



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

STATEMENT BY ZAMBIA, TO THE 73RD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME (EXCOM), BY HONOURABLE JACOB MWIIMBU MP, MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS AND INTERNAL SECURITY

GENEVA, 10TH TO 14TH OCTOBER 2022

Thank You Chairperson

Your Excellency, The High Commissioner

Honourable Ministers

Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates

Zambia aligns itself fully with the statement delivered by Chad on behalf of the African group.

It is, with great honour and privilege that I address the Executive Committee at this 73rd seating. It is pleasing to see the world opening up as most Governments have removed Covid-19 restrictions on population movement and we once again have an opportunity to meet physically although, I am aware that we have colleagues who are meeting with us online. The Covid19 pandemic affected the protection and welfare of persons of concern which left many of them vulnerable and unable to engage in any meaningful livelihood activities.

In his opening statement, the high commissioner has been comprehensive and has encouraged us to embrace the collective spirit of global cooperation which the humanitarian space was designed to foster. At this juncture, I wish to congratulate, the High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi for the extension of his term of office for another two and a half years, High Commissioner, congratulations.

Chairperson,

The government of the Republic of Zambia has continued to receive and admit asylum seekers and is currently hosting a total of 94,618 asylum seekers, refugees and former Angolan and Rwandan refugees. These persons of concern are hosted in three designated refugee settlements namely; Mayukwayukwa, Meheba and Mantapala, with a good number living in urban areas mostly in Lusaka and the Copperbelt Provinces.

The designated refugee settlements are located in rural areas where there is limited or inadequate infrastructure, in terms of, renewable energy, educational institutions, level 1 hospitals and lack of various social amenities. The majority of refugees in Africa including Zambia, opt to live outside refugee settlements because the settlements are not attractive causing rural-urban drift.

This situation limits refugees from full enjoyment of life. This is attributed to low investment in the settlements. In order to address this, I am pleased to inform the Chairperson that the Government will be embarking on revolutionising refugee protection in Zambia using the Modernisation of Refugee Settlements Approach (MORSA). This will attract displaced persons from other nations such as Ukraine to seek asylum in Zambia, for which we shall need support from the donor community.

Chairperson,

This approach is anchored on the vision of the new dawn government of the Republic of Zambia's desire to take development to all parts of the country, including Refugee Settlements.

Modernised settlements, will enable persons of concern live in a dignified manner with an improved quality of life and less socio-economic vulnerability. They will be able to meet their basic needs and strengthen their resilience to the humanitarian crisis and impact of their displacement.

In order to achieve modernisation, there is need to have a holistic approach. We believe, Chairperson, that this is the only way the impact of the many players in the humanitarian and development sector will be visible. Going forward, our development partners will be guided on the type of projects they should undertake in the settlements in order to have meaningful development in line with the MORSA concept. The government believes that the resources meant for refugee protection should be utilised prudently in order to appreciate the impact of outside support.

Chairperson,

Zambia has been working to fulfil the pledges that were made during the global refugee forum. To connect all three (3) refugee settlements to the main electricity grid at a total cost of 2.5 million

United States Dollars. In that regard, the Government has executed a Memorandum of Understanding with UNHCR to power Meheba Sefugee Settlement under phase one at an initial cost of 854,000 dollars. the project is being carried out by the rural electrification authority (REA) a Quasi Government institution responsible for rural electrification.

The Government is also considering a significant permanent solution to local integration of former refugees. In this regard, the Minister of Home Affairs and Internal Security, is expected to table before Cabinet the model of regularising the former refugees once and for all.

Further, the Government has included persons of concern in development programmes. To this effect, persons of concern will now be included in the national statistics and planning. This is evidenced by the inclusion of persons of concern in the just ended Zambia Statistics Agency 2022, national population census.

In another achievement, the Government is expected to conclude the development of the national Refugee Policy by December, 2022, which will inform legal reforms to ease challenges faced by refugees and address their plight.

Chairperson

As we all know, the refugee situation is not permanent. As a means of providing a durable solution, the Government targeted to repatriate over 10,000 Congolese refugees who had expressed willingness to return to the Democratic Republic of Congo and so far, we have facilitated the return of over 5,000 individuals.

I am glad to report that we also successfully carried out a verification exercise between April and July, 2022 which was aimed at obtaining accurate statistical information to ease planning and collect updated data such as bio data, contact details and current addresses of persons of concern.

In joining the “I belong campaign to end statelessness by 2024,” the Government has revived the task force on statelessness whose terms of reference include; to facilitate the ratification and domestication of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, and the 1954 Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons. The Government is also expected to finalise the draft National Action Plan on statelessness by November, 2022 and come up with mechanisms for identification of stateless persons.

In conclusion chairperson, the Zambian government would not have achieved the outlined successes and plans without the involvement of our international partners especially UNHCR who have consistently supported our operations. In this regard I wish to thank the international community for the continued support and urge them to continue supporting the Government especially at this

point of paradigm shift of refugee protection through modernisation of Refugee Settlements.

I look forward to today's deliberations.

I Thank You!