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Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Expert workshop on best practices in the promotion of equal nationality rights in law and in practice

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 53/16. In the resolution, the Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to organize, prior to the fifty-sixth session of Council, a half-day expert workshop, in an accessible format, to showcase best practices in the promotion of equal nationality rights in law and in practice. The Council also requested the High Commissioner to submit a summary report on that workshop, including any recommendations stemming therefrom, to the Council at its fifty-seventh session. Pursuant to Council decision 55/115, the event was postponed. The workshop was held online on 6 May 2025.

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 53/16, the Human Rights Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to organize, prior to the fifty-sixth session of the Council, a half-day expert workshop, in an accessible format, to showcase best practices in the promotion of equal nationality rights in law and in practice and to submit to the Council at its fifty-seventh session a report on that workshop, including any recommendations stemming therefrom. Pursuant to Council decision 55/115, the event was postponed. In accordance with the new timeline set out in the annex to the decision, the expert workshop was to be held before the fifty-ninth session of the Human Rights Council, and the report submitted to the Council at its sixtieth session. The workshop took place on 6 May 2025.¹ Owing to the ongoing liquidity crisis affecting the United Nations Secretariat, the workshop was held online.
2. The workshop was aimed at raising awareness of and promoting dialogue on the right to a nationality and its linkages with other human rights, especially equality and non-discrimination, and highlighting challenges faced and good practices implemented with regard to ensuring equal nationality rights and preventing statelessness.
3. The expert workshop was attended by nearly 150 participants, including representatives of States Members of the United Nations, United Nations specialized agencies, regional and intergovernmental bodies, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations, academics and persons affected by statelessness.
4. The expert workshop featured two panel discussions, each lasting one hour and 20 minutes. During the first discussion, panellists provided an overview of discrimination in nationality matters, focusing on its disproportionate impact on minorities and women. During the second discussion, panellists presented examples of good practices from around the world aimed at addressing unequal nationality laws and resolving statelessness among children, minorities and other populations affected. The first discussion was moderated by a representative from OHCHR, the second by a representative from UNHCR. Panellists, representing diverse backgrounds and perspectives, delivered statements that highlighted the key aspects of each topic. The final portion of each discussion was dedicated to comments and questions from participants, concluding with brief closing remarks from the panellists and the moderator.
5. The present report contains a summary of the discussions held during the expert workshop and outlines the key recommendations that emerged.

II. Opening of the expert workshop

6. Ruvendrini Menikdiwela, the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection at UNHCR, opened the workshop by recalling that in its resolution 53/16, the Human Rights Council called upon States to adopt and implement nationality legislation, consistent with their obligations under international law, to reduce and eliminate statelessness, including through the elimination of discrimination. Discrimination in nationality laws – whether codified or embedded in administrative procedures – remained a major global challenge, disproportionately affecting minority communities. It was estimated that over 75 per cent of stateless individuals belonged to such minority groups, including nomadic peoples, hill tribes and long-standing resident communities never formally recognized by the State in which they resided. She expressed concern that around two dozen States had legal frameworks that explicitly allowed the denial or revocation of nationality on the basis of race or ethnicity, and that 24 States restricted women from passing their nationality to their children on the same basis as men. Systemic discrimination often manifested in more subtle ways, such as through administrative barriers that resulted in stateless individuals being denied access to essential

¹ Video recordings and other documents of the workshop are available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/events/events/2025/expert-workshop-showcase-best-practices-promotion-equal-nationality-rights-law>.

services, freedom of movement and legal protections – sometimes escalating to the level of persecution, as seen in the case of the Rohingya in Myanmar.

7. Despite those challenges, significant progress had been made. The I Belong campaign to end statelessness, a decade-long UNHCR initiative, resulted in over 560,000 stateless individuals acquiring nationality. Noteworthy successes also included Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, which had resolved all known statelessness cases within their borders. Globally, more than 20 countries had adopted new laws to protect stateless persons, 13 had passed laws to prevent future statelessness and 3 had eliminated gender discrimination in their nationality laws. A significant regional milestone was the adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights Relating to the Specific Aspects of the Right to a Nationality and the Eradication of Statelessness in Africa.

8. Building on the I Belong campaign, the Global Alliance to End Statelessness – a multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at translating political will into concrete action – had been launched in 2024. In closing, the Assistant High Commissioner warned of emerging threats, including the rise of ethnonationalism and the use of deprivation of nationality under the guise of counter-terrorism. Those trends risked further entrenching exclusion.

III. Overview of discrimination in nationality matters and the disproportionate impact on minorities and women

9. The first panel discussion, moderated by Simon Walker, Chief of the Rule of Law and Democracy Section at OHCHR, provided an overview of discrimination in nationality matters and its disproportionate impact on minorities and women.

10. Juan Sebastián Chamorro, a visiting fellow at the University of Notre Dame in the United States of America, former Secretary of Planning and Vice Minister of Finance in Nicaragua and former Executive Director of the Foundation for Economic and Social Development and of the Civic Alliance for Justice and Democracy, also in Nicaragua, began by expressing concern over the growing use of statelessness as a tool of political repression, emphasizing its severe consequences for individuals, families and society. Nationality was more than a legal identity – it was a fundamental link to one's culture, history and land. Describing his own experience, he noted that arbitrary deprivation of nationality was a targeted political weapon used to eliminate dissent. He had been deprived of his nationality on 9 February 2023, the day he and 221 other political prisoners had been released from detention and forcibly exiled. He highlighted the paradox of being declared free while being rendered stateless, describing it as a deliberate attempt by the Nicaraguan authorities to inflict psychological damage on and erase the identity of those who had been exiled.

11. Mr. Chamorro noted that deprivation of his nationality and exile went beyond legal exclusion – it was aimed at severing emotional and family ties and causing maximum personal suffering. His participation in the national dialogue process and his subsequent presidential candidacy had made him a direct target. He had been arrested in 2021, held incommunicado and sentenced to 13 years in prison for alleged treason. The aim of the authorities was to silence opposition through fear and exile. He expressed deep concern about the widespread confiscation of assets, including homes, businesses, savings and social security entitlements, from persons deprived of their nationality and exiled. Those actions deprived people not only of their financial security, but also of their dignity. Statelessness caused long-term, compounding hardships – logistical, economic, emotional and social. He described statelessness as a form of “living torture”, citing the loss of rights such as access to identification, healthcare, education and legal protection. He highlighted the particular impact on children and families, citing cases of marriages that had been annulled and families that had been torn apart. He expressed concern about the psychological toll of forced family separation and the continued targeting of relatives by the authorities as a means of extending repression beyond national borders. He also stressed the urgency of addressing the legal limbo faced by older stateless persons, who might die without ever regaining their rights.

12. Despite the gravity of the situation, Mr. Chamorro acknowledged the support he had received from several countries, including Spain, which had granted him citizenship in early 2024. Those gestures were not only acts of diplomatic goodwill, but also essential forms of

protection and solidarity. He stressed the importance of international cooperation in providing refuge and recognition to stateless persons.

13. Bronwen Manby, a lecturer at the School of Advanced Study, University of London, Senior Visiting Fellow at the London School of Economics and Political Science and Africa Coordinator for the Global Citizenship Observatory of the European University Institute in Florence, opened by stressing the importance of the right to nationality, enshrined in article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which asserted that everyone has the right to a nationality and that no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his or her nationality. That right served as a foundation for accessing all other human rights. A stateless person, as defined in the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, was someone not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law. Identifying such individuals involved complex legal and factual analysis, as outlined in the UNHCR handbook on protection of stateless persons.

14. Ms. Manby expressed concern that, despite its universality and its inclusion in various international and regional human rights instruments, discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, ethnicity, religion and other factors in nationality laws and procedures continued to be the basis for the denial of the right of nationality for millions of individuals across the globe. Although 90 per cent of countries did not have explicit discriminatory provisions in their nationality laws, 10 per cent still did, with a higher prevalence of such provisions in regions such as Africa and Asia. Ms. Manby underscored in particular that in 24 countries, women did not have the same right as men to confer nationality. She also pointed out forms of exclusion based on race, ethnicity or religion in countries such as Brunei Darussalam, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Uganda. Discrimination might be codified in laws or manifested in procedures that disproportionately affected marginalized communities. Nationality regimes were often complex, involving civil registration, family law and administrative procedures that could inadvertently lead to statelessness. In post-colonial contexts, arbitrary borders that had been drawn without regard to ethnic or cultural realities had further exacerbated statelessness, particularly in Africa. Ms. Manby drew attention to the heightened risks faced by migrants, nomadic populations and vulnerable children who might inherit statelessness from their parents. Discriminatory laws not only led to statelessness, but also caused violations of other human rights, including freedom of movement, political participation and access to education, healthcare and work. Ms. Manby concluded by emphasizing the grave impact of statelessness on human dignity, noting that denial of nationality often served as a precursor to conflict and instability.

15. Subin Mulmi, a human rights lawyer and researcher and the executive director of the Nepal-based non-governmental organization (NGO) Nationality For All, began by giving an overview of statelessness in the Asia and the Pacific. He noted with concern that, as of the end of 2023, the region was hosting an estimated 2.5 million stateless persons, nearly 50 per cent of the global total, according to the UNHCR global trends report. However, that figure was likely a significant undercount due to weak national identification systems, political sensitivities in reporting statelessness figures, and the legal invisibility of stateless populations.

16. Mr. Mulmi noted that most countries in the region followed a *jus sanguinis* (descent-based) model of citizenship acquisition. A total of 22 countries in the region allowed children to acquire citizenship from a parent regardless of birthplace and 17 countries imposed birthplace-based distinctions. Four countries – Brunei Darussalam, Kiribati, Malaysia and Nepal – retained gender-discriminatory laws that inhibited women's ability to pass nationality to their children on the same terms as men. Nine countries restricted the ability of married women to confer their nationality on their foreign spouses. Those laws disproportionately disadvantaged women, thus reinforcing unequal citizenship rights across generations. Mr. Mulmi illustrated, through country examples, how ethnic and gender discrimination intersected. In Myanmar, citizenship was denied to members of groups that were not listed among the 135 officially recognized "national races", leading to the exclusion of the Rohingya. In Brunei Darussalam, nationality was limited to the "Indigenous Malay race", thereby excluding various ethnic groups and compounding ethnic and gender discrimination. In Nepal, children born to Nepali mothers and foreign fathers did not have equal access to nationality. In Malaysia, a recent constitutional amendment allowing women

to confer their nationality on their children who were born abroad was not retroactive, leaving many excluded. In addition, Malaysian men faced challenges passing their citizenship to children born out of wedlock.

17. Mr. Mulmi emphasized that even where laws appeared inclusive, bureaucratic and systemic discrimination often obstructed access to citizenship. Such discrimination frequently obstructed the realization of equal citizenship; for example, ethnic minorities – including border tribes in India, Vietnamese communities in Cambodia and the Hmong in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic – faced impossible documentation requirements. In Bangladesh, despite legal recognition, the Urdu-speaking minority continued to face discrimination, particularly those living in camp-like settlements. Mr. Mulmi expressed concern that many individuals remained second-class citizens, enduring ongoing discrimination even after acquiring nationality. He also traced those inequalities to colonial legacies, noting that borders drawn during colonial rule had ignored ethnic and cultural realities, and that discriminatory legal frameworks had been inherited. It was not coincidental that countries with gender-discriminatory laws – such as Malaysia and Nepal – were all former British colonies or under British legal influence. In his concluding remarks, Mr. Mulmi stressed that statelessness in the region had arisen not only from gaps in nationality laws, but also from deep-rooted discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and colonial structures.

18. Ivana Krstić, a member of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls and a professor at the Faculty of Law, University of Belgrade, began by emphasizing that nationality was not only a legal status, but also the basis for the enjoyment of many other human rights. She noted that article 9 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women required States to grant women equal rights with men in acquiring, changing or retaining their nationality and with respect to the nationality of their children. She also referenced article 2 (f) of the Convention, which required States to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices that constituted discrimination against women. She expressed concern that despite those international standards, discrimination against women and girls in nationality laws and practices persisted in many parts of the world.

19. Ms. Krstić explained that discrimination stemmed not only from legal provisions but also from structural and procedural barriers. Discrimination often related to unequal transmission of nationality to children and spouses and loss of nationality upon marriage or divorce, and dependent nationality regimes that linked a woman’s nationality to that of her husband. Women and girls might face discriminatory administrative and procedural practices, including excessive documentation requirements, biased guardianship laws and corruption. Displaced, stateless or refugee women were particularly vulnerable, as they frequently lacked access to civil registration. Women from low-income or rural communities were often unable to cover travel costs or administrative fees to obtain civil registration and identity documents. Barriers such as low literacy, lack of legal aid and language constraints further hindered access. As a result, the most marginalized women faced heightened risks of statelessness and legal invisibility. The Working Group had documented the serious, long-term human rights consequences of such exclusion, including the risk of early marriage, sexual exploitation and lack of access to healthcare, property rights and justice. Discriminatory nationality laws often reinforced patriarchal structures by only allowing men to confer nationality on spouses and children, undermining women’s legal status and public participation. The Working Group had continued to advocate for gender-sensitive, inclusive legal reforms, stressing the need for universal civil registration, gender-responsive statelessness procedures and the collection of disaggregated data. Ms. Krstić concluded by stressing that the voices and lived experiences of stateless and vulnerable women and girls must be at the centre of reforms.

20. Following the panel presentations, the floor was opened for questions and statements. A representative from the Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva raised concerns about the potential abuse of dual nationality, such as through marriages of convenience. A representative from the International Commission of Jurists underscored the importance of the 2020 Principles on Deprivation of Nationality as a National Security Measure, which had been developed on the

basis of legal research and expert input. She warned that stripping individuals – especially dual nationals – of their citizenship under national security pretexts could have severe punitive impacts and urged the international community to consider the implications of such actions.

IV. Best practices to address unequal nationality laws and resolve statelessness among impacted populations

21. Monica Sandvik, head of the Statelessness Section at UNHCR, moderated the second panel discussion, which was focused on best practices to address unequal nationality laws and resolve statelessness among affected populations.

22. Usana Berananda, Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, shared the experience of Thailand in addressing statelessness. She began by noting that Thailand was home to the world's fourth largest stateless population, with over 400,000 stateless persons reported to UNHCR in 2024, most residing in the provinces bordering the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar. She emphasized the country's sustained commitment to protecting stateless persons and pursuing durable solutions, despite the complexity of the issue. Since 1992, Thailand had granted Thai nationality to over 300,000 stateless individuals.

23. Ms. Berananda stressed that resolving statelessness required a multi-stakeholder, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, including critical legal and procedural reforms. Efforts by Thailand were being made at three levels. Internationally, Thailand engaged actively with key stakeholders, including UNHCR, international organizations and civil society, on the issue. In addition, it had joined the Global Alliance to End Statelessness in 2023. Thailand had also made commitments at the Global Refugee Forum that guided national policy and promoted cross-sector coordination. Nationally, key reforms had included a 2005 strategy to improve the legal status of ethnic minorities and unregistered persons, with expanded access to basic services such as education and healthcare. The Civil Registration Act had been amended, and administrative procedures streamlined, including the devolution of decision-making powers to the provincial and district levels to reduce bureaucratic delays. The Permanent Representative highlighted a major step in October 2023, when the Cabinet had approved a resolution to fast-track permanent residency for more than 300,000 stateless persons and long-term residents, to allow permanent residents to apply for Thai citizenship after five years and to grant Thai citizenship to over 100,000 children born in Thailand to stateless parents. The resolution had also involved accelerating processing times. Locally, collaboration with partners such as UNHCR and with NGOs through initiatives such as the REACH project (reaching women migrant workers and their families in construction camps) had enabled outreach in remote areas, offering legal aid, mobile registration, DNA testing and capacity-building for front-line personnel.

24. While progress was notable, the Permanent Representative acknowledged ongoing challenges, including inconsistent decision-making at the local level and resource constraints in remote operations. She noted that internal regulations were being developed to standardize procedures, and called for continued support from partners to overcome logistical constraints. She concluded by reaffirming the commitment of Thailand to resolving statelessness, promoting the rights of stateless persons, sharing best practices and cooperating internationally to achieve sustainable solutions.

25. Mohamed M. Farid, a senator from Egypt and Deputy Chairman of the Committee on Human Rights and Social Solidarity, began by outlining the journey of Egypt towards gender equality in its nationality law. Since the 1950s, Egyptian women married to foreign men had been prohibited from passing nationality to their children, unlike Egyptian men married to foreign women. That legal discrimination had been perpetuated by subsequent reforms, which had also specifically affected children born to an Egyptian mother and a Palestinian father, who were excluded from nationality rights. The senator spoke of a turning point in 1981, when Egypt ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which affirmed the right to nationality without discrimination. However, no major legal changes had followed until the early 2000s, when the Constitutional Court of

Egypt had ruled it unconstitutional to deny women the right to confer nationality on their children. That had led to a 2004 amendment granting women that right, with the law applied retroactively – enabling children who had already been born to Egyptian mothers and foreign fathers to apply for nationality through the Ministry of the Interior. The reform had significantly reduced statelessness and had made it possible for affected children to access essential rights, such as to education, healthcare and other public services.

26. Mr. Farid highlighted the adoption of the country's 2014 Constitution, which enshrined the right to nationality for children born to either Egyptian mothers or fathers. A 2023 amendment had extended that right to women who were naturalized Egyptians. That achievement had been the result of sustained and concerted efforts by civil society, legal experts, lawyers, policymakers and parliamentarians, through the extensive use of strategic litigation, public awareness campaigns and engagement with government to overcome entrenched resistance.

27. Charles Muendo, Deputy Director of the Directorate of Immigration Services in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Administration in Kenya, and the government focal point on statelessness, began by outlining the historical roots of statelessness in Kenya, tracing it back to the colonial period when labour migration had led to the settlement of communities whose descendants had later been rendered stateless due to exclusionary legal frameworks and missed registration opportunities after independence. Constitutional and legislative frameworks, in particular the 1963 Constitution and subsequent legislation, had not recognized members of those communities as Kenyan citizens. A major development had been achieved with the 2010 Constitution, which had introduced article 15 (2), allowing stateless persons to apply for citizenship. However, he stressed that the Citizenship and Immigration Act imposed restrictions, such as limiting eligibility to those who had been present in Kenya since 12 December 1963, thereby excluding many descendants of later migrants. He also highlighted the lack of safeguards for stateless children born in Kenya and the continuing inconsistencies in the identity verification process, which remained exclusionary.

28. Mr. Muendo highlighted other key milestones in addressing statelessness, including the recognition and documentation of the Makonde (2016), Shona (2020) and Pemba (2023) communities, following presidential proclamations. Those achievements had been made possible through community self-registration efforts that had allowed for verification and processing by the Government, with elders, NGOs and UNHCR playing a crucial role. Efforts were under way for stateless Rwandan and Burundian populations, with over 2,300 individuals undergoing verification as of December 2024. He welcomed those developments as evidence of strong political will and effective coordination between government institutions, civil society actors and international partners.

29. Nonetheless, Mr. Muendo stressed that challenges remained, including the lack of comprehensive data on stateless persons, the fear of prosecution among those who had obtained identity documents irregularly, and restrictive provisions in the Citizenship and Immigration Act. Funding constraints were an obstacle to effective outreach and registration. Mr. Muendo concluded by noting the existence of a draft amendment bill aimed at addressing those legal gaps and removing restrictive time limits, reaffirming the commitment of Kenya to eradicating statelessness and ensuring equal access to rights and services for all affected persons.

30. Macarena Rodríguez, a Chilean lawyer and Director of the Legal Clinic at the Alberto Hurtado University, began by outlining the legal frameworks governing nationality in Chile and Colombia. While both countries upheld the principle of *jus soli* (the right to nationality by birth in the territory), she highlighted how exceptions, particularly for children born to parents deemed “in transit” or without legal domicile, posed serious risks of statelessness for children of undocumented migrants and refugees.

31. Ms. Rodríguez detailed the context in Chile, where, in line with an administrative circular issued in 1995, “in transit” had been broadly interpreted to include all undocumented migrants and asylum-seekers, regardless of their time in the country. That had led to thousands of children being recorded as “children of transit foreigners” and being denied Chilean nationality. While some might have been eligible for the nationality of their parents,

they had been left stateless due to the absence of consular registration. The policy had drawn criticism from multiple United Nations human rights bodies for violating children's right to a nationality. Although the Supreme Court of Chile had adopted a narrower interpretation of "in transit", its rulings were not binding. It was only in 2014, after sustained advocacy by civil society and international actors, that the Government of Chile had finally revised its position to limit the interpretation of "in transit" to tourists and crew members, extending nationality eligibility to many children of undocumented migrants.

32. Nonetheless, Ms. Rodríguez cautioned that the policy shift did not automatically resolve the situation of individuals already designated as children of transit foreigners. Between 2014 and 2016, the Chile Reconoce initiative had simplified the process for requesting nationality and had supported individuals affected. However, by the end of 2024, over 2,000 individuals still held the status of children of transit foreigners. Ms. Rodríguez welcomed the 2021 immigration law, which had incorporated the Supreme Court's interpretation of "in transit", but flagged ongoing challenges, such as slow recognition processes and overly broad administrative discretion.

33. Turning to Colombia, Ms. Rodríguez observed that while both *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis* were recognized, the former was limited to children with at least one legally domiciled parent the time of birth, thus excluding children of undocumented migrants. Since 2015, an influx of almost 2.8 million migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela – of whom 66 per cent were undocumented – had resulted in an estimated 26,000 stateless children due to their ineligibility for Colombian nationality and inability to access Venezuelan citizenship. In response, Colombia had launched the Primero la Niñez initiative in 2019, supported by UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), through which children born in Colombia to Venezuelan parents after August 2015 were granted Colombian nationality. As of December 2024, over 106,000 children had benefited. The programme, originally set to end in 2021, had been extended through 2025. While Ms. Rodríguez praised the initiative, she noted its limitations, mainly its exclusive focus on Venezuelan children and the lack of procedures for obtaining nationality documentation from abroad.

34. Ms. Rodríguez concluded by describing the policy shift in Chile as pioneering in the region, but stressed the importance of addressing remaining implementation gaps. She called for continued attention to unresolved cases, regional cooperation and legal reform to end statelessness among children.

V. Concluding remarks

35. Peggy Hicks, Director of the Thematic Engagement, Special Procedures and Right to Development Division at OHCHR, emphasized that millions of people, in particular minorities and children, remained stateless due to discriminatory laws and policies. Statelessness also led to other human rights violations, preventing individuals from gaining access to education, healthcare, legal employment and political participation. While stateless persons often remained invisible, the workshop had aimed to shine a light on their struggles and share best practices to address unequal nationality laws.

36. The Director stressed that ending statelessness was achievable with political will, international cooperation and a human rights-based approach. She commended countries such as Chile, Egypt, Kenya and Thailand for presenting promising solutions, showing what was possible when political action aligned with human rights commitments. However, combating statelessness required sustained, collective efforts. She acknowledged the growing global movement advocating for equal nationality rights, and recognized the contributions of States, international organizations and civil society groups.

37. The Director outlined the long history of OHCHR's work on anti-discrimination legislation, gender equality in nationality laws and universal birth registration, which she identified as key safeguards against statelessness. She reiterated the commitment of OHCHR to collaborating with UNHCR and other partners to ensure nationality rights and eliminate statelessness, including by continuing engagement with the Global Alliance to End Statelessness. She concluded by thanking the panellists and participants for their

contributions to the discussions, and by reaffirming the importance of maintaining momentum on nationality and statelessness issues within the agenda of the Human Rights Council.

VI. Conclusion and recommendations

38. The experts affirm that statelessness, in any form, constitutes a prolonged and dehumanizing violation of human rights. While its causes may vary, the emotional and material damage inflicted is universal.

39. The experts underscore the critical role of awareness-raising and advocacy in addressing discrimination in nationality matters and statelessness. Sustained efforts are needed to amplify the voices and lived experiences of stateless people and to expand research and public understanding through partnerships with academic institutions, policy think tanks and civil society organizations. Ultimately, achieving meaningful change necessitates not only legal reform but also strong political will, administrative fairness and inclusive governance. Policies must be designed to uphold the dignity and rights of all persons, including those who are stateless, and must acknowledge the historical roots of statelessness, including those linked to colonialism and subsequent exclusionary legal frameworks. This demands a multifaceted approach – combining legal action, international solidarity and direct support to those affected – while recognizing that statelessness, regardless of its origins, represents a prolonged and dehumanizing violation of human rights with far-reaching consequences. The experts emphasize the importance of engagement with international stakeholders, including UNHCR and other international organizations and civil society, particularly in the current context where resources are increasingly limited.

40. The experts urge the international community and Member States to strengthen legal and policy frameworks to uphold the right to nationality and address statelessness, including by:

- (a) Ensuring that no one is arbitrarily deprived of their nationality, by enshrining clear legal safeguards in national legislation, including guarantees of due process;
- (b) Enacting and implementing comprehensive legal reforms that eliminate discriminatory provisions and improve equal access to nationality in national legislation;
- (c) Enacting amendments to nationality laws that grant women equal rights with men to confer nationality on their children and spouses as well as equal rights regarding the acquisition, change or retention of their nationality;
- (d) Where necessary, ensuring that reforms apply retroactively, to correct past injustices and ensure that affected persons can access nationality;
- (e) Enshrining general principles of equality and non-discrimination, including on the grounds of gender, race and ethnicity in national constitutions;
- (f) Guaranteeing universal birth registration and equal access to birth and marriage certificates, without discrimination on the grounds of gender or marital status, to prevent risks of statelessness;
- (g) Simplifying administrative procedures and removing structural barriers to facilitate access to nationality and the obtaining of nationality documentation, including through decentralization of decision-making to provincial and district levels to reduce bureaucratic delays;
- (h) Fast-tracking permanent residency applications for stateless persons;
- (i) Creating pathways for stateless persons to have their nationality confirmed or to acquire nationality, including through facilitated naturalization;

(j) **Developing and implementing national strategies to improve the legal status of stateless ethnic minorities, children and other affected groups, with expanded access to basic services such as education and healthcare;**

(k) **Collecting, analysing and publishing disaggregated data on discrimination in the application of nationality laws and associated procedures, and using the data to inform responsive policy development;**

(l) **Adopting protective policies and ensuring adherence to international law in host countries to mitigate the risks associated with forced returns.**

41. **Experts further highlight the importance of a multi-stakeholder, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to address discrimination in nationality laws and combat statelessness effectively. This includes:**

(a) **Advancing international cooperation to harmonize legal frameworks that safeguard the right to nationality;**

(b) **Ensuring the consultation and participation of persons affected by statelessness or otherwise discriminated against in the context of their right to nationality;**

(c) **Providing stateless persons with legal and material support to enable them to seek justice.**
