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Closing Remarks

Miriam Behrens, Director Swiss Refugee Council

Thank you very much Mrs. Federal Councillor for giving me the opportunity to speak.

Dear High Commissioner, dear Directors, dear ATCR Community, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to contribute to the closing of this year's ATCR. My name is Miriam Behrens and I am the Director of the Swiss Refugee Council.

As we have heard on Day 2, there have never been so many people in need of resettlement. This trend is likely to continue. The need to further expand resettlement opportunities remains critical. We hope this meeting provided suggestions for the way ahead. For the Swiss Refugee Council the following results of the ATCR are the most crucial in this regard:

1. We need to overcome the obstacles for resettlement posed by the COVID pandemic. During the ATCR, measures and best practices were shared and discussed. Remote interviewing and case processing as well as remote pre-departure and post-arrival orientation are among the most crucial. They need to be worked into the future resettlement strategy and applied more widely, also beyond the pandemic, in order to further enhance access to resettlement for refugees in need.
2. We need more complementary pathways in addition to resettlement. We heard about several promising initiatives in this regard. I hope they

have inspired many of you to explore opportunities for similar mechanisms in your countries.

3. We need institutional and practical reforms of the ATCR in order to find swift and effective answers to the rising resettlement needs on an international level. We hope the incoming chairs can further push this important reform together with a Steering Committee as proposed in the Concept we developed with the Swiss government.
4. To make our work more effective and more legitimate we need to increase refugee participation: during the ATCR, within our own organizations, within UNHCR and as part of the decision-making process on a national level.

Given the virtual nature of this year's ATCR cycle, I am more than happy with the outcome. We all did an extraordinary job addressing the challenges in these unprecedented times and come up with sustainable and innovative solutions. I would like to use this opportunity to thank the people who made this meeting possible:

- As NGO focal point for the 2021 ATCR cycle we set out to collaborate with all stakeholders, to represent and integrate the NGO actors and to help strengthen refugee participation. The list of participants shows that many governments, NGOs and also many people with lived refugee experience were able to attend the meetings and breakout sessions. I would like to thank you all for your active and dynamic participation in the meetings and for sharing your vast experiences. Your knowledge, your dedication and your contributions were significant for the outcome of this conference.

- Some of you made an extraordinary effort for this year's ATCR as presenters or moderators. You have all done a fantastic job! Thank you so much for agreeing to step in and be part of the program.
- In the last 9 months have worked very closely with the colleagues from the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration, the UN Refugee Agency and the Refugee Steering group. Thank you very much for the excellent collaboration. It has been a great pleasure to work with you and to learn from you all.

It has been a great opportunity and rewarding experience for our organization to co-chair the 2021 ATCR Cycle. We have learnt a lot, met wonderful and dedicated people around the world and enjoyed working towards sustainable solutions together with all of you. Hopefully we will meet again next year. It was a pleasure to meet you and we hope to stay in touch!

The past NGO focal points Canadian Council for Refugees and Caritas Germany strongly supported our work as co-chair. We highly appreciated to learn from your experience. Thank you so much for your support. We hope to prove just as useful for the next NGO co-chair, the Refugee Council USA. We will do our best to support you in the handover process and we wish you and the US government Chair the best of luck.

And now, I am handing the floor back to Brian. Many thanks!