



72ND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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**STATEMENT BY HON. GEORGE BONIFACE SIMBACHAWENE(MP),
MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA**

**Madam Chairman,
Honorable High Commissioner,
Distinguished Heads of delegation,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am delighted and extremely honored to be able to attend this important 72nd Session of the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees physically despite the challenges brought about by Covid-19 pandemic. Tanzania aligns itself with the statement delivered by Burkina Faso on behalf of the Africa Group as well as statement delivered by Azerbaijan on behalf of NAM.

Madam Chairperson,

As it is the first time for me to take the floor, on behalf of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and on my own behalf, I wish to express my delegation sincere appreciations and commend Mr. Filippo Grandi, the High Commissioner as well as the entire secretariat on the exeplementary and diligent work being done despite the challenges the agency is facing in

responding to multiple emergencies and complex protracted displacement crises. Moreover, we congratulate the UNHCR for pursuing its mandate, agilely while adapting to the new circumstances in seeking durable solutions to resolve the challenges of displaced in fragile conditions.

Chairperson,

It is imperative to underscore that, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania continues to enjoy good working relations with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees which enable us, as partners, to achieve remarkable success in the areas of relief and humanitarian interventions for refugees and asylum seekers for decades. Tanzania is known for its generosity and hospitality in hosting refugees and thus wishes to draw the attention of this august house to the challenges facing host nations in their efforts to provide asylum, protection and durable solutions amid meagre resources.

Chairperson,

Currently, Tanzania is hosting **255,957** refugees and asylum seekers, out of which **176,636** are Burundians; **78,882** are Congolese; and **439** are from other Nationalities while **206,378** among them are depending on humanitarian assistance.

Chairperson,

In the search for durable solution, Tanzania has always preferred voluntary repatriation as the lasting solution to the plights of the refugees. Refugee services and refugee repatriation are conducted in strict compliance with international obligations on the protection of refugees. In this regard,

Tanzania will continue to encourage refugees to return to their countries of origin voluntarily and remain committed to cooperate with UNHCR and all humanitarian actors including Government of Burundi while assuring safety and dignity is uphold as well as the transfer becomes sustainable as is the case with the ongoing voluntary repatriation of refugees to Burundi. Whereby as of today, 137,428 Refugees have been voluntarily repatriated.

As we continue to fulfill our obligation as a host state, the Government of Tanzania is determined to protect the asylum space from being abused by social and economic migrants at the expense of credible and bonafide refugees. I therefore, continue to request the High Commissioner to support us in invoking the cessation of refugee status for Burundian refugees.

Chairperson,

We are aware on how COVID-19 pandemic significantly contributes to the continued decline of funding in refugee operations. Thus, we appeal for all stakeholders to come together in the spirit of burden and responsibility sharing in hosting and providing humanitarian assistance to our brothers and sisters who are in need of international protection.

Chairperson,

We therefore, continue to appeal to the international community to invest and enhance support in areas of return as well as reintegration programs in Burundi to ensure the return is sustainable and humane. Currently, it is clear that, there are no security threats to the majority of Burundian refugees hosted in Tanzania and elsewhere if they decide to go back home, rather, they have fear of economic and social hardship when they decide to go back home.

Chairperson,

The Government of Tanzania wishes to recap to this meeting that it still hosts a group of more than 50,000 Burundian refugees' remnants of 1972 caseload, after Naturalizing about 162,015 Refugee. We therefore continue to urge the UNHCR and the International Community at large, in the spirit of burden and responsibility sharing to support the Government of Tanzania by providing assistance to this particular group.

Chairperson,

Amidst the burden of provision of social and economic assistance to asylum seekers and refugees, Tanzania continues to express its concern on the environmental impact caused by large number of refugees in the country. We, therefore, call for urgent interventions to address the issue of environment but even more importantly, the need to seek for alternative sources of energy in the camps as well as surrounding host community. In this regard, I wish to convey my heartfelt gratitude to the High Commissioner for his commitment and continuous support to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania in addressing challenges related to environmental degradation and security in the areas surrounding refugee camps.

Chairperson,

I wish to convey my Government sincere appreciations to the Governments of the United States of America, Canada, Australia, to mention a few, for their noble cause of practically showing solidarity with Tanzania for sharing the burden and responsibility by allowing refugees from Tanzania the protracted Congolese refugees who have been hosted in Tanzania since

early 1990s to resettle in their respective countries. I appeal that other countries open their doors in support for resettlement programme.

Chairperson,

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the firm commitment of the Government of United Republic of Tanzania in honouring its long-lasting tradition and international obligation in hosting and supporting refugees. I call upon all relevant stakeholders to recommit themselves to this noble cause to support refugees.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION.