STATEMENT

BY

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AGENDA ITEM 62: REPORT OF THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES,
QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS
AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS

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Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last month’s tragic incident off the coast of Lampedusa has underlined the need for urgent action and intensified cooperation to protect asylum seekers, other migrants and vulnerable persons who are forced to undertake often dangerous land and sea journeys across the globe. The ongoing partnership and collaboration between UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is an important example of how the international community has come together to address issues related to refugees, returnees and displaced people.

Alongside governments and our various humanitarian partners, our two agencies work tirelessly to assist and protect the most vulnerable individuals. I would like to take this opportunity to briefly highlight four areas in which we exercise our complementary mandates and expertise and where cooperation is particularly important.

First, through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) coordinated humanitarian response, IOM, UNHCR and our partners in the humanitarian community work closely with governments to ensure that those in need receive the assistance and protection they require. One example of collaboration between UNHCR and IOM is the co-leadership of the Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster. UNHCR serves as the global cluster lead for CCCM on populations affected by conflict, while IOM takes the lead specifically for natural-disaster induced displacement. As co-leads, we work closely together to provide assistance to those in need.

Second, in our increasingly mobile world, IOM and UNHCR are being called upon to adapt and respond to new forms of human mobility, to work together on mixed migratory outflows. These flows raise complex challenges for the international community, including policy and operational issues as diverse as border management, asylum and protection, and smuggling and trafficking. One-dimensional solutions are not likely to have a durable impact, however effective they may be at addressing one or many pressing aspects of this issue.
Third, IOM is committed to providing support in transitional contexts, particularly those affected by large-scale displacement and where UNHCR’s protection mandate is active in registering and caring for refugees. We believe that broad participation in electoral processes is a core component of a participatory recovery process which provides durable solutions to conditions of displacement, and are dedicated to assisting governments and partners in the set-up and implementation of external voting processes. IOM’s view its role and capacity in providing technical and operational support to Out of Country Voting (OCV) as complementary to UNHCR’s refugee protection role, and as a fundamental component of fostering conditions for peace building processes.

Fourth, since the establishment of the two organizations in 1951, UNHCR and IOM have worked side-by-side in refugee resettlement operations, with a clear allocation of roles and responsibilities in a manner that emphasizes the strengths of each organization. UNHCR identifies and refers refugee cases for consideration to the countries of resettlement. Thereafter, IOM assists those resettlement countries through working directly with the identified refugees in preparing and processing their transportation. Together, along with the destination countries, UNCHR and IOM help tens of thousands of refugees every year to begin new lives.

In conclusion Mr. Chair, allow me to reiterate IOM’s strong commitment to a mutually collaborative partnership with UNHCR which first and foremost benefits those individuals who require our support.

Thank you.