

+



ZIMBABWE

**STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF
PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE OF
THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE**

HONOURABLE PROF. P. MAVIMA (MP)

**TO THE 72ND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE PROGRAMME OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH
COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (EXCOM) MEETING**

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND:

4 OCTOBER 2021

- **Chairperson;**
- **The UN High Commissioner for Refugees Mr. Filippo Grandi;**
- **Your Excellencies;**
- **Distinguished Delegates;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Let me begin by thanking you, and the other members of the Bureau, for providing the much-needed leadership during the governance meetings that were held throughout the year. My delegation counts on your collective experiences to steer this session to a resounding success. My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Burkina Faso on behalf of the Africa Group

Allow me to also register my delegation's appreciation of the work being done by the High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi and his team. Despite the COVID -19 pandemic, the conflict related complexities and inaccessibility of some areas affected by climate change induced natural disasters, the Office of the UNHCR continues to deliver the assistance and protection to refugees, asylum seekers and stateless people.

Chairperson, Zimbabwe calls for strengthened international protection of people of concern to UNHCR in Africa. We also call for positive engagement with the refugee

hosting countries like my own as we collectively seek to strengthen international protection of refugees and asylum seekers, in line with the provisions of the Global Compact on Refugees.

Chairperson, Zimbabwe supports the submission by the High Commissioner that the international community should continue to seek durable solutions in light of the increasing numbers of refugees and displaced persons. Furthermore, Zimbabwe supports the High Commissioner's idea of renewing for another five years the organization's strategic directions which were first launched in 2017.

The strategic directions are still very much relevant to the pursuit of durable solutions and are in sync with the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees adopted by the General Assembly in 2018. In this regard, Zimbabwe expects the linkages between the Strategic Directions and the Global Compact on Refugees to be examined at the First High Level Official meeting of the Global Refugee Forum scheduled to take place this year in December.

Chairperson, Zimbabwe reaffirms its commitments towards the implementation and fulfillment of its international obligations in safeguarding human welfare and the protection of refugees and asylum seekers. In this regard, refugees and asylum seekers in Zimbabwe have been included in the COVID-19 vaccination programme. I am

happy to report that to date, almost 30% of the eligible age groups of the encamped refugees at Tongogara Refugee Camp have been inoculated.

Furthermore, the Government of Zimbabwe continues to promote self-reliance among the refugees. For instance, the government has recently partnered with the Office of the UNHCR and the African Development Bank to double the irrigation hectareage of the agriculture project at Tongogara Refugee Camp in the country. About 435 families stand to benefit from the expanded irrigation project. The self-reliance project for the refugees is part of the programmes for vulnerable populations under the National Development Strategy 1-for the period 2021-2025.

My government is also promoting climate change awareness and the protection of the environment among the refugees. To this end, the Government, in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP) is in the process of establishing a pilot project in hydroponics at Tongogara Refugee camp.

Chairperson, Zimbabwe is scheduled to host a Southern Africa regional symposium on Climate Change and forced displacement. Since, the regional symposium is taking place shortly after the United Nations Climate Change Conference scheduled for Glasgow starting at the end of this month, my delegation expects the outcomes of the COP 26

to guide our discussions in the regional symposium as forced displacement is an integral part of the global climate change discourse.

The regional symposium will afford the regional players, the Office of the UNHCR and other UN agencies an opportunity to put in place mechanisms to respond to, and mitigate, the impact of natural disasters that result in large forced displacements.

As I conclude Chairperson, allow me to express the Government of Zimbabwe's appreciation for the assistance rendered to it by the international community in general and the Office of the UNHCR in particular to deliver its refugee protection responsibilities.

I thank you.