



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

**STATEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA**

**PRESENTED BY:**

**H.E. AMBASSADOR MARCEL TIBALEKA**

**PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS,**

**GENEVA**

**AT THE 73<sup>RD</sup> EXCOMM IN GENEVA**

**10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

**Thank you Chairperson!**

**High Commissioner; Mr. Filippo Grandi,**

**Hon. Ministers and distinguished delegates.**

Uganda aligns with the African Group Statement as delivered by the Honorable Minister from Chad.

My delegation extends a special thanks to the office of the chairperson of the Executive Committee and the High commissioner plus his distinguished team for your committed leadership in organizing this 73rd Executive Committee Session.

Allow me first Mr. Chair, to extend our congratulations to the High Commissioner Mr. Filippo Grandi upon his re-election by the General Assembly to lead the UNHCR up to 2025. I pledge my Government and personal support to you in execution of your mandate.

I also take this opportunity to once again thank the Chairperson of EXCOMM, for your timely and invaluable visit to Uganda, we are confident that your experience gave you a glimpse into our refugee response efforts.

My government deeply values this Meeting as it continues to afford us the platform and opportunity to annually meet and interact with other delegations and the UNHCR on issues concerning programme and budget.

**Mr. Chair,**

I am proud to remind this meeting that Uganda remains committed to our international obligations in the protection of refugees, amidst increasing forced displacements in the region, challenged by a consistently shrinking financial support.

As I speak, Uganda currently hosts 1,525,000 refugees and yet we continue to face new influxes from Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. These protracted movements call for continuous verification of refugee numbers to ably guide in planning and inform

equitable burden and responsibility sharing. The increasing numbers also call for the need to support a shelter strategy in order to ease pressure off land and open up land for alternative livelihood activities for refugees.

We need funds to open up New Refugee Settlements in South West and Northern Uganda to cater for the continued influxes.

**Chair,**

In the last three (3) years, the Uganda Refugee Response has averagely been funded at 45% of the budget, equivalent to less than a dollar per day for each of the refugees.

The Country's response plan for 2022 is so far funded at only 25%, which is far below the requirements and challenges.

My Government is deeply concerned at the decreasing funding towards refugees hosted in Uganda in the wake of an influx. Our generosity and open-door principle should not be taken for granted in the middle of new refugee situations in other parts of the world. Our continued policies on hosting refugees are largely informed by the fact that every human being deserves to have a place they call home irrespective of their race, tribe, gender or nationality. We, therefore, do not expect different treatment or assistance towards refugees based on their location or race. Refugee emergency humanitarian needs including food are at stake. As we talk of development needs, we should not forget humanitarian emergency needs.

We call upon the international community, the existing donors, the potential donors and those that have not yet contributed towards refugees, to step forward and not forget the already burdened long-term refugee hosting countries like my country. I implore you all to approach this humanitarian cause with a human face and genuinely own up to the responsibility that we all have in ensuring equitable and fair burden and responsibility sharing.

**Chair**

Another important truth I would like to share is the unfortunate environmental degradation that directly impacts climate change, that my country suffers resulting from the deforestation by refugees. Currently, 62% of refugee households are using firewood to cook and 36% are using charcoal contributing to loss of forest cover. In this realm, we are grateful to the World Bank for supporting our

Government with a project that will connect some refugees and host communities to on-and-off grid electricity access as an energy solution.

I call upon our donors and other development partners to support and fund projects of alternative energy sources and consider investing in forest protection.

**Chair,**

We should not forget the importance of finding durable solutions towards ending refugee situations. We call for support to voluntary repatriation since it is the most durable solution to refugee problem. Since December 2020 we have voluntarily repatriated 8,522 Burundian refugees. We commend IGAD and EAC peace initiatives that have made it possible for restoring peace in some parts of the region that has enabled voluntary repatriation. The International Community should support these efforts for permanent peace in the region so that refugees can return home.

Another solution to ease pressure on the host country is third-country resettlement. This is only made possible by other States opening their borders to refugees. We call upon all States to ensure safe pathways and resettlement opportunities in line with the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR).

Finally Chair, my government remains committed to our international obligations in the protection of refugees.

**For God and My Country.**

**I thank you!**