



**Federal Republic of Somalia
Draft Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs
And International Cooperation
EXCOM 1-5 October 2018**

Mr. Chairman, High Commissioner and distinguished delegates;

We welcome statement of the High Commissioner on the opening of this session and on behalf of the Government of Somalia, we would like to convey our appreciation for his commitment and support to Somalia refugees in the Region of Horn of Africa and Yemen as well as Internally Displaced persons (IDPs).

The Federal Government of Somalia would like to express gratitude to all countries in the region – Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Uganda and Yemen – which have been providing asylum to Somali refugees since outbreak of the Somali civil war in 1991. Equally, we thank donor countries and INGOs for their assistance, particularly, UNHCR Somalia whose contribution in this regard is highly appreciated.

i would like to outline the enormous problems facing Somalia:

- There are around 2.6 million internally displaced persons in Somalia, mostly in and around the Benadir region.
- The number of refugees in neighboring countries is currently around 819,000 (Ethiopia: 256,000, Kenya: 255,500 and Yemen: 256,000).
- From the end of 2014, 120,050 people returned to the country voluntarily, with most of them receiving assistance to return, in collaboration with international organizations. Most of these returnees came from Kenya, while as many as 2,000 have been rescued from Yemen this year alone, whereas more than 200 have been released from jails and in the hands of Libyan smugglers and traffickers.

Mr. Chairman, since the EXCOM meeting a year ago a number of challenges have continued to bedevil the country including the flowing:

- This year's floods and previous drought, which resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of displaced people, was tackled by the commendable intervention of the government, the Somali community and the international community, who together have managed to lessen the impact of the floods.

- As of 31 July, 31,473 refugees and asylum-seekers from Yemen were registered in Somalia. With the support of UNHCR, the FGS is working to register asylum seekers and refugees and to provide for those who have specific needs.

Mr. Chairman, whereas the displaced have been traditionally dealt with for nearly three decades from the humanitarian perspective and although it has been important and lifesaving, it is no longer sufficient or sustainable by itself as it has not provided durable solutions, which is now urgently required and the conditions are deemed suitable.

My government is concerned, ready and willing to provide the leadership necessary to achieving solutions for the displaced which is what has motivated us to canvass the views of Somalis together with its friends and partners to find the most appropriate way forward in finding durable solutions.

It is in this context that I would refer to Somalia's National Action Plan (NAP) which is one of the most important outcomes of the commitments in support of greater international responsibility sharing and building on the existing framework in Somalia through a jointed-up approach i.e. the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) of the New York Declaration, the IGAD Special Summit or commonly known as the Nairobi Declaration, the National Forum on Durable Solutions for Returnees and IDPs and . The Action Plan is a three-year strategy with linkages and alignment with existing processes, including adherence to the 2017-2019 National Development Plan (NDP) and existing aid architecture.

One of the important requirements the government considers as necessary, is to review the legal frameworks that would facilitate the achievement of durable solutions in Somalia. The most important and urgent ones include the need to finalize Refugee-Returnees & IDP policy, Refugee and Asylum Law or Protocols, Housing, Land and Property (HLP) Law and the elimination of statelessness etc.

There is an urgent need to address the issue of evictions, as currently, thousands of individuals are evicted on a monthly basis due to complex reasons engendered by the process of recovery such as institutions reoccupying their old premises, newly established businesses acquiring spaces or for expansion, and other factors of urban expansion. At the second Somalia Partnership Forum (SPF), on July 2018 in Brussels, the Federal Government of Somalia committed to ensure that National Eviction Guidelines are adopted to deal with this matter fairly and avoid violating the rights of those affected.

In this regard it is important to recall that it is a great achievement for Somalia that it has accepted the adoption and ratification of the Kampala Convention that guides African displacements; as Somalia was already one of the original signatories.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to note that there is continuous recognition that Somalia's stabilization progress is taking root and we are committed to taking a whole of government approach to the issue of finding Durable Solutions for the displaced and in our view; we consider area-based approach as the best method suited to resolve this problem in a holistic, inclusive manner taking into consideration IDPs, Refugees, Returnees and the host population. This approach has many advantages the most important being to encourage social cohesion and avoid resource-based conflicts. It is also important to note that it recognizes areas of return i.e. districts and municipalities have a crucial role to play in this regard and need strengthening in terms of capacities and resources to meet this burdensome challenge.

I would like to mention that for the government to take up holistically the issue of the displaced and work towards achieving durable solutions, it will result in increased burden on the government and will require significant investment, capacity building of government institutions directly involved (both at the Federal and even more importantly at the Regional levels), and real commitment to cooperation amongst humanitarian and development agencies, and above all support of the donor community.

The primary impetus is the perpetual lack of adequate resources from the international community to meet the needs of refugees (this equally applies to Somalia's reception and reintegration effort), which could potentially have the effect of derailing the successful achievements made so far. Here, we request that UNHCR be allowed the flexibility to implement quick impact projects to meet the immediate needs of returnees to avert any disruption which may have deleterious impact on voluntary repatriation.

Mr. Chairperson -, the needs and challenges on the ground still remain enormous but there is a window of opportunity for all stakeholders to work together to increase the absorption capacity of the receiving communities and expand access to basic services and livelihood opportunities, which are key flagship sectors to support sustainable reintegration and local integration for IDPs. Working together however means mandate flexibility but not "mandate shedding". We therefore sincerely request UNHCR to maintain its responsibility for repatriation and reintegration.

I wish to thank all the participants and wish all of you very successful deliberations.

Thank you.