



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

STATEMENT TO THE 72ND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S
PROGRAMME (EXCOM)

HONOURABLE JACK J. MWIIMBU MP, MINISTER OF HOME
AFFAIRS AND INTERNAL SECURITY, ZAMBIA.

GENEVA, 4TH TO 8TH OCTOBER, 2021

THANK YOU VICE-CHAIRPERSON,
YOUR EXCELLENCY, HIGH COMMISSIONER FILIPPO GRANDI,
HONOURABLE MINISTERS PRESENT,
EXCELLENCIES,
DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,

VICE-CHAIRPERSON, I AM PLEASED AND HONOURED TO BE HERE TO REPRESENT ZAMBIA FOR THE FIRST TIME, HAVING BEEN APPOINTED AS MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS AND INTERNAL SECURITY RECENTLY. IT IS INDEED A PRIVILEGE TO ADDRESS THE SEVENTY-SECOND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND INDEED WISH TO THANK HIGH COMMISSIONER GRANDI FOR YOUR BOLD AND FRANK ASSESSMENT OF THE MAMMOTH TASK THAT FACE ALL REFUGEE HOSTING COUNTRIES, LARGE AND SMALL, AS WE MOVE AHEAD IN THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES. WE, IN ZAMBIA, STAND WITH YOU AND YOUR STAFF AS WE STRIVE TO DELIVER PROTECTION AND SOLUTIONS DESPITE THE HEALTH CRISIS POSED BY THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC.

VICE-CHAIRPERSON,

ZAMBIA HAS MAINTAINED HER LONG STANDING TRADITION AS A HOSPITABLE STATE AND SAFE HAVEN FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES BY KEEPING ITS BORDERS OPEN IN THE FACE OF THE

COVID-19 PANDEMIC. IN THIS REGARD, THE POPULATION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS, REFUGEES AND OTHER PERSONS OF CONCERN BEING HOSTED IN ZAMBIA, NOW STANDS AT ONE HUNDRED AND TWO THOUSAND, ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY SEVEN (102,127), ALMOST DOUBLE THE FIGURE OF 2016 WHEN WE WERE HOSTING FIFTY THREE THOUSAND, NINE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY TWO (53,972) PEOPLE. AS A COUNTRY THAT ROLLED OUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE REFUGEE RESPONSE FRAMEWORK IN 2017, WE CONTINUE TO BE INCLUSIVE IN OUR PROGRAMMES BY PLACING NATIONAL RESOURCES AT THE DISPOSAL OF REFUGEES, INCLUDING LAND, SOCIAL SERVICES AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES, USING THE WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH. HOWEVER, THE INCREASE IN THE REFUGEE POPULATION HAS EXERTED IMMENSE PRESSURE ON THE COUNTRY'S CAPACITY TO EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY CARE AND PROTECT THEM. THIS, THEREFORE, CALLS FOR GREATER BURDEN AND RESPONSIBILITY SHARING, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE TWELVE POINT THREE MILLION UNITED STATES DOLLARS (US\$12.3 MILLION) FUNDING SHORTFALL FOR ZAMBIA EXPERIENCED IN 2021. THERE IS ALSO A GREATER NEED TO RAISE THE BAR IN THE QUALITY OF SERVICES OFFERED TO REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITIES. TO ACHIEVE THIS, WE WILL NEED SUPPORT TO DIVERSIFY SOURCES OF

FUNDING AND FIND MORE CREATIVE WAYS TO FULFIL OUR RESPONSIBILTIES TO DISPLACED POPULATIONS.

DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,

ZAMBIA REMAINS COMMITTED TO OFFERING DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR PROTRACTED CASELOADS OF FORMER REFUGEES FROM ANGOLA AND RWANDA. HOWEVER, VARIOUS POLICY, ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL CHALLENGES HAVE PREVENTED THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS INITIATIVE SINCE IT BEGAN IN 2014. WE ARE SEARCHING FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM THE UNHCR AND OTHER DONOR PARTNERS AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN ORDER FOR US TO REALISE THIS INITIATIVE AND MAKE PROGRESS IN THE LOCAL INTEGRATION PROCESS. THE GOVERNMENT IS, THEREFORE, CONTINUING TO CONSULT WIDELY ON THE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE CHALLENGES THAT WE ARE FACING IN PROVIDING ALTERNATIVE LEGAL STATUS AND ENSURING

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION FOR THE MORE THAN TWENTY THREE THOUSAND (23,000) FORMER REFUGEES.

CHAIRPERSON,

COVID-19 HAS CONTINUED TO IMPACT THE PROVISION OF PROTECTION TO REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS AS THIS POPULATION GRAPPLES WITH THE LOSS OF INCOME, FOOD SHORTAGES AND A FEELING OF ABANDONMENT DUE TO HEALTH RESTRICTIONS NECESSARY TO CONTROL THE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE. IT HAS BEEN QUITE CHALLENGING FOR REFUGEES AND THOSE ENTRUSTED TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR WELFARE TO COPE WITH DISPLACEMENT AND A HEALTH CRISIS AT THE SAME TIME. IN RESPONSE, THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT ALIGNED THE COVID-19 RESPONSES WITH DISTRICT INITIATIVES AND RAMPED UP HEALTH SERVICES IN REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS. WITH SUPPORT FROM PARTNERS, WE MANAGED TO AVERT SERIOUS DISEASE OUTBREAKS AND HAVE NOW EMBARKED ON VACCINATION CAMPAIGNS TO TACKLE VACCINE HESITANCY AMONG THE REFUGEE POPULATION.

VICE-CHAIRPERSON,

WITH REGARD TO THE COMPREHENSIVE REFUGEE RESPONSE FRAMEWORK, ZAMBIA HAS CONTINUED TO MAKE STEADY PROGRESS. IN AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE FOOD SECURITY, PROMOTE SUSTANABLE LIVELIHOODS, SELF RELIANCE AND INCLUSION OF REFUGEES IN NATIONAL PROGRAMMES, ZAMBIA HAS EXTENDED THE FARMER SUPPORT INPUT PROGRAMME (FISP) TO INCLUDE REFUGEES, FORMER REFUGEES AND THE HOST COMMUNITY. PRESENTLY, THE GOVERNMENT, IN COLLABORATION WITH ITS PARTNERS, HAS UNDERTAKEN EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES IN REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS INTENDED TO BUILD CAPACITY THROUGH SKILLS TRAINING, INJECTION OF START-UP CAPITAL IN SMALL BUSINESSES AND DISTRIBUTION OF SEEDS TO ENABLE REFUGEES TO PARTICIPATE IN FARMING ACTIVITIES. TO PREVENT STATELESSNESS, EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE TO ENSURE ALL REFUGEES AND FORMER REFUGEES HAVE ACCESS TO CIVIL REGISTRATION DOCUMENTS AND ARE INCLUDED IN THE NEW CIVIL REGISTRATION STRATEGIC PLAN. PROGRESS HAS ALSO BEEN MADE IN THE COMPLETION OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO DEAL WITH STATELESSNESS, IN ADDITION TO TAKING THE NECESSARY STEPS TO ACCEDE TO THE 1961 CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION OF STATELESSNESS IN SUPPORT OF THE UNHCR'S *IBELONG* CAMPAIGN. FURTHER, IN ORDER TO

IMPROVE THE ASYLUM SPACE IN THE COUNTRY, WORK HAS ADVANCED TOWARDS THE COMPLETION OF THE FORMULATION OF THE NATIONAL REFUGEE POLICY.

IN CONCLUSION, VICE-CHAIRPERSON, I WISH TO REITERATE ZAMBIA'S WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE PEOPLE FLEEING THEIR COUNTRIES SEEKING SAFETY AND PROTECTION BECAUSE IT IS IN TIMES LIKE THESE, THAT COUNTRIES TEND TO LOOK INWARDS TO SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THEIR OWN CITIZENS. HOWEVER, NOW IS THE TIME FOR THE WORLD TO SHOW SOLIDARITY WITH COUNTRIES THAT HAVE CONTINUED TO BE GENEROUS ENOUGH TO TAKE INTO THEIR CARE THOSE THAT NEED A HELPING HAND.

VICE-CHAIRPERSON, I THANK YOU.