

Mr Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This statement has been achieved through the efforts of the Somalia NGO Consortium, a *network of Local and International, Humanitarian, Peace building and Development NGOs working in Somalia and Somaliland.*

The Consortium recognises the efforts that Governments involved have committed to make it possible for all actors and stakeholders to support the successful reintegration of refugees to Somalia. We take cognizance of the Tripartite agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kenya, (GOK) The Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia (FGS) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) *Governing the Voluntary Repatriation of Somali Refugees Living in Kenya, 2013* that provides for a legal framework for the safe and dignified voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees and most recently the development of the portfolio of projects to support the repatriation programme.

To this end, and in identifying with one of the main aims of the conference being, *to allow international and national partners to take stock of the Somali refugee return challenges and define a path towards concrete results*, we have identified key issues that are critical in influencing the outcomes of this conference and the overall aim of a successful repatriation programme:

- **Somalia remains insecure.** Insecurity is likely to be the greatest hindrance to intentional and voluntary return of the refugees. Security in Somalia calls for clarity of purpose amongst all actors, given the obvious implications for other interventions.
- **Poor infrastructure and poor living conditions** owing to the fragile state of development in Somalia. This factor continues to influence refugees return to the host country, Kenya.
- **Limited livelihood opportunities** in Somalia for both host communities and returnees.
- The **constraint of land for resettling returnees** in Somalia and the subsequent increase of IDPs, majority of whom lack security of tenure, as they compete for land with host communities and the emerging private sector in Somalia.
- **Limited funding and/or withdrawal** of funding in some thematic areas such as education and health by donors and development partners remains a huge challenge to humanitarian, peace building and development actors in Somalia.
- **Stringent conditions imposed on the NGOs** in Somalia, making their existence and implementation of projects very difficult. This includes regulations on taxations with no legal framework to guide the process, bureaucratic impediments and new regulatory requirements.
- **Lack of social ties for most returnees**, many of whom left Somalia decades ago or were born in the refugee camps in Kenya. This is more so due to the important fact that the Somalia people take seriously social ties and investments.

Against this background, we as the Consortium, request that:

Governments and Member States:

- Ensure security is reinforced and strengthened in Somalia to promote and ensure more access of refugees and humanitarian actors.
- Actors discuss lasting solutions and put emphasis on development funding and support.
- Support for Civil Society development and operation in Somalia is considered central in the process of a wholesome repatriation programme.

Donors and Development Partners:

- Channel and aid the repatriation programme informed by the need to ensure that the basic needs and rights of the returnees are upheld.

Action Africa Help-International (AAH-I), Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Agency for technical Cooperation and development (ACTED), American Refugee Committee (ARC), Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Environmental Care Organization (ECO), Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW), KAALO Aid and Development Organization, Mercy Corps (MC), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Solidarités International (SI), World Vision Somalia (WV).



- Support studies and reviews on new, emerging migration patterns in the Horn of Africa including the complex dynamics that includes refugees from Yemen to Somalia.
- Support comprehensive and durable solutions to support the Somali refugees and host communities at their points of origin and after potential return.
- Support market- driven trade and vocational projects and agreements that will expand opportunities for Somalia returnees and the host community members.

Civil Society:

- Create avenues for working with Governments and authorities in Somalia, on durable and lasting sustainable solutions.
- Support the Governments to streamline administrative processes that will enhance their existence as they work and implement their thematic areas of work.

In **conclusion** the Consortium is grateful for the opportunity of being present at this Conference and remains optimistic that pledging for the repatriation programme will have the best interests of the returnees, based on informed priority areas as outlined above.

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