



#IBELONG

Global Action Plan to End Statelessness

2014–2024

“Statelessness can lead to a devastating cycle of deprivation and vulnerability. In the five years since the launch of the #IBelong Campaign, we have witnessed remarkable progress on many fronts, including new accessions to the UN Statelessness Conventions.

However, millions of people still suffer the lifelong denial of their human rights because they are stateless. And certain worrying trends, including a rise in damaging forms of nationalism, and increased forced displacement, threaten to increase statelessness in some parts of the world if action isn’t taken.

Now - more than ever - we need strengthened international resolve to take the steps set out in this Global Action Plan so as to ensure that no one is stateless in 2024.”

FILIPPO GRANDI, UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Objectives

TO END STATELESSNESS WITHIN 10 YEARS, the *Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014–2024* establishes a guiding framework of 10 Actions to be undertaken by States, with the support of UNHCR and other stakeholders to:

- **resolve existing major situations of statelessness;**
- **prevent new cases of statelessness from emerging; and**
- **better identify and protect stateless populations.**

2. The 10 Actions to End Statelessness

STATES ARE ENCOURAGED to take one or more of the following 10 Actions to achieve the related Goals by 2024. UNHCR, other UN and international agencies, regional organizations, civil society and stateless people all have roles to play in supporting governments to accomplish relevant Actions. Because the causes, profile and magnitude of statelessness vary, not all Actions are required in all countries.

Action 1:

RESOLVE EXISTING MAJOR SITUATIONS OF STATELESSNESS

- Goal: All major non-refugee statelessness situations resolved.

Action 2:

ENSURE THAT NO CHILD IS BORN STATELESS

- Goal: No reported cases of childhood statelessness.
- Goal: All States have a provision in their nationality laws to grant nationality to stateless children born in their territory.
- Goal: All States have a provision in their nationality laws to grant nationality to children of unknown origin found in their territory (foundlings).
- Goal: All States have a safeguard in their nationality laws to grant nationality to children born to nationals abroad and who are unable to acquire another nationality.

Action 3:**REMOVE GENDER DISCRIMINATION FROM NATIONALITY LAWS**

- Goal: All States have nationality laws which treat women and men equally with regard to conferral of nationality to their children and with regard to the acquisition, change and retention of nationality.

Action 4:**PREVENT DENIAL, LOSS OR DEPRIVATION OF NATIONALITY ON DISCRIMINATORY GROUNDS**

- Goal: No States have nationality laws which permit denial, loss or deprivation of nationality on discriminatory grounds.

Action 5:**PREVENT STATELESSNESS IN CASES OF STATE SUCCESSION**

- Goal: No cases of statelessness due to future situations of State succession.

Action 6:**GRANT PROTECTION STATUS TO STATELESS MIGRANTS AND FACILITATE THEIR NATURALIZATION**

- Goal: 70 States identify stateless migrants through determination procedures which lead to a legal status that permits residence and guarantees the enjoyment of basic human rights, and facilitate naturalization.

Action 7:**ENSURE BIRTH REGISTRATION FOR THE PREVENTION OF STATELESSNESS**

- Goal: No reported cases of statelessness due to a lack of birth registration.

Action 8:**ISSUE NATIONALITY DOCUMENTATION TO THOSE WITH ENTITLEMENT TO IT**

- Goal: No States have populations which are entitled to nationality under law but which cannot acquire documentary proof of nationality.

Action 9:**ACCEDE TO THE UN STATELESSNESS CONVENTIONS**

- Goal: 140 States are party to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.
- Goal: 130 States are party to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Action 10:**IMPROVE QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA ON STATELESS POPULATIONS**

- Goal: Quantitative data on stateless populations is publicly available for 150 States.
- Goal: Qualitative analysis on stateless populations is publicly available for at least 120 States.

OVERVIEW

Statement of Intent

TO BRING AN END TO STATELESSNESS

within 10 years by resolving existing situations and preventing the emergence of new cases of statelessness.

Introduction

IN A WORLD COMPRISED OF STATES, the problem of statelessness remains a glaring anomaly with devastating impacts on the lives of at least 10 million people around the world who live without any nationality.¹ In October 2013, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees called for the “total commitment of the international community to end statelessness.”² The *Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014–2024 (Global Action Plan)*, developed in consultation with States, civil society and international organisations, sets out a guiding framework made up of 10 Actions that need to be taken to end statelessness within 10 years. Provided that there is adequate leadership and effective implementation of the *Global Action Plan*, statelessness can be ended within a decade.

THE GLOBAL ACTION PLAN INCLUDES ACTIONS TO:

- **resolve** existing situations of statelessness;
- **prevent** new cases of statelessness from emerging; and
- better **identify and protect** stateless persons.

¹ The terms ‘nationality’ and ‘citizenship’ are used interchangeably throughout the *Global Action Plan*.

² High Commissioner’s Closing Remarks to the 64th Session of UNHCR’s Executive Committee, 4 October 2013: <http://unhcr.org/525539159.html>.

THE 10 ACTIONS TO END STATELESSNESS ARE:

- **Action 1:** Resolve existing major situations of statelessness.
- **Action 2:** Ensure that no child is born stateless.
- **Action 3:** Remove gender discrimination from nationality laws.
- **Action 4:** Prevent denial, loss or deprivation of nationality on discriminatory grounds.
- **Action 5:** Prevent statelessness in cases of State succession.
- **Action 6:** Grant protection status to stateless migrants and facilitate their naturalization.
- **Action 7:** Ensure birth registration for the prevention of statelessness.
- **Action 8:** Issue nationality documentation to those with entitlement to it.
- **Action 9:** Accede to the UN Statelessness Conventions.
- **Action 10:** Improve quantitative and qualitative data on stateless populations.

Because the causes, profile and magnitude of statelessness vary, not all Actions are required in all countries. Indeed, in the majority of cases, only one or two Actions will be relevant to address statelessness within specific country contexts. For this reason, the Actions presented in this *Global Action Plan* are not in order of implementation, priority or importance. UNHCR, other UN and international agencies, regional organizations, civil society and stateless people all have a role to play in supporting governments to accomplish the relevant Actions.

For each Action, the *Global Action Plan* sets out available information (the Starting Point) and the Goals to be achieved within 10 years. It also includes Milestones, or interim targets, in 2017 and 2020, to mark progress towards achievement of the Goals.

A number of the Actions are interrelated. Therefore, achievement of the Goals of one Action, could lead to partial achievement of the Goals of another Action. For example, increasing the number of States parties to the 1961

Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness under Action 9, could also lead to those States adopting or improving provisions in their nationality laws to ensure that no child is born stateless pursuant to Action 2.

Countries are encouraged to accomplish Actions by developing and implementing National Action Plans (please see Annex 1). These National Action Plans can set out detailed strategies to complete selected Actions and indicate detailed country-level goals and milestones. It is recommended that National Action Plans are developed through a consultation process which includes the involvement of UNHCR, other UN and development actors and regional bodies where relevant, national institutions (relevant ministries, parliament, etc.), civil society and stateless groups. States are encouraged to undertake periodic reviews of their National Action Plans. UNHCR will report on progress achieved under the *Global Action Plan* every two years. In the absence of a National Action Plan, UNHCR will continue to promote key Actions within the country concerned.

Overall Strategy

TO ASSIST COUNTRIES ACHIEVE THE GOALS of this *Global Action Plan*, UNHCR and partners will:

- **Identify factors** which may contribute to new cases of statelessness or which prevent resolution of existing situations;
- **Develop and implement National Action Plans** to undertake relevant Actions;
- **Convene country-level roundtable discussions** with governments, civil society, other UN Agencies and stakeholders, and undertake participatory assessments with stateless communities to inform the development of National Action Plans;
- **Provide technical advice** and, where necessary, resources to support governments and stateless populations;
- **Promote the exchange of good practices** in resolving statelessness;
- **Engage with the justice sector** and the legal community for a strategic use of judicial processes;

While the *Global Action Plan* focuses on the overarching goals of resolving existing situations of statelessness and preventing the emergence of new cases of statelessness, UNHCR will continue to work with relevant actors to ensure implementation of all aspects of its statelessness mandate in accordance with relevant General Assembly Resolutions and Conclusions of UNHCR's Executive Committee, notably Conclusion No. 106 of 2006 on "Identification, Prevention and Reduction of Statelessness and Protection of Stateless Persons."³

While some stateless people are also refugees, most are not. The *Global Action Plan* focuses primarily on non-refugee stateless populations but also complements UNHCR's efforts to resolve protracted refugee situations.

Resources

EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN that successful responses to most situations of statelessness entail low costs. However, additional resources will be required to undertake the Actions outlined in the *Global Action Plan*.

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