

Ethiopia

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**Statement**

**by**

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**for**

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**Mister Chairperson,**

**Excellencies, Honorable Ministers and Heads of Delegations,**

**Mister Filipo Grandi, High Commissioner for Refugees,**

**Distinguished Representatives,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Ethiopia aligns itself with the statement delivered by Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group.**

**Mister Chairperson,**

At the outset, allow me to convey my gratitude to the High Commissioner for his report which touches upon pertinent issues addressing forced displacement and the needs of people of concern. Permit me also to take this opportunity to thank the UNHCR and express Ethiopia's commitment to further strengthen our excellent cooperation as we move forward in implementing the Global Compact on Refugees. Indeed, it is a privilege for me to extend as well our heartfelt gratitude on behalf of the Government and people of Ethiopia to donor countries, the World Bank, the private sector, civil society and NGO's who have been supporting the refugee operation in Ethiopia.

**Mister Chairperson**

Ethiopia's reform process which is being undertaken under the leadership of Prime Minister Abiye Ahmed is further consolidating as a result of the Government's committed effort to build a democratic system that upholds the rule of law and address

poverty and inequality. Furthermore, the new democratic dispensation in Ethiopia is also impacting the region positively in reversing the cycle of violence that gripped the Horn of Africa for over five decades.

Accordingly, Ethiopia's diplomatic efforts are making significant inroads in bringing peace within our sub-region. This is evident in Ethiopia's role in the successful conclusion of the signing of the Constitutional Declaration in Sudan and the steady changes in South Sudan in the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement. These efforts have contributed significantly in preventing violence and potential consequences of massive refugee influx within the sub-region. We therefore encourage UNHCR and key partners to support these peace efforts mainly by working together with development actors in rehabilitation and voluntary return of refugees.

In addition to these, Ethiopia, is taking practical steps aimed at transforming its policy approach towards addressing the needs of refugees essentially by further strengthening the nexus between humanitarian assistance and development interventions and instituting comprehensive approaches to refugee responses. Indeed, the year 2019 was an exciting year in Ethiopia's refugee response as we were able to make landmark changes in our refugee response system. Our Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has shown remarkable commitment towards refugees by enacting new refugee law, reorganizing an independent Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs and enactment of a new civil society law to put in place the required legal and institutional infrastructure for an inclusive and comprehensive refugee response. The enactment of a revised refugee law which guarantees a range of rights including freedom of movement, registration of vital events and access to labor market has a critical role in creating an enabling condition to improve THE lives of refugees and host communities in tandem.

On the other hand, substantial progress continues to be registered in ensuring access to education at all levels. Accordingly, with the support of our partners and the UNHCR,

the gross enrolment of refugee children in the primary school have reached 74% while secondary education stands at 12%. 3,600 refugee students are attending at different universities significant amount of them through the support of the Ethiopian Government. Nonetheless, about 43% school-aged children still remain out of school. On the other hand, the Jobs Compact which aims at providing 30,000 jobs to refugees and 70,000 locals is also well underway employing a multi- partner approach. However, needless to say that, given the sheer size of the refugee population, the need to scale up such ventures demands a concerted action from our partners.

**Mister Chairperson,**

In relation to the support provided to refugees and asylum seekers, Ethiopia has continued to provide protection and assistance to the refugees it is hosting using the limited available resources. While Ethiopia is currently a host to close to 905,000 refugees with 65,000 new arrivals in 2019, Ethiopia's refugee response plan unfortunately continues to suffer from serious underfunding. Out of the 346.5 million USD budget for 2019, it is only 37 percent that is funded thus far. The huge gap in funding has forced us to prioritize life -saving assistance over long- term self -reliance schemes. In addition to that, chronic underfunding is seriously compromising the well-being of the people of concern at several levels, particularly in meeting their needs for safe and clean water, shelter, provision of core relief items and food.

I want to raise in particular the challenges we are facing with regard to availability of renewable energy resources. Accordingly, due to the fact that only 13% refugee households have access to renewable energy, deforestation in and around refugee camps for fuelwood remains our prime concern. In this regard, the private sector role in providing adaptive technologies needs to be further explored. With regard to solutions, we express our concern with dwindling availability of resettlement which is an important protection tool in its own. We encourage traditional and emerging countries to continue

providing resettlement places to refugees. We encourage also donors to support the IGAD initiatives including the Nairobi Declaration and Plan of Action in this regard.

In relation to addressing statelessness, we salute the UNHCR and those countries who have made significant strides in the eradication statelessness of protection of Stateless people. In this regard, Ethiopia wishes to express its commitment to combat statelessness and give back their right to those who are made invisible by operation of laws and practices. Accordingly, we request the UNHCR to support us by conducting studies that will allow us understand the breadth and width of the problem and take actions accordingly.

On the other hand, we want to also to draw the attention of the High Commissioner challenges we are facing regarding voluntary of returns. Ethiopia is receiving requests from citizens who were living in exile as refugees due to political problems before the 2018 reform. However, absence of robust reintegration package is posing a huge challenge in ensuring sustainable reintegration. Hence, we call the UNHCR to extend support to Ethiopia and generally strengthen its support to reintegration.

**Madame Chairperson,**

In conclusion, as the days for convening the Global Refugee Forum are fast approaching, it is important that we all brace up for the success of the Forum. Indeed, it is vital that we consider the Forum as a real test to our resolve to implementing the Global Compact on Refugees. In closing, Ethiopia as co-convenor of the Global Refugee Forum therefore calls upon the international community to pledge contribution share best practices and forge new partnerships in accordance with the principle of equitable and reasonable burden and responsibility sharing.

**Thank You**