

**Draft Statement by H.E Amira Ei Fadil
Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs, Health and Social Development
African Union Commission**

**72nd Ordinary Session of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Executive Committee.
October 2021, Geneva, Switzerland**

Madam Vice Chairperson of the Executive Committee,

Mr. Filippo Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I begin by congratulating UNHCR on the observation of the 72nd Ordinary Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme and on behalf of the African Union Commission, I wish the President of the Executive Committee the best of health.

The Commission also aligns itself with the statements of the Africa Group and with all Member states of the Union who have made statements.

On behalf of H.E Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, I would like to renew our gratitude and congratulations to Mr. Filippo Grandi, High Commissioner for Refugees and his team, for their tireless and dedicated efforts, in the service of the protection of millions of refugees and displaced persons in Africa and all over the world. It is in this regard, that the mutually beneficial partnership between the African Union Commission and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees is appreciated.

Madam Vice Chair,

Several member states of the Africa Union, that have already taken the floor have already enumerated the multiple humanitarian challenges that they face, which have been additionally compounded by climatic factors, insecurity, the COVID pandemic and the limited access to vaccines.

The Commission aligns itself with the call for durable solutions to Africa's humanitarian crisis and to this end, the Commission continues to make efforts in the framework of prevention and resolution of conflicts as well as the establishment of a culture of peace in order that Africa achieves Aspiration 4 of Agenda 2063 of the African Union which aspires for "*A peaceful and secure Africa*".

The Commission in close partnership with the Sub-Committee on Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Returnees of the Permanent Council of the Union continuously assess the humanitarian situation in the Member States most affected by forced displacement and other humanitarian problems and contributes to humanitarian support in these countries by providing financial assistance.

The Commission further continues to assist AU member States in developing and implementing AU policies and decisions on matters affecting Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and returnees including the implementation of the Kampala Convention and others relevant policies instruments.

With regard to the challenge posed by the Covid Pandemic, the Commission has established Africa Vaccine Acquisition Task Team (AVATT) to fast-track vaccine acquisition on the continent for all African citizens including the most vulnerable persons of our society inclusive of refugees, IDPs and statelessness persons.

The Africa Union is ceased with the issue of the substantial decreases in financial resources to address the challenges of displacement in Africa where funding gaps have reached alarming proportions. For example, the DRC financing gap is 73% of needs, 78% for Mali and 75% for Sudan. To address these dire situations and many others, the Commission, in collaboration with Member States and partners shall host a Continental Humanitarian Summit and a Donors' Pledging Conference, in order, to raise the resources needed for humanitarian action across the continent.

I would therefore like to take advantage of this forum to renew the appeal to the international community, to provide the requisite assistance to address the challenges of displacement, through the provision of appropriate, predictable, and accessible funding.

Mad. Vice Chairperson

Of deep concern to the Commission is the decision of some States and governments to externalizing their asylum and protection obligations in Africa. The African Union views these practices and initiatives with the gravest of concerns and wishes to remind all States parties to the 1951 UN Refugees Convention of their responsibility towards international protection for persons, in need of that protection as provided for in the 1951 UN Convention on refugees.

The African Union perceives that externalization arrangements run counter to the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees, within which countries agreed to share equitably the responsibility for refugee protection. Several African member states in this forum have

demonstrated their commitment to the Global Compact on Refugees and the actions that have been taken to implement it. The continent continues to generously shoulder the burden of the world's 85% of the refugees, often in protracted situations, whereas only 15% are hosted by developed countries.

Tackling the multidimensional problems posed by these crises, will require institutional reform and efforts that are dependent on the effective mobilization of broader and all-inclusive investments in prevention. Partners are invited to support continental initiatives such as the AU Peace Fund, and the establishment of key institutions such as the African Humanitarian Agency, the African Development Agency, and the Africa Medicines Agency.

In conclusion I call on all States Parties to the 1951 United Nations Convention to remain true to their commitment and obligations to the international asylum system and encourage them to protect the international asylum system.

I thank you for your kind attention.

