

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN



76th session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Program (ExCOM)

Presented by

Hon. Albino Akol Atak

Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Managment

Republic of South Sudan

Conference Hall, Palais des Nations

Geneva, Switzerland

6th to 10th October, 2025

Excellencies,

Amb. Marcelo Vazquez, Chairperson of ExCOM

Mr. Filippo Grandi, High Commissioner,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a profound honor to address this 76th Session of the Executive Committee on behalf of the people and Government of the Republic of South Sudan. I also take this opportunity to convey to you the warm greetings of our President, His Excellency Salva Kiir Mayardit and express deep appreciation to UNHCR for its steadfast leadership role in providing continued solidarity and international protection to the displaced and stateless persons both in South Sudan and across the globe.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

Although a young nation that got its independence on 9th July 2011, South Sudan has continued to keep its doors open to refugees and asylum seekers from the neighboring countries and beyond, adapting an open-door policy enshrined in our laws and policies, and in so doing accords protection space for asylum. Today, we host about 600,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, mainly from the neighboring Countries, with Sudan having the largest percentage. We would like to underline that our open -door policy and hospitality do not stop at the boarder but rather, extends to the host communities that welcome refugees, provide land for farming and share with them their meager resources, including investing in Agricultural cooperatives, and small business. This is the spirit that the government of South Sudan continues to promote to ensure that the camps are fully transitioned into integrated settlements, to allow refugees and host communities coexist as stipulated in the Durable Solution Strategy and Action plan 2024 which I launched as the Minister in charge last year. As witnessed by the High Commissioner, Mr. Fillipo Grandi, during his visit to South Sudan last year, where he celebrated World Refugee Day together with the refugees, and the host communities.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

I am glad to announce that South Sudan in its commitment to end statelessness has this year acceded to the international convention of 1954 and 1961 on statelessness. Hence, the approaches taken by South Sudan are not just on paper but practical. For example, today over 80 professors and lecturers displaced from Sudan have been absorbed by the Institutions of High learning like University of Juba among others. Likewise, over 50 medical personnel/doctors have been absorbed in the private sector hospitals and clinics, with some provided licenses by the government to open clinics. This inclusive approach reinforces South Sudan's role in refugee protection as part of our hospitality, solidarity and a commitment to the Global Compact on Refugees and other international frameworks.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

While our commitments are clear, **the challenges** we face are severe. Despite continued support by UNHCR and the UN Country Team, the country faces immense challenges. Severe budget cuts since early 2025 have led to widespread programmatic scale-downs, including staff layoffs, office closures and restructuring by UN agencies, NGOs, and national partners. This has significantly affected the delivery of essential services, including protection, healthcare and nutrition, education, food assistance and livelihoods support. It is worth noting that UNHCR and IOM in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of South Sudan have supported the transportation of over 1.2 million returnees to their respective places of origin.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

In conclusion, I would like to point out that South Sudan has taken steps that include formulating policies and legislation, to ensure the process of issuing machine readable Refugee IDs and Passports are in place, supported by UNHCR country team. However, due to the economic situation, coupled with a lack of external funding to this initiative, the process slowed down in 2025, and as such refugees continue to suffer waiting, especially those starting their businesses,

who need to open bank accounts or access loan schemes, as well as those who want to travel for medical, education, or other emergency services.

Excellencies, without meaningful solidarity, the pressure South Sudan faces beside being a post-conflict Country will only complicate the already dire humanitarian situation as many do not have sustainable means. The Republic of South Sudan is therefore asking for international partnership that will empower Government entities to protect, sustain, and provide solutions for the refugees, IDPs, returnees, and the vulnerable communities that host them. In this context, we call upon the Member States and partners to join hands to help address these challenges through upholding the principles of responsibility-sharing that lie at the heart of the refugee protection system. On behalf of the Government of South Sudan, I reaffirm our commitment to work hand in hand with UNHCR, Member States, and partners in pursuit of lasting solutions.

I thank you.