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Thank You, Mr. President, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines commends the Republic of Niger for convening this discussion, and we thank Commissioner Filippo Grandi, for his sobering presentation. And I welcome the Norwegian Foreign Minister who joined us earlier today. During this most challenging moment, *experienced globally, though unevenly, by all countries and peoples*, the work of the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) provides hope and encouragement to us all. Efforts to shelter and protect the most vulnerable— particularly stateless persons, refugees, and internally displaced peoples—are critical to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. President,

The socioeconomic dislocations triggered by armed conflict, exacerbated by COVID-19, and further magnified by the climate crisis demand urgent, focused and well-coordinated international action—the commissioner has underscored this loudly and clearly but it bears repeating: Vulnerable people from Haiti, across the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin, through the Central African Region to the Horn of Africa, and in Yemen, Syria and Afghanistan - *amongst others* - require a renewed multilateralism that:

- *in the first instance*, provides urgent humanitarian assistance and critical life-saving support;
- reinforces sovereignty and restores social contracts; and,
- comprehensively addresses the root causes of conflict and insecurity, *wheresoever they persist*.

Greater political will and wide-ranging multilateral engagements are needed, *now more than ever*, to assist conflict-affected and fragile states to cultivate peace processes, strengthen the rule of law, rebuild public trust, enhance institutional capacities and advance reconciliation processes - *within communities and at the national level*. Again, the commissioner underscored that the UNHCR cannot replace the necessary political will of the international community. Further, all international stakeholders, particularly the developed countries and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), should accelerate their efforts to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals. This must be done promptly and in line with the needs, priorities and aspirations of concerned countries.

It is no coincidence that the challenges of today bear disproportionately on the most vulnerable; so much that those countries that suffer the worst effects of conflict also experience striking levels of acute hunger, mass human displacement, recurring public health emergencies, and social and economic disruptions of the most debilitating kind. As rampant climate change, increased biodiversity loss, and widespread environmental degradation add further strain to these already complex, *and often insurmountable*, situations - we must work together to advance practical, people-centred, and climate-sensitive solutions to our peace and security, development and humanitarian challenges.

It is imperative that all development plans, policies and programmes are centred around the fundamental tenets of inclusivity and equality. Vulnerable persons, groups and nations must feature as the key contributors and beneficiaries of international development efforts. Under all circumstances, the interests of, *and implications for*, stateless persons, refugees and internally displaced peoples should

be fully considered. So too should the rights and perspectives of indigenous societies, ethnic and religious minorities; women and girls; and other marginalized groups be extensively examined and safeguarded.

When addressing any crisis, the bedrock principles of international law - *in particular the sovereign authority of states* - ought to guide response efforts. Humanitarian operations must be tethered to precepts of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. And the return and reintegration of displaced peoples should always be conducted in a safe, voluntary, dignified, and sustainable manner.

In conclusion, Mr. President: it is essential that social, economic and environmental justice serve as the primary edicts in all efforts to maintain international peace and security. Only through a comprehensive and synergistic approach would we achieve the lasting peace and security which we all deserve.

We join the Commissioner's plea for concerted efforts to be made for a reversal of international failure and the paralysis caused by the conflicting political aims within the international community. To be sure, our global struggles are colossal - *in both scope and magnitude*. But if we work *collectively*, through sincere political commitments and with a steadfast resolve, a better future awaits all countries and peoples, *and in particular to those most exposed to the perils of our time*. I thank you.