



STATEMENT

by

**The Honorable Minister of Local Government, chieftainship,
Home Affairs and Police of the Kingdom of Lesotho**

HON. LEBONA FABIAN LEPHEMA

At

**76th Session of the Executive Committee of the High
Commissioner's Programme (ExCom)**

06-10 October 2025

Chairperson

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Lesotho, I am delighted to join other delegations at this important Forum of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme. We extend our appreciation to the High Commissioner and UNHCR staff for the invitation and excellent facilitation of the meeting.

Allow me from the onset to confirm that the Kingdom of Lesotho aligns itself with the statement that has been delivered by Cote D'Ivoire on behalf of the African Group. I wish to congratulate the **High Commissioner** for his good leadership within UNHCR over the years.

Chairperson

My delegation appreciates the UNHCR's major initiative, and its focus on ending statelessness, with the launch of the Global

Alliance to End Statelessness built on the momentum of the “**I Belong campaign**”. This Alliance will unite governments, UN agencies, civil society, and stateless-led organizations to drive legal reforms and collective action to ensure that everyone has a nationality.

In line with the Sustainable Development Goal 16.9 and the spirit of the 2030 Agenda, of **leaving no one behind**, the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho, through its National Identity and Civil Registry continues to take robust steps in ensuring that legal identity is provided for all, including through birth registration. Lesotho has also made positive strides towards digitalizing registration of these services for easy access to everyone including the refugees and asylum seekers.

The Kingdom of Lesotho believes that everyone has a role to play, including the displaced persons themselves. We are working very hard to level the playing field to ensure that refugees and internally displaced persons are included in our economy and society.

The Government has a funding initiative for refugees' education to empower them with skills and knowledge for a better future. Education enables refugees to rebuild and integrate, supporting stability and growth.

Lesotho extends its gratitude to UNHCR staff for assisting the government with the study on statelessness, which paves a way to development of legislation on statelessness besides our Immigration and Citizenship Bill. The Government of Lesotho is amending the 1983 Refugee Act to improve refugee protection, align with international standards, and address identity document fraud. Refugee status is granted to persons who are vulnerable and in need of protection where their countries of origin fail to provide for such, due to political and climate factors. Irregular migrants should not acquire the refugee status through illicit means to circumvent compliance with immigration laws, as these actions impact individuals who really require protection.

Chairperson

The Government of Lesotho is working to help refugees become self-sufficient in food production by supporting a small chicken-rearing project at the Centre, as current government

grants are insufficient for their food needs. Shade nets for growing vegetables have also been installed at the centre to improve crop yields, reduce losses, and promote sustainable agricultural practices as the weather in Lesotho is harsh throughout the year. Some refugees have shown interest in phone repairs and digital satellite television installation. They received training and Start-Up Kits, enabling them to launch businesses, earn income, and create jobs.

Lastly, the Kingdom of Lesotho has also in the past year managed to increase its efforts in public awareness campaigns in partnership with local organizations. These efforts are yielding positive results as more people have accepted the fact that they must accommodate and live in harmony with our brothers and sisters from other countries.

Distinguished Guests

Allow me to conclude by reaffirming Lesotho's unwavering commitment to boosting humanitarian and development support for refugees, expanding protection and durable solutions such as resettlement, and upholding the right to seek asylum. This commitment is based on the believe that becoming a refugee is never a choice. **I thank you**