

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



MINISTRY IN CHARGE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

**UNHCR: Seventy session of the Executive Committee (5th–11th October 2019)
Statement by Rwanda delivered by Hon. Germaine KAMAYIRESE Minister
in charge of Emergency Management**

Mr Chairperson

Mr. High Commissioner

Hon Ministers and Heads of delegation

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and gentlemen,

I'm very pleased and honored to be part of the 70th Session of the Executive Committee of United Nations High Commissioner's Programme for Refugees

Chairperson, my delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Zimbabwe delegation on behalf of the Africa Group and commends the High commissioner for his dedicated work and for his comprehensive report.

Chairperson,

Mr. High Commissioner

The UNHCR goal “#IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024” was set at the right moment as Rwanda had undertaken a series of review in policies and laws relating to the right on nationality as one of the fundamental rights of a person.

In line with the above, Rwanda has achieved many actions among others the accession to the 1954 Convention relating to the status of stateless persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of stateless persons; the amendment of the nationality law in 2008 to comply with the Conventions; the Constitutional right of equality between women and men to ensure they have equal rights to acquire, change and retain their nationality, and to confer it to children and spouse; the reduction of risk of statelessness by reinforcing civil registration mechanisms, in particular by ensuring that every child is registered immediately after birth, and that late birth registration procedures are accessible to all unregistered individuals born on the territory with loosed formalities.

Chairperson, the commitments that Rwanda ensure to achieve before the end of 2024 are the following:

1. Establish a National Taskforce on Statelessness;
2. Prepare and adopt a national action plan to eradicate statelessness;
3. Enact the nationality legislation facilitating naturalization of the stateless persons;
4. Include in the next census national population, include the question of stateless persons to have the exact number of stateless people;
5. Grant or confirm nationality of all stateless persons and their descendants living on Rwanda territory;

6. Improve access to late birth registration for refugees in line with the principle of universal birth registration, in order to ensure that all refugees born in Rwanda have their birth registered and have a birth certificate or civil status ruling;
7. Ensure that former refugees of Rwandan origin who opted for local integration in their respective host countries and whose refugee status was ceased by the respective asylum authorities, and who are entitled to nationality documents and willing to obtain these documents are able to do so;
8. Contribute to the adoption process and subsequent ratification of the draft protocol on the protocol to African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on Specific Aspects of the Right to Nationality and Eradication of Statelessness in Africa

Chairperson,

Rwanda continues to host refugees and receive and reintegrate Rwandans who return from exile following the closure of the Rwandan Refugee chapter in December 2017.

Rwanda is currently hosting over 149,000 refugees who mainly fled from Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi, 92% of them are living in camps and depending on humanitarian assistance.

In addition to above refugees, the Emergency Transit Mechanism was established in Rwanda to temporary host 500 refugees and asylum seekers stranded in Libya. Recently, we have received the first group of 66 people in coming week another group of 127 will also be received. To this end, I wish to take this opportunity to thank AU and UNHCR for their effort in this life-saving act of solidarity which

will provide an end to the despair and misery of some of the most vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers in the world today.

Chairperson,

The Government of Rwanda ensures security and protection for all refugees and contributes to the promotion of their well-being by integrating them into existing socio-economic programs such as education, Health, Livelihood activities, to name but a few.

Picking from CRRF, The Government of Rwanda has already made good progress in delivering its commitment and has developed a 5 years' strategic plan for social economic inclusion of refugees and host community.

Allow me to inform you that today, refugee students are integrated in national education system, the Government of Rwanda and UNHCR are implementing the joint strategy on economic inclusion of refugees; refugees benefit secondary and tertiary health services and as part of our commitment, Urban refugees and students in boarding schools have access to the National Community based insurance scheme. All refugees aged 16 years and above will progressively be provided with Refugee ID cards as the verification exercise goes on and expected to be completed at the end of year.

Chairperson,

The inclusion of refugees in National programs is a journey that needs joint efforts and responsibility sharing to reduce pressure on refugee hosting countries. I call upon the development partners to join humanitarian agencies in efforts to bridge the existing gaps in humanitarian sector, especially gaps in programs aiming at empowerment and self-reliance of refugees. To this note, I take the opportunity to

thank the World Bank group for providing a 60 Million Us Dollar to support the socio economic inclusion of refugees and host community project which took effect from August this year.

Chairperson,

Rwanda has always kept its borders open to human beings seeking international protection and create a conducive environment for them despite a number of challenges linked to shortage of humanitarian funding leading to food ratio cut and unmet needs having adverse consequences on protection and safety of refugees, limited livelihoods opportunities, limited space for camp extension and environment degradation among others.

Chairperson,

Let me conclude by thanking UNHCR Leadership for its plan with Member states to eradicate statelessness and for the adoption and implementation of the global compact for refugees and the forthcoming first Global Refugee Forum in December this year.

Let me take also this opportunity to reiterate Rwanda's Government commitment to continue working closely with the UNHCR to finding lasting solutions for refugees and stateless people.

Once again, I thank the African Union and UNHCR for their support to save life of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. I call upon States to uphold their obligations in a spirit of solidarity.

I thank you for your kind attention.