**Committee: Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL)**

 **Country: France**

**Agenda Item: Establishing a Global Framework for the Protection of Stateless People**

Located in Western Europe, bordering Switzerland to the east, Andorra and Spain to the south, Belgium and Luxembourg to the north, Germany to the northeast, and Italy and Monaco to the southeast, France, officially known as the French Republic, has a population of approximately 68 million people and is the third-largest country in Europe. Being home to the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA), over the years, France has taken several actions to tackle the issue of statelessness.

Statelessness has been going on consecutively for decades and is caused by many factors, such as inequity based on ethnicity, gender, and religion, alteration of borders, and unregistered childbirth. This led to those who fit the criteria of a stateless individual, a status that occurs when an individual is not considered a citizen under the laws of any country, face multiple issues like difficulties in employment, as most of the companies require a citizenship and legal documents, including birth certificates, passports, and national identity cards during their hiring processes, which majority of stateless individuals do not own. Hence, it is often quite challenging for stateless people to receive employment offers. On top of that, even if a stateless individual finds employment, there is a high chance that they will be forced to work for low income as a consequence of not being protected by laws. The majority of stateless people also face issues in accessing education and healthcare services due to a lot of schools and medical services requiring legal documents for enrolment and assistance procedures, and the unaffordable pricing of educational and medical services. Considering many stateless individuals work for minimum wage, accessing those services becomes nearly impossible for them. Even if a stateless child gets enrolled in a school, they will likely face severe discrimination and bullying from other students, causing them to have low self-esteem and many other mental problems. Additionally, in recent years statelessness has become a bigger issue, considering the amount of problems stateless individuals face, increasing progressively.

France supported many acts and took action for the prevention and reduction of statelessness. In the past, France signed both the 1954 Convention and the 1961 Convention, to prevent further cases of statelessness from occuring. Although the 1961 Convention was not ratified due to certain concerns, France has made a significant effort to protect the stateless individuals and to avoid statelessness upon birth through the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA), a public governmental organization that contributes to the protection of both the refugees and the stateless people, and the laws implemented specially to guarantee no child is born without a nationality. Moreover, France has also supported the #IBelong Campaign established by UNHCR in various ways, raising global awareness to educate more people on the topic and possibly putting an end to statelessness. For instance, through the Statelessness Determination Procedure (SDP) in France, it became easier to identify and support stateless individuals in the area and provide assistance for them to be able to obtain nationalities and receive appropriate treatment as well as protection. Additionally, France has also released a guide with the support of the European Network on Statelessness (ENS), named the “Guide for the Identification, Support, and Guidance of Persons at Risk of Statelessness in France” to provide more information on the definition and causes of statelessness, assist stateless individuals to apply for a stateless status and train and advise professionals on how to identify a person at risk of statelessness.

To form a global framework to protect stateless individuals, France encourages other nations to support the efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to raise global awareness and facilitate stateless individuals in obtaining nationalities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and foundations such as Amnesty International and European Network on Statelessness (ENS), to fight against discrimination, provide support and assistance, the Doctors Without Borders, to help with the medical needs of stateless individuals, and also the Equal Rights Trust, to ensure all human beings have access to fundamental human rights, including the right to a nationality and the right to education, as well as funding and supporting campaigns including the Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights. France actively encourages other nations to establish a statelessness determination procedure (SDP) to ensure that stateless individuals are identified, allowing them to access basic human rights. Furthermore, France also encourages more nations to provide access to public education systems. This is possible by scholarships and assistance programs so that the stateless children are also integrated into the education system. France additionally recommends that stateless person travel documents be given out to facilitate travel, and possibly create job opportunities abroad. Lastly, France is open to collaborating with other countries to help stateless individuals access medical services, regardless of their status. Using these methods, we can potentially prevent more cases of statelessness from appearing, provide an improved lifestyle for stateless people, and most importantly protect stateless individuals.

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