



**SEVENTY-SIXTH PLENARY SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE  
HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME  
(76<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UNHCR EXCOM)**

**STATEMENT BY THE AFRICA GROUP  
(DELIVERED BY KENYA)**

**AGENDA ITEM 4: CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS OF THE STANDING  
COMMITTEE  
(a) International Protection**

**THURSDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2025  
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**



**Thank you, Chairperson,  
Mr. Filippo GRANDI, High Commissioner for Refugees,  
Distinguished delegates,**

1. Kenya is honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group.
2. The Africa group thanks UNHCR for the report of the Standing Committee on international protection. We also take note that in the reporting period, UNHCR responded to 43 emergencies in 25 countries. In line with that, the Africa Group thanks all frontline humanitarian workers, who often at great risk, work to ensure protection to those in need, usually, in very challenging environments.
3. The **rise in the number of people in need of assistance from UNHCR** to over 120 million is a very major concern. This is particularly so at a moment when the humanitarian aid system is facing a funding crisis and its attendant reduction in field presence. We are equally very concerned that among some of the sectors to experience cuts including **education, health and livelihoods are life-saving and core to protection.**
4. It is therefore imperative that these sectors remain at the heart of any prioritization, restructuring and financing efforts. Where there will be collaborations on health, education and livelihoods, the Africa Group would appreciate granular details on the role of the different partners.
5. Among its many strengths, **leveraging multi-stakeholder partnerships** is one of the hallmarks of the Global Compact on Refugees. The realization of the four objectives of the GCR also requires a multi-stakeholder approach. Amidst the sharp and unexpected reduction in aid funding and, in order to ensure the protection of displaced and



stateless persons, while also pursuing durable solutions, the Africa Group urges UNHCR to strengthen its collaboration and engagement with relevant partners, particularly development actors. It is equally important to ensure the engagement with national and development partners begins at the very onset of a crisis in order to foster better transitions from relief to development.

6. On **inclusion and access to rights**, while host countries in the African Group have made significant efforts towards the inclusion of refugees, the African Group reiterates that matching of these policy commitments with the requisite resources is crucial to realise their success. Ultimately, policy commitments do not operate, neither do they succeed in a vacuum. It is essential to uphold solidarity, international cooperation and equitable responsibility sharing while upholding humanitarian principles.
7. We look forward to the **upcoming December 2025 Progress Review of the Global Refugee Forum** to take stock of progress made on the objectives of the GCR while also undertaking a stocktaking exercise on pledges made during the Global Refugee Forums. The Africa Group continues urging for matching of pledges made in order to unlock their full impact.
8. Pertaining asylum, is **crucial to ensure the integrity of asylum systems is upheld** in order to ensure identification of those in need of international protection while facilitating returns of those not in need of international protection. Equally important is ensuring that the trend on externalization of asylum responsibilities is addressed while also addressing the challenges posed by onward and mixed movements.



9. The Africa Group takes note of the **intensification of risks for people moving by sea along some maritime routes**. While the update states, and I quote “insufficient data hampered humanitarian responses,” we recall that at the 92<sup>nd</sup> Standing Committee held in March 2025, on agenda item 3 on regional activities and global programmes, there was clear reference to the data and we would like to quote that, “*Nearly 3,000 people were reported dead or missing along the three Mediterranean and Northwest Africa maritime routes, though this figure is likely to be a significant underestimation*”<sup>1</sup>.
10. **3,000 people is way too many**. It is an affront to our shared humanity. We are convinced that, while data is very crucial, the provision of humanitarian responses is not just a function of data. It is affected by other factors including policy and politics. The Africa Group urges UNHCR to intensify its engagement with all relevant stakeholders towards definitive steps to address the crisis at sea and protection in that regard.
11. The African Group is equally concerned that “***displaced and stateless people remain at heightened risk of human trafficking***, with women and girls particularly vulnerable”. Equally disturbing is that “*child trafficking and trafficking for sexual exploitation has devastating consequences*”. The risk of amplified sexual and gender-based violence with the reduction in funds to prevent and respond is deeply disturbing. Amidst ongoing funding cuts and prioritization efforts, we urge UNHCR to ensure prioritization of access to protection and support in these areas.

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<sup>1</sup> See, UNHCR, Regional update – Europe, Standing committee ninety-second meeting, p. 1



12. Nelson MANDELA once said that **“Our children are our greatest treasure. They are our future.”** This **affirmation is however today juxtaposed against concerning realities.** The report points out that *“approximately 400 million children, or around one in every five of the world’s children are refugees or live in conflict zones, while some 47 million have been forced to leave their homes”*<sup>2</sup>. What will happen to children whose education is interrupted? What will happen to children whose healthcare is cut short? What is happening to children whose access to nutritious and adequate food is a dehumanising struggle? What will happen when children struggle with trauma and mental health because of the constellation of difficulties their young lives should never know about.
13. **The answers to these questions must stir up urgent action.** It is important to ensure that even amidst the ongoing humanitarian reset and prioritization, children remain a core priority and that allocation of resources should be commensurate to needs. It is crucial to ensure **child-focused prioritization** in humanitarian action, design, coordination, operations, and sectoral strategies. This ought to be matched with the urgently needed advocacy, visibility, political will and action. Prioritization of children in humanitarian action must not be just a rhetoric.
14. On **education**, and noting the ongoing funding cuts, we urge UNHCR to explore alternative partnerships to ensure the continuity of education across all levels - primary, secondary and tertiary, and the retention of both boys and girls at the secondary level.

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<sup>2</sup> See the note on international protection, p.7



15. As the report indicates, **“international protection should be a temporary measure** until a sustainable long-term solution can be found.”<sup>3</sup> The Africa Group urges UNHCR to continue working with all relevant partners (including development and peace actors) and leverage their mandates towards durable solutions, including in countries of origin.
16. It is a major concern that **“the gap between the number of refugees in need of resettlement and available places is widening.”**<sup>4</sup> Resettlement remains a crucial mechanism to foster responsibility sharing and we urge States to increase their resettlement quotas. The African Group thanks all States who continue to invest in facilitating skills-based pathways and family reunification, including the facilitation of refugee labour mobility and urge more States to contribute to these efforts.
17. The **States conferred mandate on UNHCR of international protection is under test.** The high numbers of people in need of international protection vis a vis chronic underfunding of protracted and less visible displacement situations as well as the fresh funding cuts attest to this. We conclude by urging all States to support the implementation of this mandate through the requisite political, diplomatic and financial support.

**I thank you for your attention**

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<sup>3</sup> See, Note on international protection, 12

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.14