

In the name of Allah, the Most compassionate the most
merciful

Statement of the Afghan Minister of Refugees and Repatriation

Excom meeting

Geneva, October 05, 2015

Excellency, Chairman

Excellency, High Commissioner

Distinguished delegates from participating countries and agencies supporting refugees

Ladies and gentlemen

At the outset, allow me to thank the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Gutters, for his unique and tireless efforts in his capacity as the High Commissioner, and for his recent visit to Afghanistan aimed at drawing the attention of the International Community to the situation of Afghan refugees.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Although in the past 13 years around six million Afghan refugees have returned to their country with UNHCR assistance, still millions of our compatriots are living outside of their country either as registered refugees or seeking asylum.

On behalf of the Afghan Government, I would like to thank all the hosting countries of Afghan refugees, especially our neighboring, Iran and Pakistan, for their generous hospitality in hosting millions of Afghans. I would also like to thank UNHCR and the staff of all other humanitarian agencies who often in different parts of the world

endangers their lives working in various hardship duty stations to help refugees.

I must honestly admit that the Afghan Government in the past years did not pay enough attention to refugee issues, particularly to their voluntary repatriation. However, I would like to emphasize that the Government of National Unity has placed the issue of Afghan refugees as one of its national priorities and in this respect there are various important structures actively operating now:

Mr Chairman,

The vision of the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is that “without the repatriation of its refugees, the Afghan nation remains incomplete”.

The Government of Afghanistan, within the framework of the Solutions Strategy, has considered more appropriate pull factors in its newly established return and reintegration strategy. It reaffirms the fundamental right of all Afghans to resettle in any area of the country, whether it be a rural area of origin or one of Afghanistan’s cities or towns that reflect changed livelihoods and aspirations. Returnees needs are also embedded into national priority programmes in line with the government of Afghanistan’s country portfolio which is been prepared.

So far in 2015, over 55,000 registered Afghans have returned from Iran and Pakistan. It is possible that this figure will reach to 100,000 individuals. Over 80,000 unregistered Afghans have returned voluntarily and it is estimated to reach 100,000 persons.

I would like to mention that until we reach the aforementioned objectives, there is a need to continue assisting Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan as well as those in other countries. While appreciating efforts by the host countries to reduce the costs incurred by Afghan refugees, solutions have got to be found for providing these costs through the assistance by the International Community.

We hope for the continued assistance to the process of voluntary and gradual repatriation and sustainable reintegration based on absorption capacity in Afghanistan, for the asylum space persevered in all asylum countries, and that forced deportations are stopped and undocumented Afghans are registered so that the ground should be paved for their voluntary and sustainable return.

Deterioration of security situation, I am sure all of you have followed the events of the past week in Kunduz has displaced 170,000 individuals in addition to the more than 220,000 people who are currently living in Khost, Pakika, Kunar and Nangarhar provinces in the past two years, and with this increase the number of internally displaced persons has reached to one million individuals.

Although with the help of humanitarian agencies, emergency assistance is provided to those newly displaced people, however, the Government of Afghanistan based on its IDP policy is seeking to fundamentally resolve the issue of displacement. As the Afghan President has said, within the next five years the word "displacement" should be eliminated from Afghanistan's vocabulary. While displacement is on the rise, I would like to honestly say that the Government of Afghanistan will not be able to resolve the problems of the displaced by its own and will be in need cooperation from the International Community.

Ladies and gentlemen,

One of my priorities at my Ministry is to fight corruption and I have fulfilled in this respect these responsibilities successfully since I took up Office. That satisfaction of CIGAR in its September report and of MECC through a letter two weeks back is a clear witness of the transparency of current activities of the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation.

At the end, it is worth-mentioning that the recent influx of refugees and migrants, especially talented generation have indeed affected the European countries; therefore, in order to better manage the existing crisis, an appropriate and logical solution should be found, otherwise, the phenomena of migration which is a need of the human society will present serious risks and countries will face a lot of problems. We must reverse this tide.

In order to properly manage refugee and migration crisis, the following points should be taken into consideration:

1. In the first place, recognizing all asylum seekers who have so far reached to their countries of destination, without any kind of discrimination;
2. Help to find better ways to manage and facilitate economic migration between countries of origin and countries in need of labor migrants
3. Help create better employment opportunities to prevent irregular migration
4. Decisive decisions by all countries to counter organized human and migrant smuggler's networks.

Lastly, the Government of national unity is also seeking to make good on its pledge, taking into consideration the current situation of the country, to pass a refugee law in accordance with our obligations under the 1951 Convention

Thanks,