



Statement by the H.E. Ahmed Nur  
Commissioner of NCRI, FGS  
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Madam Chairperson, the High Commissioner, Distinguished delegates, Ladies & Gentlemen.

Excellences,

First, we would like to take this opportunity to align ourselves the African Group statement.

Somalia today, has nearly three million persons who have been displaced in one of the world's most protracted displacement crises, that is now about to enter its third decade, with an estimated 2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) of whom 900,000 people have been displaced due to the most recent and still ongoing drought in parts of the country. These are on top of the original 1.1 million; while nearly another 1 million are refugees in the Horn of Africa region and Yemen.

Somalia has also witnessed a rise in internal migration towards major urban centers in keeping with urbanization trends world-wide, leading to rapid urban growth and consequent pressure on access to services, which are compounded by the arrival of IDPs compelled to leave their places of origin owing to conflict or food insecurity, and seeking assistance and access to services.

In summary, these are the result of conflict, drought induced famine and other humanitarian, security and developmental challenges which has blighted the Somali nation for nearly three decades.

The international community and Somalia have taken up the challenge of addressing the protection, assistance and durable solutions needs of refugees, returnees and IDPs. Let me provide a synopsis of this engagement:

- Having established the National Commission for refugees and IDPs (NCRI) and subsequently entering into a Tripartite Agreement with Kenya, Somalia and UNHCR on November 2013,
- High Level Global Initiative on Somali Refugees in Geneva in 2013;
- The Addis Ababa Commitment by the five countries in the region hosting Somali refugees;
- The High-Level Partnership Forum held in Mogadishu on July 2015;
- The High-Level side event on Somalia held in the margins of the General Assembly in New York on September 2015;

- The 2016 GA meeting in September's Commitment to Refugee Response Framework(CRRF); and
- A series of meetings under the auspices of IGAD starting with the one in Mogadishu, Entebbe in Uganda, the Nairobi Declaration on durable solutions for Somali refugees, followed by Djibouti and lastly Addis Ababa in last month.

Not unrelated to the above mentioned joint effort, recent years have seen an increase in the number of Somali refugees returning to Somalia, which is also the result of both improved stabilization at home, and events in the countries of asylum.

Madame Chairperson, with the assistance of generally UNHCR, the High Commissioner's numerous visit to the Somali situation and also at the operational level the UNHCR office in Somalia which is highly appreciated by the Somali government, we managed to bring since 2014 more than 95,000 Somalis, mainly from Kenya. Over 35,000 have also been evacuated from Yemen, not to mention the nearly 120,000 refugees who spontaneously and unassisted have repatriated to Somalia.

While much assistance has been and is been provided to support their initial reintegration, much more remains to be done for example emphasis on education, health, water, vocational training, etc. Additionally, it is required to ensure effective linkages are made between meeting their immediate needs and longer-term reintegration prospects, bridging the humanitarian and development divide. At the same time, and despite the ongoing supported voluntary returns, security, access and absorption limitations restrict the scale of returns to Somalia, at the present moment.

While much has been achieved in Somalia to build functioning Federal and State institutions, restore public services and rehabilitate social infrastructure, there remains a critical need to further strengthen the peace, security, social and community conditions, for Somalis in the country and refugees whose decision to return, can thus be more sustainable.

Therefore, what we intend to do now is to try to consolidate and harmonize the action of humanitarian and development stakeholders into a concerted approach with the government to progressively and incrementally achieve solutions for all of Somalia's displaced.

It is in this light that the Somali Government, as one of the pilot countries for the Comprehensive Refugees Response Framework (CRRF) is at the early stages of the development of the framework. It is also working on the declaration of the IGAD Summit, the adoption the Nairobi Comprehensive Plan of Action for Durable Solutions for Somali refugees, already alluded to earlier, and the commitment by all concerned to the creation of an enabling environment for the safe, sustainable and voluntary return and re-integration of Somali refugees.

Madame Chair, we would like to emphasize that the FGS has taken onboard the view that it is primarily responsible for providing durable solutions and has taken the commendable initiative of specifically including the displaced in its first 3-year National Development Plan (NDP). The displaced feature in the NDP's resilience pillar which seeks to reverse the trend of protracted displacement and substantially reduce the number of IDPs by facilitating and supporting durable solutions.

Through the NDP, the Somali Government has committed to protect, respect and ensure the social, economic, cultural, political and civil rights of IDPs and refugee returnees. Essentially this would mean restoring their rights as citizens of the country and not mere appendages requiring separate treatment apart from the ordinary citizens.

It is in this respect the FGS organized a National Forum on Durable Solutions for refugees, returnees, and IDPs which was attended by senior Government officials of the Federal republic of Somalia (FGS), representatives of Federal Member States, Civil society, scholars and professionals from the Diaspora as well as refugees, returnees & IDPs themselves.

The principal outcome of the Forum was a Draft National Refugee Returnee and IDP policy and Action Plan which has been well received and for which we are now embarking consultation tours within Somalia and refugee camps in the Region to obtain further inputs and contributions in order to finalize the policy before the end of this year and also to obtain commitment in to the policy.

Finally, Somalia In this regard, while it is grateful for the assistance and commitment of the international community which is partly responsible for its achievements so far, is nevertheless still faced by major challenges, necessitating Somalia to request that the development actors and multilateral donors to mobilize resources to promote durable solutions for the longer term for the Somali displaced population and their host communities, not only to enhance social cohesion but to eventually shed the appellation of being the displaced and revert to being ordinary citizens of Somalia.

Thank you.