



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

**Statement by Hon. Stephen Kampyongo,  
MP, Minister of Home Affairs, to the 69<sup>th</sup>  
Session of the Executive Committee of  
the High Commissioner's Programme  
(EXCOM),**

**Geneva, 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> October 2018**

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The High Commissioner,

Chairperson,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Zambia wishes to thank the High Commissioner for his forward looking statement and his vision for reform which, we are confident, will enable the UNHCR respond more effectively to emerging challenges. My delegation also wishes to associate itself with the statement delivered by Uganda on behalf of the African Group and emphasize that the contribution of African countries should be measured not only by their willingness to open their borders but also by quantifying their contributions in kind that allow them to host refugees often with minimum resources.

### **Chairperson**

At a time when Zambia was preparing to close the chapter on the Angolan and Rwandan refugee caseloads by giving them alternative legal status, the country was once again faced with an influx of refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) at the end of August, 2017. Over twenty two thousand

(22,000) refugees have entered the country in the last twelve months, bringing the average per month to one thousand eight hundred and thirty (1830) new arrivals. In view of this, Zambia now hosts over forty two thousand (42, 000) Congolese refugees alone, double the number it hosted at this time last year. This number is in addition to over twenty thousand (20,000) former Angolan and Rwandan refugees whose integration into Zambian society is still ongoing. The total number of refugees, asylum seekers and former refugee currently in Zambia is currently more than seventy four thousand (74,000).

As a country that holds the Chairmanship of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Organ on Politics, Defence and Security and a neighbor, we are keenly monitoring the events in the DRC, we are confident that the situation there will remain calm and peaceful to prevent further or even more displacement. As I speak, some of DRC's population is already in the border areas, ready to cross into Zambia at short notice. The number of refugees in Zambia is, therefore, expected to increase, posing an additional challenge to the country due to the ever decreasing resources required to provide relief and assistance.

In order to effectively address the Congolese influx, the Government established a third refugee settlement known as

Mantapala in the Northern part of Zambia located 50 Kilometers from the DRC border which currently hosts 13, 874 refugees. This was a huge task for the Government in light of the severe economic constraints that the country is facing. We are grateful to the United Nations Central Emergency Relief Fund for releasing US\$6.2 million to enable us, together with our partners, to provide for the immediate needs of the newly arrived refugees. However, as we consolidate this response and prepare for a possible influx, there is need for more support to the Government to improve reception conditions in both the entry points and the refugee settlements as well as to extend services to the host communities.

In May, 2018 the Government, in conjunction with the UNHCR-Zambia, launched the country Chapter of Refugee Response Plan (RRP) for the DRC Crisis which envisaged to raise USD\$74 million required to meet the needs of the refugees and addressing the numerous humanitarian gaps which include among others water and sanitation, health, education, protection, infrastructure development, alternative means of energy and communication. This was in anticipation that the country would receive at least seventy six thousand (76,000) refugees from the DRC by the end of this year if the trend which prevailed at the end of 2017 had continued. Chairperson, refugee operations in Zambia remain

underfunded at 17% of the requirements despite growing needs.

As you are aware, **Chairperson**, Zambia started rolling out the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) after the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee as the seventh roll-out country in Africa and the first country in the Southern African Region. After one year, we believe we have made tremendous progress in implementing refugee programmes in line with this robust approach. Learning lessons from our highly successful local integration programme, we have responded to the new Congolese refugee influx in an innovative way, bringing together local institutions and a wide range of partners to ensure that our interventions benefit both the refugees and the local community. An Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee appointed by the Republican President, of which I am Chairperson, is spearheading the overall implementation of the CRRF. District and Provincial CRRF Committees that are being supervised by a National CRRF Steering Committee have since completed their consultations in readiness for national consultations.

It is worth noting, **Chairperson**, that while Zambia is committed to play its role in this process, it is important for relevant partners to increase their involvement in our

programmes in support of Government efforts and the tireless work of the UNHCR.

**Chairperson,**

Allow me to take this opportunity to reflect on the progress that we have made, so far, in dealing with the protracted cases of former refugees from Angola and Rwanda. As you are well aware, the programme started in 2014 and was expected to be completed in 2016 with the integration of about 14,000 Angolans and 4000 Rwandans. However, the full implementation of the legal pillar, involving the acquisition of permanent residence by the former refugees has stalled due to various factors, including financing and legal technicalities. I am proud to state that despite these challenges, over three thousand former refugees now hold Residence Permits or Temporal Permits while the social economic pillars are being supported by development partners led by the UNDP.

In order to successfully conclude the legal pillar of the programme, the Government of the Republic of Zambia requires financial assistance in order to ensure that permits are issued to the remaining over 11,000 Angolans and

Rwandans. It would be remiss of me if I did not, at this stage, fail to convey my Government's profound gratitude to the Governments of Canada, the United States of America and Japan for their continued assistance in making the local integration programme in Zambia possible.

**Chairperson,**

As we draw closer to the Statelessness event in 2019, Zambia wishes to reiterate her pledge to accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. In this regard, Parliament has directed my Ministry to bring a proposal before Cabinet to begin the process. This will be done before the end of 2018.

Let me conclude, **Chairperson,** by reaffirming my Government's firm commitment to maintaining an open border asylum policy and fulfilling our obligations to the international community to offer refuge and protection to all who need it. I assure you, **Chairperson,** of our good will as you steer the proceedings of this meeting.

I thank you for your attention.