



**Statement of the Republic of South Sudan
Delivered by**

Hon. Mahmoud Solomon Agok

Minister of Interior

To

**73rd Session of the UNHCR Executive Committee
(ExCom 2022)**

Palais de Nations Geneva, Switzerland

10th October 2022

Excellency the Chairperson of ExCOM, Mr. Salim BADDOURA
The High Commissioner, Mr. Filippo Grandi,

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates

The Republic of South Sudan aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Republic of Chad on behalf of the African group and would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Chairperson of ExCom and wishing him all success in his assignment.

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate High Commissioner Mr. Filippo Grandi on the extension of his term, and to thank him also for his commendable leadership in his efforts for supporting member states in search for durable solutions to the problem of refugees and displaced population around the world and in South Sudan in particular. This has not been an easy task particularly during this extremely challenging time of global climate change, unprecedented conflicts, COVID 19 pandemic and high food prices.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

Allow me to convey greetings from my President, H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of the Republic of South Sudan, to this August house. It is my distinct honour to assure you of my Government's commitment and readiness to fully implement the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan. The parties to the Agreement last August agreed to a roadmap and extended the current transitional period by 24 months. On August 30th, 2022 our nation witnessed a great event and the first of its kind where the president H.E Salva Kiir Mayardit

graduated the unified forces to mark the completion of the vital section of the Security arrangement provided for in the Agreement. All the governance structure at national, states and local Government levels are in place, functional Revitalized National legislature to enact laws has been established, launched the permanent constitutional development process and instituted economic sector reforms just to mention a few.

Distinguished Delegates,

South Sudan is committed to protecting refugees, and to welcoming home returnees. Despite being a new nation facing challenges such as climate crisis, conflict and emerging issues. We have always welcomed refugees into our territory. We are currently hosting over 340,000 refugees on our territory. They are included in our national plans and they have access to basic services, they are provided ID cards in addition to enjoying freedom of movement throughout the country.

Moreover, through the generosity of South Sudanese communities, we have allocated over 4,000 hectares of valuable agricultural land to refugees in Ruweng Administrative area and recently the traditional leadership in Western Equatoria, His Majesty the King of the Azande, offered around one square kilometer of similar land to new asylum-seekers, in addition to land he has already provided. Recognizing the current momentum, the support of UNHCR and the wider international community, including development partners such as World Bank through the funding of Window for host community and Refugees there is a need to develop a comprehensive national view of solutions.

Distinguished delegates ladies and gentlemen,

South Sudanese have been displaced for decades, owing to our independence struggle and other emergencies. I am glad to state that all South Sudanese are always welcome home. And despite all the challenges, over 600,000 have voluntarily returned home on their own since the signing of the peace agreement in 2018. I would like to applaud UNHCR for recognizing this returnee, and for partnering with us on the “**Pockets of Hope**” approach to reach out to these population with potential support in terms of basic service delivery and this is of a great benefit not only to the returnees but also to the entire displaced population of IDPs, refugees and host communities. The Agreement offers an opportunity for us all to contribute to create enabling environment for voluntary return. What is required is a comprehensive strategy to provide urgent humanitarian assistance and basic services in areas of potential return.

Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates

In Conclusion, South Sudan welcomes and appreciates the efforts of the High Commissioner, Mr. Filippo Grandi on this situation, including his missions to South Sudan, and any planned upcoming mission hopefully soon. Furthermore, South Sudan extends a warm welcome to development partners for long-term engagement in supporting Government efforts. A larger development effort is needed to ensure those returning, can remain home. Experience has shown us that refugee return to areas lacking basic services are unsustainable, forcing some to take the difficult decision to leave their country again.

Our thanks and appreciation go to the UNHCR South Sudan for their unwavering support to the process of finding durable solutions to the protracted displacement. Once again, on behalf of my Government, I want to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the sisterly Countries for hosting our citizens for many years.

Thank You