireless efforts in spite of the challenges posed by COVID-19.

Mr. President,

The rights of refugees, internally displaced persons, and those made stateless as a result of political, socioeconomic, and environmental forces over which they exert little influence, must be safeguarded as they are empowered to live dignified lives. Aside from being enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is a moral imperative for all actors in the international system to promote the political inclusion, social welfare, and economic participation of all persons, without discrimination of any kind. In pursuing this shared responsibility, the principles of international law, including international humanitarian law and refugee law must be upheld while the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of all states - including those affected by conflict - are fully respected. To this end, the Security Council has a crucial role to play, in hosting discussions such as these to consider the key drivers and adequate responses of global insecurity, especially at a time when the traditional challenges to international peace - such as conflict - converge with the emerging threats of climate change and pandemics.

Excellencies,

In an increasingly interconnected and globalized world, the challenge of displacement touches and concerns us all. Indeed, all regions from the Americas to Asia and the Pacific have been affected by displacement, exacerbating protection risks in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is therefore in our collective interest to ensure that all states have the necessary tools to confront their development challenges, and to build peaceful, prosperous and inclusive societies in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This remains the primary blueprint to systematically address the root causes and the symptoms of insecurity, including conflict and mass human displacement, in our efforts to build a more equitable and secure world. As we grapple with the health, economic, social and security implications of COVID-19, we must redouble our efforts to reduce inequalities, encourage good health and well-being, and to promote climate-friendly and inclusive growth and development for all. The Global Compact on Refugees forms a critical aspect of this progressive vision. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines therefore calls upon all members states to renew their support to the Global Compact, in the spirit of solidarity. We also call for greater technical and financial support to regional and sub-regional organizations, such as the African Union, that play an invaluable role in maintaining international peace and security.

Thank you.