



STATEMENT

BY

**HON. TESFAHUN GOBEZAY, DIRECTOR GENERAL,
AGENCY FOR REFUGEES AND RETURNEES' AFFAIRS
(ARRA)**

THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA

AT

**THE 72ND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF
THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME**

4-8 October 2021

PALAIS DES NATIONS, GENEVA

Your Excellency Vice-Chairperson

Your Excellency Filippo Grandi, High Commissioner for Refugees,

All Protocols observed,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ethiopia aligns itself with the statement made by Burkina Faso on behalf of the African Group.

I would like to appreciate the High Commissioner for the great strides he is making in the fulfillment of his mandate. High Commissioner, your visit to my country in February and the subsequent follow-ups have boosted the responses from partners. Ethiopia commends the elaborated speech you gave yesterday and stands ready to partake in its realization.

Vice-Chair,

Ethiopia is home to more than 900,000 refugees and has maintained its longstanding open-door asylum policy. We have received more than 30,000 new asylum seekers even in time of COVID-19. On top of that, my country also continues to make great strides to contribute to peace and security of the countries of origin to address the root causes of displacement.

To minimize the risk of being stateless, refugees in the country are provided with access to civil registries. Furthermore, the Government of Ethiopia has been and is still taking various measures to include refugees in the ongoing national COVID-19 response mechanisms including in vaccination plans. We have vaccinated thousands of refugees from the minimal dosage my country is able to acquire so far.

As part of the Government's remarkable efforts towards ensuring self-reliance to refugees, Ethiopia is graciously providing the opportunity of education. More than 200,000 refugees are attending schools in all levels throughout the country. More than 4,100 students have graduated from the tertiary schools and this year alone, nearly 800 students have joined the universities and colleges of the country.

To alleviate the challenges Eritrean refugees in Tigray region are facing, we have provided an alternative land for a new camp and eased the requirements for urban refugee status. As of October 3, more than 14,000 refugees in the capital Addis Ababa have received status of urban refugee and opened bank accounts for their assistance.

Recently, Ethiopia's Refugee Agency has signed an agreement with the federal Jobs Creation Commission that ensures inclusion of refugees in the national jobs creation plans. This will enable the refugees to be part of the government's plan of creating 14 million jobs in agriculture, industry, and service sectors in the next five years. We call upon the international community to contribute to the realization of this grand goal in a manner that will benefit both the refugees and hosting communities.

Madam Vice-Chair,

We concur with the UNHCR's believe that voluntary, dignified, and safe return is the most favorable durable solution. While my country is home to large refugee population, we also have our citizens in other countries. We were able to return more than 600 returnees from Kenya this year and we will continue to repatriate our citizens who want to return to their home. In this regard, we

would like to stress the need to adequately and sustainably support the return and reintegration process. This will diminish the risk of internal displacements and re-migration that can result from inadequate reintegration package.

Ethiopia believes that strengthening the nexus among humanitarian assistance, development interventions and peace building initiatives is important to coherently address people's vulnerability before, during and after crisis.

As a founder of the United Nations and firm proponent of multilateralism throughout our history, Ethiopia values and appreciates the excellent cooperation and partnership it has with UNHCR, other UN Agencies, donors, and the private sector. In our shared objectives to sustainably improve the lives of refugees, returnees, internally displaced people, and the communities that host them, I cannot overemphasize the importance of upholding the principles of impartiality and neutrality so as not to undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ethiopia.

At this juncture, I would like to highlight that the bold commitments of the Government can only be realized if the international community broadens its contribution in a tangible manner. In this regard, I regret to remind that those contributions from the international community are continuously dwindling.

We would also like to draw the international community's attention particularly to the need to promote market-based energy solutions, and natural resource management activities that are linked with livelihoods.

In addition, in terms of economic use of the insufficient resources, we strongly believe that transparency should be maximized, and accountability needs to be ensured at all levels through expanding demand-driven models and shortening

the funding pathways. To this effect, building and developing national and local capacities remains vital.

Madam Vice-Chair

Finally, the Government of Ethiopia would like to take this opportunity to once again reaffirm its commitment to continue in close collaboration with all stakeholders towards the successful realization of the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees and its Pledges including those that have been made during the first-ever Global Refugee Forum.

I thank you!